

CAN

DIALECTICS

BREAK

BRICKS?

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HOW TO THINK

Sojourner Truth Organization

MARXIST EDUCATION

The outline study guide which follows is based on classes conducted by Sojourner Truth Organization over the past two years. The original draft has undergone substantial modification as a result of the classes, and there is undoubtedly room for considerable improvement still, but its basic shape has worn well.

Each time we have *taught* the material; that is, we have had three or four "teachers" presumed to be more familiar with a broader range of Marxist doctrine and five to eight "students." "Students" one time become "teachers" in later sessions. Each part is introduced with an overview from a "teacher" and then the "students" give prepared answers to the study questions which are thoroughly discussed and debated, "student" reactions first. Of course, in each session the "teachers" have been learners as much as the "students," sometimes more so.

We think this is the best way to learn these lessons, in contrast to the study circle approach which has been a popular bequest of the New Left and which has characterized so much radical education during the past decade. This is partly because of the intrinsic difficulty of some of the materials, such as the texts by Hegel and Althusser. "Teachers" who are versed in the terms of the debates surrounding these thinkers can steer the discussion to useful conclusions and debates that may not emerge in discussions solely limited to the assigned materials.

There is another aspect which has proven to be the decisive consideration for us. Some concepts—often central to the entire program of study—are sufficiently subtle that they will not necessarily emerge even from a very careful study group. One example, probably the most important one, will illustrate. In Part One, study question four says:

The Guardian and the Weather Underground state that the fundamental contradiction of modern capitalism is that between the proletariat ("working class as a whole") and the capitalists ("imperialist bourgeoisie"). Prairie Fire says it is "the contradiction between social production and private appropriation." Who is right? Why?

In our view, the correct answer is "neither of the above." Yet it is not necessarily clear from the texts why this is so, though the necessary explanations are provided.

According to Marx, the social contradiction which can only be resolved by revolution is that between the forces of production and the relations of production. The most common Marxist interpretation of this assertion is that forces of production means capital (sometimes our latter-day Marxists implicitly limit this to technology, so that the "full development of the forces of production" is interpreted solely as the presence of advanced, highly productive machinery) while relations of production means the system of production, appropriation, and exchange.

In reality, Marx meant something quite different. Forces of production includes both capital and labor, while relations of production includes capitalists and workers. Thus the proletariat is an essential of both sides of the antagonism—on one side as the creator of use value, on the other as wage laborer. The contradiction is therefore internal and essential to the working class itself, and cannot be resolved externally. STO's political line—in particular our understanding of the role of white skin privilege—is based on this recognition of the conflict internal to the proletariat.

The Guardian/Weather Underground view is wrong because it sees the essential contradiction as between workers and forces external to their class, rather than seeing the necessary embodiment of that conflict within the workers themselves. Political concepts which are derived from a faulty understanding of this process, such as class consciousness, will be warped in a similar direction.

The Prairie Fire interpretation suffers from a different problem. Unlike the Guardian/Weather Underground mistake, the Prairie Fire statement can be textually supported; it is a summary of the position argued by Engels in *Anti-Duhring*. But the situation more or less accurately described by Engels was a historically specific example drawn from pre-imperialist, pre-state-capitalist capitalism. Prairie Fire's mistake is to presume that Engels' observation can be generalized without regard for the stage of capitalism, and then substituted for the

general form of the contradiction described by Marx. Ironically, Engels himself in the same book demonstrated that private-property capitalism could be superseded by nationalization without abolishing capitalist exploitation. Usually those who talk about the contradiction between social production and private appropriation today are doing so for a political reason—to exclude from consideration the contradiction between forces and relations of production in the "socialist" countries.

If the participants entered these classes with a *tabula rasa*, the most reasonable interpretation of the readings might readily emerge from unassisted collective study. But they don't. Nearly all are experienced leftists who have assimilated the various distortions of Marxism which constitute the conventional wisdom. These, more than the difficulties and complexities of the concepts, are the reasons for furnishing experienced help to guide the learning process.

Some material critically important to our classes has been superseded. In the STO study, one whole segment of each session was devoted to a critique of Stalin's *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*.

There were two study questions:

1. List everything that is inadequate or wrong in Stalin's pamphlet. Be ruthless, and as complete as possible.
2. Why has no one ever published a serious critique of the Stalin pamphlet, in spite of its being probably the most widely distributed work on the subject of dialectical materialism?

Each of these was assigned to an individual who made a presentation which was followed by a general discussion. With the publication of Lance Hill's article in this issue of *Urgent Tasks*, we are replacing that session of the study program with a comparable one on Mao Tse-Tung. Lance Hill was one of the "students" (who became one of the "teachers"). His article is an individual product except to the extent that he chose to incorporate ideas from the general discussion. In editing the article for publication, no attempt was made to have it conform to any official position.

Other areas of study, begun in the classes, have led to expanded discussion and elaboration in STO's Internal Bulletin and in *Urgent Tasks*—for example the symposium on Louis Althusser's politics in *Urgent Tasks* number four. We think the basic readings and discussion are sufficiently enlightening to warrant retaining them, using the later materials as supplements.

We have found that thirty to sixty days of student/teacher preparation followed by five days and evenings of *uninterrupted* discussion classes is required to accomplish satisfactorily the aims of this program. It poses serious problems to a small organization, most of whose members are workers and all of whom are engaged in political work. Under such circumstances the classes cannot succeed unless the political decisions personal and organizational—are taken seriously and firmly, even ruthlessly, enforced. During the pre-class period, participants must be sufficiently free from other political obligations to concentrate on study; for the classes themselves, held in rural retreats, people often have to spend most of their annual vacation time. Comrades not involved in the same session have to pick up the slack in political work and personal responsibility.

We feel it has been worth the investment, and would caution others against attempting shortcuts. If theoretical work is a prerequisite to building a revolutionary movement, as Lenin argued, a thorough grasp of *How to Think* is the first step in developing the ability to do that work.

Many of the readings are available in dozens of editions. Those that can easily be found are not referenced to a specific edition. In some cases we have chosen a particular, easily obtainable edition of a work, in order to provide uniformity when citing multiple excerpts. Copies of out-of-print readings may be obtained from STO—contact us for costs. Groups should also feel free to contact STO if teachers for this study program are desired.

We strongly recommend the following study habits to students: Keep a notebook of your studies. Make a note every time you have a question about anything, even if it is merely the definition of a word that you look up in the dictionary, or even if it is a concept that you expect will be clarified in a later passage or a subsequent reading.

As soon as you have finished a reading, record what you didn't like about it. In the cases of excerpted materials, for example, it is likely that earlier parts that are not included here will contain information which is

vital to a full grasp of the selected fragment. What terms ought to be included in a supplementary glossary? What individuals or historical events should be identified? What kind of supplementary materials would be helpful? Should this particular selection have been omitted? Why or why not? Answer each of these questions before proceeding to the study questions for the particular reading.

— Education Committee

Sojourner Truth Organization

HOW TO THINK

A Guide to the Study of Dialectical Materialism

Introduction

We begin with Lenin's observation to Inessa Armand: "People for the most part (99 percent of the bourgeoisie, 98 percent of the liquidators, about 60-70 percent of the Bolsheviks) don't know how to *think*, they only *learn words by heart*." [35:131 Lenin's emphasis] It is our purpose in this study program to impart an ability to evaluate political situations critically and to decide independently on proper courses of action. Our aim is to elevate the effectiveness of our political work by elevating the quality of our "product."

The skills of which we speak are theoretical, but theoretical in the broadest sense. We are not concerned here with abilities to operate an offset press or marshal a picket line, but we are concerned with the organization and presentation of criticism, whether of strategy, general tactics, or issue-oriented practical work. Our conception of criticism does not rest on the application of general rules and abstract principles, but on mastering the approach summarized by Lenin:

"Dialectics is the teaching which shows how Opposites can be and how they happen to be (how they become) identical,—under what conditions they are identical, becoming transformed into one another,—why the human mind should grasp these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, becoming transformed into one another." [38:109]

In some ways what we are attempting to accomplish is the Marxist equivalent of a Berlitz class in a foreign language. We are not striving to be comprehensive, but we are attempting to impart a *functional* ability to use Marxism. This is quite different from the usual introductory course which intends to convince the newcomer of the value of Marxism and to familiarize her/him with its terms and scope, but on the whole to leave the important decisions to the more advanced.

Since this is a short course, it would be wrong to view it as an end in itself. If it fails to inspire further study of works like *The Poverty of Philosophy*, *The German Ideology*, the *Grundrisse*, *Capital*, *Anti-Duhring*, Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*, Gramsci's writings, and so forth, then it is not fulfilling its long-term purpose and ought to be re-evaluated in that light. Still, at present our emphasis has to be utilitarian.

The purpose of all this study is not abstract or millennial. If after all this you cannot explain how labor unions can be the greatest obstacle to class struggle or why Communist Parties can fiercely oppose proletarian revolutions, we will have failed. But understanding of this type is also armament, preparation for battle. The test of that will be in our political practice.

Part I – Base and Superstructure in Motion

Discussion:

This part includes two very well-known selections from the writings of Marx and Engels, and several that are less familiar. One might say that the "Theses on Feuerbach" represent the "voluntarist," the "Hegelian," the "dialectical" side of Marxism, while the "Preface" shows the "determinist," the "scientific," the "materialist" side. We have included these together to show, from the beginning of the course, the roots in Marx's writings of two diverging trends in Marxist thought, and to demonstrate from the outset the dangers of failing to consider Marx's writings as a totality. Engels' letters represent his conscious attempt to correct what was a one-sidedness in the socialist movement of his day. The significance of the *Grundrisse* selections we leave to the discussion to determine.

Questions:

1. Marx states that social existence determines the consciousness of people. What is meant by social existence? How are the circumstances of social existence changed?
2. What is the conflict that leads to social revolution? How does it develop under capitalism?
3. What does the passage from the *Grundrisse* [705-6] say about how the forces of production are fettered by capitalism?
4. The Guardian and the Weather Underground state that the fundamental contradiction of modern capitalism is that between the proletariat ("working class as a whole") and the capitalists ("imperialist bourgeoisie"). Prairie Fire says it is "the contradiction between social production and private appropriation." Who is right? Why?
5. Is Engels' treatment of the relationship between the economic base and the political superstructure of society, as expressed in his letters to Bloch and Schmidt, adequate?

Supplementary or Future Recommended Readings:

1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*
2. Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*
3. Frederick Engels, *Anti-Duhring*
4. Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*

Part II - The Marxist View of Change

Discussion:

These readings constitute essential statements of Marxist dialectics, yet nearly every attempt to popularize them winds up grossly falsifying them (as in the writings of Mao Tse-tung, Stalin, and Maurice Cornforth).

This whole problem will be developed later; here we will give one illustration. The most widely used introductory textbook for studying Marxist "philosophy" is Maurice Cornforth's *Materialism and the Dialectical Method*. Cornforth writes, "At bottom, idealism is religion, theology. 'Idealism is clericalism,' wrote Lenin. All idealism is a continuation of the religious approach to questions, even though particular idealist theories have shed their religious skin. Idealism is inseparable from superstition, belief in the supernatural, the mysterious and unknowable." [page 18]

Contrast that statement with the full Lenin citation from which Cornforth drew his fragment: "Philosophical idealism is *only* nonsense from the standpoint of crude, simple, metaphysical materialism. From the standpoint of *dialectical* materialism, on the other hand, philosophical idealism is a *one-sided*, exaggerated, *uberschwengliches* [over-extended] (Dietzgen) development (inflation, distention) of one of the features, aspects, facets of knowledge into an absolute, *divorced* from matter, from nature, apotheosised. Idealism is clerical obscurantism. True. But philosophical idealism is ("*more correctly*" and "*in addition*") a *road* to clerical obscurantism *through one of the shades* of the infinitely complex *knowledge* (dialectical) of man." [38:361 Lenin's emphasis]

Does not Lenin say exactly the opposite of what Cornforth concludes? This illustrates a potentially paralyzing problem of Marxist study. If a beginner studies easy-to-read popular pamphlets in order to learn what Marxism is, she/he may learn only much later (if ever) of this type of deception. It may be more difficult to read the original presentations of these ideas, but it is the only certain way to eliminate counterfeit Marxism.

Questions:

1. What is the relationship between philosophical idealism and dialectical materialism? Between dialectical materialism and materialism? How does Marx characterize Feuerbach's philosophical errors in the Theses?
2. What is the essence of dialectics? How can it be tested?
3. Why is it difficult to simplify the study of dialectics?
4. Ted Allen has written that the policy begun in colonial Virginia conferring a privileged status on European-Americans in relation to African-Americans was the "invention" of the white race. What do you think of

the notion that the white race was "invented"? Is it possible to speak of "race" as having an origin in historical times?

5. Lenin connected the "betrayal" of the Second International to the new stage reached by capitalism. Would the failure of the Communist parties after 60 years to establish socialism in any country constitute conclusive evidence of another change in historical stages? (Debate over the definition of socialism is not the intended focus of this question, although it obviously must be considered part of the discussion.)
6. How does the process of production in the U.S. today shape workers' attitudes toward consumption? What was different during the Great Depression? How will communism be different?
7. Is the U.S. working class backward? Explain your answer.
8. What is meant by "negation of the negation"? Give examples. Is this a conservative or a revolutionary concept?
9. Find applications of Lenin's elements of dialectics in the *Grundrisse* passages in this and the previous session. Give particular attention to any examples of the "negation of the negation."
10. What is the Marxist organization and who are we?

Supplementary or Future Recommended Readings:

1. George Plekhanov, *The Materialist Conception of History*
2. V. I. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*
3. C. L. R. James, *Notes on Dialectics: Hegel and Marxism*

Part III - From Hegel to Marx

Discussion:

Hegel sees a duality in each level of self-consciousness. Each level of consciousness contains its own opposite. He carries this argument through to its most extreme statement: each self-consciousness can only fully emerge through a life and death struggle: "it is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained." [page 233] When Hegel differentiates the master and the bondsman it becomes clear that the master's "independent existence" and "power" are not equivalent to freedom. The bondsman's "negative attitude," the result of his "self-consciousness in a broad sense" rooted in participation in productive labor, becomes the condition for genuine freedom.

"But just as lordship showed its essential nature to be the reverse of what it wants to be, so, too, bondage will, when completed, pass into the opposite of what it immediately is: being a consciousness repressed within itself, it will enter into itself, and change round into real and true independence." [page 237] (Gramsci has carried this further still: "the more an individual is compelled to defend his own immediate physical existence, the more will he uphold and identify with the highest values of civilization and humanity, in all their complexity." [*Prison Notebooks*, page 170])

Marx has called Hegel's *Phenomenology* "the true point of origin and the secret of Hegelian philosophy." [*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, page 136] Engels referred to it as "a parallel of the embryology and paleontology of the mind, a development of the individual consciousness through its different stages through which the consciousness of man has passed in the course of history." [*Ludwig Feuerbach*, page 14] Since Engels wrote this very late in life, and after Marx had died, it is worth remembering when one is told that Marxism is a complete rejection of Hegel.

Questions:

1. In the conflict between master and slave described by Hegel, at what points can each be described as "class conscious"?
2. "My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, *i.e.*, the process of thinking, which, under the name of "the Idea," he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of "the Idea." With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought." [*Capital I*: 191] What, then, is the relationship of Marx to Hegel?

3. Compare Lenin's statement that "the result of activity is the test of subjective cognition and the criterion of *objectivity which truly is*" [38:219] with his statement that the essence of dialectics "must be tested by the history of science." [38:357] Would Gramsci agree with Lenin's tests?

Supplementary or Future Recommended Readings:

1. C. L. R. James, "The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery" in *Amistad I*
2. C. L. R. James, "Colonialism and National Liberation in Africa" in Miller and Aya, eds., *National Liberation*

Part IV - How Revolutionaries Are Made

Discussion:

If Hegel is difficult, Plekhanov is a pleasure to read; it is no mystery why his writings are responsible for the early popularization of Marxism in Russia. This statement is an excellent summary of the orthodox view of the relations between individual character, society as a whole, and "historical accident." Though Luxemburg and Plekhanov were later to diverge politically, there is a certain similarity in the views they expressed in the selections included here. The Rawick, Ignatin, Twain and Bennett selections all deal with the development of consciousness through an internal dialectic.

Questions:

1. What determines the extent to which an individual can influence society? What is the influence of "accidents" on history? Are Plekhanov's positions on these questions right? What about Engels' [see the letters in Part I] ?
2. Why cannot human nature account for the course of history? Or can it?
3. What accounts for the stagnation of Marxism described by Rosa Luxemburg?
4. Luxemburg says that the third volume of *Capital* far exceeded the theoretical needs of the proletariat of her time. Is she right?
5. Why are people of great talent often the contemporaries of others with similar talents?
6. What is the limit of individual power? In what sense can a person "make history"?
7. Does Lerone Bennett mean the same thing as Hegel by "free"? Is freedom, to Hegel, "just another word for nothin' left to lose"? Does Frantz Fanon agree with Hegel's definition?
8. Compare Shields Green and Huck Finn. Do the same for John Brown and Jim.
9. What does George Rawick mean that "one can never remove culture, although one can transform it" [page 8]? What represents the negation of the negation in Black culture today?
10. What insight is shared by Hegel, Bennett, Twain, Rawick and Ignatin? How is it missing from Elkins and Genovese (based on the Rawick reading)?
11. What does it mean to "construct acts to the end"?
12. How do characters like Shields Green, John Brown, Huck Finn, and Jim affect everyone else? What is it that "few American white men" can resist?
13. Is George Rawick a racist? Is Mark Twain? Is Stanley Elkins? Is Eugene Genovese?
14. What is self-activity? How is it relevant to revolution? Who is a revolutionary?

Supplementary or Future Recommended Readings:

1. W. E. B. DuBois, *John Brown*
2. *Autobiography of Mother Jones*
3. *Autobiography of Malcolm X*
4. Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx*
5. James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*
6. Tony Cliff, *Lenin*
7. Paul Frolich, *Rosa Luxemburg*
8. Peter Netti, *Rosa Luxemburg*
9. Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

10. Matthew Ward, *Indignant Heart*
 11. Hakim Jamal, *From the Dead Level*
 12. Ida B. Wells, *Crusade for Justice*
 13. Fred Beal, *Proletarian Journey*
 14. Hosea Hudson, *Black Worker in the Deep South*
 15. Richard Wright, *Native Son*
 16. B. Traven, *The Death Ship*
- (Obviously a list like this can go on forever, but these should be suggestive.)

Part V - How Revolutions Are Made

Discussion:

The two readings are models of the application of dialectics to the study of history. Both are examples of the universality of the dialectical method: the ability to recognize common themes and interconnections between seemingly isolated events, and to discover "the contradiction in the very essence of things."

Questions:

1. Who were the Jacobins? Was James justified in referring to the Saint Domingue revolutionaries as "Black Jacobins"?
2. Do you agree with DuBois' statement [page 358] that Reconstruction was an attempt at a dictatorship of labor?
3. Compare DuBois' remark [pages 319-20] about the attitude of white Americans with James' description of Parisian attitudes [pages 139-40]. How do you explain the transformations in the thinking of the white masses? How do you explain their later relapse?

Supplementary or Future Recommended Readings:

1. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*
2. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*
3. Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France*
4. Leon Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*

Part VI - The Marxist Method

Discussion:

In some ways Gramsci and Lukacs sharply diverge from Engels and Lenin. The latter two viewed dialectical materialism as a universally useful theory of knowledge, as applicable and important to the study of chemistry and physics as to problems of human society. Gramsci limited his concerns to questions of politics and culture, a situation largely forced upon him by his imprisonment. Lukacs specifically rejected the applicability of dialectics outside the realm of human social experience. These matters have been and continue to be the subject of heated debate, but they need not directly concern this course of study as long as we are generally aware of them.

Gramsci is well known to STO and our friends, but some background on Lukacs may be helpful. Lukacs had a checkered political career; because he deliberately accommodated to Stalin with consciously hypocritical tactical self-criticisms, there has always been some ambiguity concerning his own attitude toward his theoretical work. On the other hand, after Lenin's criticisms shattered his early ultra-"left" and sectarian views, he was always firmly in the right wing of the Comintern, and his premature fight for his line—the "Blum Theses" he submitted to the Sixth Congress of the CI—were the cause of his political downfall, not his opposition to Stalinism. By the time Dimitrov's Popular Front (virtually identical to the Blum Theses) was adopted at the Seventh Congress, Lukacs' retreat from political life had been totally accomplished.

Thereafter he confined his writings to cultural matters. He emerged from seclusion to become the Minister of Culture in the short-lived Hungarian revolutionary government of 1956 headed by Imre Nagy; following its overthrow by the Soviet army, he returned to even greater seclusion, but emerged to condemn the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Lukacs argued that his hypocrisy was fully justified because it was

better to live under the worst socialism than the best capitalism. It is this ambiguity of his work, even more than its right-wing political line, that renders it so attractive to scholastic Marxists. It is therefore wise to approach it with a large measure of caution. [It is interesting to note the contrasts and similarities in Marxist writings under the shadow of censorship—Lenin's *Imperialism* under the tsar, Gramsci under Mussolini, and Lukacs under Stalin.]

On the other hand, Lukacs was no party hack, grinding out "philosophy" to justify the party line. He retained his critical approach throughout his career, giving his work a value that is usually missing from the Marxist writers of any country. This is the independent significance of the revived interest in his writings.

The essay "What Is Orthodox Marxism?" is a product of Lukacs' early years, under the influence of the European revolutions. Examining it in 1967, 48 years after he wrote the first draft, Lukacs reaffirmed his belief that it is "not only objectively correct but also capable of exerting a considerable influence today when we are on the eve of a Marxist renaissance."

Questions:

1. What is philosophy? What is a philosopher?
2. What is the relationship of language to philosophy?
3. How does consciousness shape personality? Is "proletarianization" a justifiable kind of "conformism" for an individual? for a communist organization?
4. During World War II an overwhelming majority of United Auto Workers' members voted in a referendum to abide by a no-strike pledge agreed to by the union's leadership. Before, during, and after the passage of the referendum a majority of the union's membership participated in wildcat strikes. Was this hypocrisy? Explain it in Gramsci's categories.
5. Under what conditions can intellectuals propagate their views among the masses? Under what conditions can the revolutionary party?
6. Gramsci says Marxism seems like a philosophy of intellectuals separated from common people and from common sense. Is he right?
7. What, according to Gramsci, is the conflict within the consciousness of the average person? Relate this conflict to the contradictions discussed in earlier sessions.
8. Would Gramsci agree with Rosa Luxemburg's statement that the working class cannot create its own culture under capitalism? Do you agree with Luxemburg?
9. Gramsci writes [page 334], "Critical self-consciousness means, historically and politically, the creation of an elite of intellectuals." Was Gramsci an elitist?
10. How does the "average person" retain his/her views in the face of a superior intellect? How does she/he change views?
11. Why are new converts to Marxism often extremely unstable? What should we do about it?
12. Reread the second paragraph on page 341 of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*. One reader, commenting on the passage at the end of that paragraph, asked if Gramsci is "taking back with the left hand what he gave with the right." How do you interpret this passage? (Remember that Gramsci often uses "intellectual" in a double sense to refer to the revolutionary party.)
13. What is orthodox Marxism? Was Marx an orthodox Marxist? Is Lukacs correct in saying that even if every one of Marx's individual theses could be disproved, Marxism would still be valid?
14. In a speech Lenin said, "A journal of the Communist International recently appeared under the title of *Narody Vostoka*. It carries the following slogan issued by the Communist International for the peoples of the East: 'Workers of all countries and all oppressed peoples, unite!' 'When did the Executive Committee give orders for slogans to be modified?' one of the comrades asked. Indeed, I do not remember that it ever did. Of course, the modification is wrong from the standpoint of the *Communist Manifesto*, but then the *Communist Manifesto* was written under entirely different conditions. From the point of view of present-day politics, however, the change is correct." [31:453] Was Lenin an orthodox Marxist?
15. Explain the distinction between the "real existence" and the "inner core" of facts.

16. How would you understand the ideas of "imputed class consciousness" [Lukacs, page 51] and "identical subject-object" [Lukacs, page 206]? How are they related to each other?

Supplementary or Future Recommended Readings:

1. Georg Lukacs, *Lenin*
2. Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince*
3. Rosa Luxemburg, *Reform or Revolution*

Part VII - Louis Althusser's Philosophy

Discussion:

Any doctrine which can claim millions of adherents throughout the world will necessarily be subject to differing—even violently conflicting—interpretations. Christianity is an obvious example; Marxism is no exception. In addition to differing interpretations which stem from the wide variety of attempts to extrapolate contemporary adaptations from century-old insights, there is another aspect.

Hal Draper has truthfully written, "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 pronouncements 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." [*Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution, Part I. State and Bureaucracy*, pages 17-18]

It is this latter consideration with which this section is primarily concerned. We take for granted that everyone engaged in this study has a degree of familiarity with the spectrum of Marxist opinion in the U.S. today as manifested in various left parties and publications.

We believe that Althusser's theoretical work is fatally flawed by his importation of a purportedly scientific method—rationalism—as a substitute for the notion of the self-emancipation of the working class. The reason for examining his work here is because it is a serious attempt to confront Marx's writings, rather than a faked version of dialectical materialism, as in Cornforth, or a trivialized version, as in Stalin.

Questions:

1. What do you think of Althusser's statement that in order to identify the "real, mature" Marxist concepts which are to be found in Marx's writing one must activate "provisional Marxist theoretical concepts"?
2. Compare Althusser's "dialectical circle" with Hegel's explanation of the concept.
3. What is the difference between Althusser's and Gramsci's interpretations of the Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach? Who seems more correct?
4. Define Althusser's Generalities I, II, and III. Define "concrete" as used by Marx in the *Grundrisse* passage.
5. "How is it possible, theoretically, to sustain the validity of this basic Marxist proposition: '*the class struggle is the motor of history*' . . . when we know very well that it is not politics but the economy that is determinant in the last instance?" [Althusser, page 215] Althusser regards these statements as inconsistent. Do you? Explain your answer.
6. Criticize Althusser's proposition (2) stated on page 185. In doing so, compare Althusser's quote from Marx, "this concrete-real 'survives in its independence after as before, outside thought'," with the same statement as it appears in the *Grundrisse* selection.
7. Lukacs summarized his outlook by saying, "Rightly or wrongly, I had always treated Marx's works as having an essential unity." Althusser argues the opposite, yet both Marxists have similar followings among purely academic Marxists. Why?

Supplementary or Future Recommended Readings:

1. "The Politics of Louis Althusser: A Symposium," in *Urgent Tasks* number four, Summer 1978
2. David McLellan, *Marx Before Marxism*
3. David McLellan, ed., *The Grundrisse* by Karl Marx

Part VIII - The Philosophy of Mao Tse-Tung

Discussion:

In the sixties it was the writings of Mao Tse-Tung that steered the Black Panther Party and Students for a Democratic Society to Marxism. All over the United States these groups distributed *Quotations from Chairman Mao* by the thousands, while in their study circles nearly all of them read and discussed Mao's philosophical writings, whatever else the direction of their study. The greatest irony of the left today is that these writings, which brought so many young revolutionaries to Marxism, now stand as one of the main barriers to their deeper understanding. Martin Glaberman's essay is probably the most substantial Marxist critique of Mao's philosophy published to date.

Questions:

1. List everything that is inadequate or wrong in *On Practice*. Be ruthless, and as complete as possible.
2. How useful are Mao's concepts of "principal contradiction" and "principal aspect of a contradiction" to an understanding of Lenin's "Elements of Dialectics"?
3. Is Martin Glaberman correct to conclude that Mao's contributions have nothing to do with philosophy?
4. Where do correct ideas come from?

Supplementary or Future Recommended Readings:

1. Karl Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy*
2. Karl Korsch, *Three Essays on Marxism*
3. George Plekhanov, *The Materialist Conception of History*
4. George Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*
5. Victor Serge, *From Lenin to Stalin*

Part IX - Totality and Universality

Discussion:

Marxism is a proud theory, claiming for itself a general applicability. Even while continuing to dodge the question of its applicability in the realm of natural science, there is a duality to the broad value of the theory: on the one hand its result, though derived from an examination of particular examples of human struggle, if valid, can be applied (generally) to every instance; on the other hand, the method itself is applicable to investigations of every kind of human endeavor. These claims are important enough to serve reflexively as the ultimate test and vindication of the theory itself.

Questions:

1. What is art?
2. How does Plekhanov propose to prove the correctness of the materialist view of history? Does he succeed? Is there a better way?
3. What determines what people find to be esthetically pleasing? How do you explain the esthetic pleasure that people in the 20th century gain from ancient Greek art?
4. Was Plekhanov a racist?
5. What does Plekhanov mean when he says that the increased division of social labor among different classes leads to a disappearance of the direct dependence of art on technology and mode of production? Is he right?
6. Whose assessment of ancient Greece seems more correct to you, James' or Ivins'? Is the difference between the two more than a question of fact?
7. Why were Griffith, Chaplin, Eisenstein and Picasso able to produce works of undying vision while the finest modern writers produced only a picture of gloom, degeneration and decay?
8. Do you agree with Ken Lawrence's thesis that changes in mass consciousness can be anticipated by expressions in popular culture?

Supplementary or Future Recommended Readings:

1. C. L. R. James, *The Future in the Present*
 2. John Berger, *Success and Failure of Picasso*
 3. John Berger, *Art and Revolution*
 4. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*
 5. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*
 6. T. O. Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia*
 7. C. L. R. James, *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways*
 8. C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary*
 9. Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*
 10. George Plekhanov, *Art and Social Life*
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Sojourner Truth Organization. "Marxist Education" and "How to Think: A Guide to the Study of Dialectical Materialism", *Urgent Tasks*, no 7, winter 1980, pp. 18-19, 19-29.

PART I: BASE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE IN MOTION

Questions:

1. Marx states that social existence determines the consciousness of people. What is meant by social existence? How are the circumstances of social existence changed?
2. What is the conflict that leads to social revolution? How does it develop under capitalism?
3. What does the passage from the *Grundrisse* [705-6] say about how the forces of production are fettered by capitalism?
4. The Guardian and the Weather Underground state that the fundamental contradiction of modern capitalism is that between the proletariat ("working class as a whole") and the capitalists ("imperialist bourgeoisie"). Prairie Fire says it is "the contradiction between social production and private appropriation." Who is right? Why?
5. Is Engels' treatment of the relationship between the economic base and the political superstructure of society, as expressed in his letters to Bloch and Schmidt, adequate?

Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, "Preface" (1859)

I examine the system of bourgeois economy in the following order: *capital, landed property, wage-labour; the State, foreign trade, world market.*

The economic conditions of existence of the three great classes into which modern bourgeois society is divided are analysed under the first three headings; the interconnection of the other three headings is self-evident. The first part of the first book, dealing with Capital, comprises the following chapters: 1. The commodity, 2. Money or simple circulation; 3. Capital in general. The present part consists of the first two chapters. The entire material lies before me in the form of monographs, which were written not for publication but for self-clarification at widely separated periods; their remoulding into an integrated whole according to the plan I have indicated will depend upon circumstances.

A general introduction, which I had drafted, is omitted, since on further consideration it seems to me confusing to anticipate results which still have to be substantiated, and the reader who really wishes to follow me will have to decide to advance from the particular to the general. A few brief remarks regarding the course of my study of political economy are appropriate here.

Although I studied jurisprudence, I pursued it as a subject subordinated to philosophy and history. In the year 1842-43, as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, I first found myself in the embarrassing position of having to discuss what is known as material interests. The deliberations of the Rhenish Landtag on forest thefts and the division of landed property; the official polemic started by Herr von Schaper, then Oberpräsident of the Rhine Province, against the *Rheinische Zeitung* about the condition of the Moselle peasantry, and finally the debates on free trade and protective tariffs caused me in the first instance to turn my attention to economic questions. On the other hand, at that time when good intentions "to push forward" often took the place of factual knowledge, an echo of French socialism and communism, slightly tinged by philosophy, was noticeable in the *Rheinische Zeitung*. I objected to this dilettantism, but at the same time frankly admitted in a controversy with the *Allgemeine Augsburger Zeitung* that my previous studies did not allow me to express any opinion on the content of the French theories. When the publishers of the *Rheinische Zeitung* conceived the illusion that by a more compliant policy on the part of the paper it might be possible to secure the abrogation of the death sentence passed upon it, I eagerly grasped the opportunity to withdraw from the public stage to my study.

The first work which I undertook to dispel the doubts assailing me was a critical re-examination of the Hegelian philosophy of law; the introduction to this work being published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbucher* issued in Paris in 1844. My inquiry led me to the conclusion that neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary they originate in the material conditions of life, the totality of which Hegel, following the example of English and French thinkers of the eighteenth century, embraces within the term "civil

society”; that the anatomy of this civil society, however, has to be sought in political economy. The study of this, which I began in Paris, I continued in Brussels, where I moved owing to an expulsion order issued by M. Guizot. The general conclusion at which I arrived and which, once reached, became the guiding principle of my studies can be summarised as follows.

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or – this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms – with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.

In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society.

Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation. In broad outline, the Asiatic, ancient,^[A] feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society. The bourgeois mode of production is the last antagonistic form of the social process of production – antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism but of an antagonism that emanates from the individuals' social conditions of existence – but the productive forces developing within bourgeois society create also the material conditions for a solution of this antagonism. The prehistory of human society accordingly closes with this social formation.

Frederick Engels, with whom I maintained a constant exchange of ideas by correspondence since the publication of his brilliant essay on the critique of economic categories (printed in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, arrived by another road (compare his *Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*) at the same result as I, and when in the spring of 1845 he too came to live in Brussels, we decided to set forth together our conception as opposed to the ideological one of German philosophy, in fact to settle accounts with our former philosophical conscience. The intention was carried out in the form of a critique of post-Hegelian philosophy. The manuscript [The German Ideology], two large octavo volumes, had long ago reached the publishers in Westphalia when we were informed that owing to changed circumstances it could not be printed. We abandoned the manuscript to the gnawing criticism of the mice all the more willingly since we had achieved our main purpose – self-clarification. Of the scattered works in which at that time we presented one or another aspect of our views to the public, I shall mention only the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, jointly written by Engels and myself, and a *Discours sur le libre echange*, which I myself published. The salient points of our conception were first outlined in an academic, although polemical, form in my *Misere de la philosophie...*, this book which was aimed at Proudhon appeared in 1847. The publication of an essay on *Wage-Labour* [Wage-Labor and Capital] written in German in which I combined the lectures I had held on this subject at the German Workers' Association in Brussels, was interrupted by the February Revolution and my forcible removal from Belgium in consequence.

The publication of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1848 and 1849 and subsequent events cut short my economic studies, which I could only resume in London in 1850. The enormous amount of material relating to the history of political economy assembled in the British Museum, the fact that London is a convenient vantage point for the observation of bourgeois society, and finally the new stage of development which this society seemed to have entered with the discovery of gold in California and Australia, induced me to start again from the very beginning and to work carefully through the new material. These studies led partly of their own accord to apparently quite remote subjects on which I had to spend a certain amount of time. But it was in particular the imperative necessity of earning my living which reduced the time at my disposal. My collaboration, continued now for eight years, with the *New York Tribune*, the leading Anglo-American newspaper, necessitated an excessive fragmentation of my studies, for I wrote only exceptionally newspaper correspondence in the strict sense. Since a considerable part of my contributions consisted of articles dealing with important economic events in Britain and on the continent, I was compelled to become conversant with practical detail which, strictly speaking, lie outside the sphere of political economy.

This sketch of the course of my studies in the domain of political economy is intended merely to show that my views – no matter how they may be judged and how little they conform to the interested prejudices of the ruling classes – are the outcome of conscientious research carried on over many years. At the entrance to science, as at the entrance to hell, the demand must be made:

*Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto
Ogni viltà convien che qui sia morta.*

Here must all distrust be left;
All cowardice must here be dead

[From Dante, *Divina Commedia*.]

Karl Marx

London, January 1859

[A](#). As a second footnote to the Communist Manifesto, Engels wrote in 1888:

In 1847, the pre-history of society, the social organization existing previous to recorded history, [was] all but unknown. Since then, August von Haxthausen (1792-1866) discovered common ownership of land in Russia, Georg Ludwig von Maurer proved it to be the social foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and, by and by, village communities were found to be, or to have been, the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland. The inner organization of this primitive communistic society was laid bare, in its typical form, by Lewis Henry Morgan's (1818-1861) crowning discovery of the true nature of the gens and its relation to the tribe. With the dissolution of the primeval communities, society begins to be differentiated into separate and finally antagonistic classes. I have attempted to retrace this dissolution in [The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State](#), second edition, Stuttgart, 1886.

Thus, as the science of understanding pre-history progressed (pre-history being that time before written records of human civilization exist), Marx & Engels changed their understanding and descriptions accordingly. In the above text, Marx mentions “Asiatic” modes of production. At the time, they had thought Asian civilization was the first we could speak of humanity (an understanding based on Hegel, see: [The Oriental Realm](#)). After writing *The Grundrisse*, they dropped the idea of a distinct Asiatic mode of production, and kept four basic forms: tribal, ancient, feudal, and capitalist.

Karl Marx, “Theses On Feuerbach” (1845)

1

The main defect of all hitherto-existing materialism — that of Feuerbach included — is that the Object [*der Gegenstand*], actuality, sensuousness, are conceived only in the form of the object [*Objekts*], or of contemplation [*Anschauung*], but not as human sensuous activity, practice [*Praxis*], not subjectively. Hence it happened that the active side, in opposition to materialism, was developed by idealism — but only abstractly, since, of course, idealism does not know real, sensuous activity as such. Feuerbach wants sensuous objects [*Objekte*], differentiated from thought-objects, but he does not conceive human activity itself as objective [*gegenständliche*] activity. In *The Essence of Christianity* [*Das Wesen des Christenthums*], he therefore regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuinely human attitude, while practice is conceived and defined only in its dirty-Jewish form of appearance [*Erscheinungsform*]^[1]. Hence he does not grasp the significance of ‘revolutionary’, of ‘practical-critical’, activity.

2

The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a **practical** question. Man must prove the truth, *i.e.*, the reality and power, the this-sidedness [*Diesseitigkeit*] of his thinking, in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question.

3

The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of changed circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances and that the educator must himself be educated. Hence this doctrine is bound to divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society. The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-change [*Selbstveränderung*] can be conceived and rationally understood only as **revolutionary practice**.

4

Feuerbach starts off from the fact of religious self-estrangement [*Selbstentfremdung*], of the duplication of the world into a religious, imaginary world, and a secular [*weltliche*] one. His work consists in resolving the religious world into its secular basis. He overlooks the fact that after completing this work, the chief thing still remains to be done. For the fact that the secular basis lifts off from itself and establishes itself in the clouds as an independent realm can only be explained by the inner strife and intrinsic contradictoriness of this secular basis. The latter must itself be understood in its contradiction and then, by the removal of the contradiction, revolutionised. Thus, for instance, once the earthly family is discovered to be the secret of the holy family, the former must itself be annihilated [*vernichtet*] theoretically and practically.

5

Feuerbach, not satisfied with **abstract thinking**, wants **sensuous contemplation** [*Anschauung*]; but he does not conceive sensuousness as **practical**, human-sensuous activity.

6

Feuerbach resolves the essence of religion into the essence of man [*menschliche Wesen* = ‘human nature’]. But the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In reality, it is the ensemble of the social relations. Feuerbach, who does not enter upon a criticism of this real essence is hence obliged:

1. To abstract from the historical process and to define the religious sentiment regarded by itself, and to presuppose an abstract — isolated - human individual.
2. The essence therefore can by him only be regarded as ‘species’, as an inner ‘dumb’ generality which unites many individuals only in a **natural** way.

7

Feuerbach consequently does not see that the ‘religious sentiment’ is itself a **social product**, and that the abstract individual that he analyses belongs in reality to a particular social form.

8

All social life is essentially **practical**. All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice.

9

The highest point reached by contemplative [*anschauende*] materialism, that is, materialism which does not comprehend sensuousness as practical activity, is the contemplation of single individuals and of civil society [*bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*].

10

The standpoint of the old materialism is civil society; the standpoint of the new is human society or social humanity.

11

Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.

1. “Dirty-Jewish” — according to Marshall Berman, this is an allusion to the Jewish God of the Old Testament, who had to ‘get his hands dirty’ making the world, tied up with a symbolic contrast between the Christian God of the Word, and the God of the Deed, symbolising practical life. See [The Significance of the Creation in Judaism](#), *Essence of Christianity* 1841

Engels to C. Schmidt in Berlin (Abstract), London, August 5, 1890

[....]

I saw a review of Paul Barth's book [*Die Geschichtsphilosophie Hegels und der Hegelianer bis auf Marx und Hartmann*] by that bird of ill omen, Moritz Wirth, in the Vienna *Deutsche Worte*, and *this* book itself, as well. I will have a look at it, but I must say that if "little Moritz" is right when he quotes Barth as stating that the sole example of the dependence of philosophy, etc., on the material conditions of existence which he can find in all Marx's works is that Descartes declares animals to be machines, then I am sorry for the man who can write such a thing. And if this man has not yet discovered that while the material mode of existence is the *primum agens* [primary agent, prime cause] this does not preclude the ideological spheres from reacting upon it in their turn, though with a secondary effect, he cannot possibly have understood the subject he is writing about. However, as I said, all this is secondhand and little Moritz is a dangerous friend. The materialist conception of history has a lot of them nowadays, to whom it serves as an excuse for *not* studying history. Just as Marx used to say, commenting on the French "Marxists" of the late [18]70s: "All I know is that I am not a Marxist."

There has also been a discussion in the *Volks-Tribune* about the distribution of products in future society, whether this will take place according to the amount of work done or otherwise. The question has been approached very "materialistically" in opposition to certain idealistic phraseology about justice. But strangely enough it has not struck anyone that, after all, the method of distribution essentially depends on *how much* there is to distribute, and that this must surely change with the progress of production and social organization, so that the method of distribution may also change. But everyone who took part in the discussion, "socialist society" appeared not as something undergoing continuous change and progress but as a stable affair fixed once for all, which must, therefore, have a method of distribution fixed once for all. All one can reasonably do, however, is 1) to try and discover the method of distribution to be used *at the beginning*, and 2) to try and find the *general tendency* of the further development. But about this I do not find a single word in the whole debate.

In general, the word "materialistic" serves many of the younger writers in Germany as a mere phrase with which anything and everything is labeled without further study, that is, they stick on this label and then consider the question disposed of. But our conception of history is above all a guide to study, not a lever for construction after the manner of the Hegelian. All history must be studied afresh, the conditions of existence of the different formations of society must be examined individually before the attempt is made to deduce them from the political, civil law, aesthetic, philosophic, religious, etc., views corresponding to them. Up to now but little has been done here because only a few people have got down to it seriously. In this field we can utilize heaps of help, it is immensely big, anyone who will work seriously can achieve much and distinguish himself. But instead of this too many of the younger Germans simply make use of the phrase historical materialism (and *everything* can be turned into a phrase) only in order to get their own relatively scanty historical knowledge — for economic history is still as yet in its swaddling clothes! — constructed into a neat system as quickly as possible, and they then deem themselves something very tremendous. And after that a Barth can come along and attack the thing itself, which in his circle has indeed been degraded to a mere phrase.

However, all this will right itself. We're strong enough in Germany now to stand a lot. One of the greatest services which the Anti-Socialist Law did us was to free us from the obtuseness of the German intellectual who had got tinged with socialism. We are now strong enough to digest the German intellectual too, who is giving himself great airs again. You, who have really done something, must have noticed yourself how few of the young literary men who fasten themselves on to the party give themselves in the trouble to study economics, the history of economics, the history of trade, of industry, of agriculture, of the formations of society. How many know anything of Maurer except his name! The self-sufficiency of the journalist must serve for everything here and the result looks like it. It often seems as if these gentlemen think anything is good enough for the workers. If these gentlemen only knew that Marx thought his best things were still not good enough for the workers, how he regarded it as a crime to offer the workers anything but the very best!

[....]

Engels to J. Bloch in Königsberg (Abstract), London, September 21, 1890

[....]

According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately* determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Other than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure — political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas — also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form*. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events whose inner interconnection is so remote or so impossible of proof that we can regard it as non-existent, as negligible), the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period of history would be easier than the solution of a simple equation of the first degree.

We make our history ourselves, but, in the first place, under very definite assumptions and conditions. Among these the economic ones are ultimately decisive. But the political ones, etc., and indeed even the traditions which haunt human minds also play a part, although not the decisive one. The Prussian state also arose and developed from historical, ultimately economic, causes. But it could scarcely be maintained without pedantry that among the many small states of North Germany, Brandenburg was specifically determined by economic necessity to become the great power embodying the economic, linguistic and, after the Reformation, also the religious difference between North and South, and not by other elements as well (above all by its entanglement with Poland, owing to the possession of Prussia, and hence with international political relations — which were indeed also decisive in the formation of the Austrian dynastic power). Without making oneself ridiculous it would be a difficult thing to explain in terms of economics the existence of every small state in Germany, past and present, or the origin of the High German consonant permutations, which widened the geographic partition wall formed by the mountains from the Sudetic range to the Taunus to form a regular fissure across all Germany.

In the second place, however, history is made in such a way that the final result always arises from conflicts between many individual wills, of which each in turn has been made what it is by a host of particular conditions of life. Thus there are innumerable intersecting force, an infinite series of parallelograms of forces which give rise to one resultant — the historical event. This may again itself be viewed as the product of a power which works as a whole *unconsciously* and without volition. For what each individual wills is obstructed by everyone else, and what emerges is something that no one willed. Thus history has proceeded hitherto in the manner of a natural process and is essentially subject to the same laws of motion. But from the fact that the wills of individuals — each of whom desires what he is impelled to by his physical constitution and external, in the last resort economic, circumstances (either his own personal circumstances or those of society in general) — do not attain what they want, but are merged into an aggregate mean, a common resultant, it must not be concluded that they are equal to zero. On the contrary, each contributes to the resultant and is to this extent included in it.

I would furthermore ask you to study this theory from its original sources and not at second-hand; it is really much easier. Marx hardly wrote anything in which it did not play a part. But especially [The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte](#) is a most excellent example of its application. There are also many allusion to it in [Capital](#). Then may I also direct you to my writings: [Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science](#) and [Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy](#), in which I have given the most detailed account of historical material which, as far as I know, exists. [[The German Ideology](#) was not published in Marx or Engels lifetime]

Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasise the main principle *vis-à-vis* our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to give their due to the other elements involved in the interaction. But when it came to presenting a section of history, that is, to making a practical

application, it was a different matter and there no error was permissible. Unfortunately, however, it happens only too often that people think they have fully understood a new theory and can apply it without more ado from the moment they have assimilated its main principles, and even those not always correctly. And I cannot exempt many of the more recent "Marxists" from this reproach, for the most amazing rubbish has been produced in this quarter, too....

[....]

Engels to [Conrad Schmidt](#) in Berlin (Abstract), London, October 27, 1890

I think you would do very well to take the post in Zürich. [Editor of the *Zürich Post*.] You could always learn a good deal about economics there, especially if you bear in mind that Zürich is still only a third-rate money and speculation market, so that the impressions which make themselves felt there are weakened or deliberately distorted by twofold or threefold reflection. But you will get a practical knowledge of the mechanism and be obliged to follow the stock exchange reports from London, New York, Paris, Berlin and Vienna at first hand, and in this way the world market, in its reflex as money and stock market, will reveal itself to you. Economic, political and other reflections are just like those in the human eye, they pass through a condensing lens and therefore appear upside down, standing on their heads. Only the nervous system which would put them on their feet again for representation is lacking. The money market man only sees the movement of industry and of the world market in the inverted reflection of the money and stock market and so effect becomes cause to him. I noticed that in the 'forties already in Manchester: the London Stock Exchange reports were utterly useless for the course of industry and its periodical maxima and minima because these gentry tried to explain everything from crises on the money market, which were generally only symptoms. At that time the object was to explain away the origin of industrial crises as temporary overproduction, so that the thing had in addition its tendentious side, provocative of distortion. This point has now gone (for us, at any rate, for good and all), added to which it is indeed a fact that the money market can also have its own crises, in which direct disturbances of industry only play a subordinate part or no part at all--here there is still much, especially in the history of the last twenty years, to be examined and established.

Where there is division of labour on a social scale there is also mutual independence among the different sections of work. In the last instance production is the decisive factor. But when the trade in products becomes independent of production itself, it follows a movement of its own, which, while it is governed as a whole by production, still in particular cases and within this general dependence follows particular laws contained in the nature of this new factor; this movement has phases of its own and in its turn reacts on the movement of production. The discovery of America was due to the thirst for gold which had previously driven the Portuguese to Africa (compare Soetbeer's *Production of Precious Metals*), because the enormously extended European industry of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the trade corresponding to it demanded more means of exchange than Germany, the great silver country from 1450 to 1550, could provide. The conquest of India by the Portuguese, Dutch and English between 1500 and 1800 had *imports from* India as its object--nobody dreamt of exporting anything there. And yet what a colossal reaction these discoveries and conquests, solely conditioned by the interests of trade, had upon industry: they first created the need for *exports to* these countries and developed large-scale industry.

So it is too with the money market. As soon as trading in money becomes separate from trade in commodities it has (under certain conditions imposed by production and commodity trade and within these limits) a development of its own, special laws and separate phases determined by its own nature. If, in this further development, trade in money extends in addition to trade in securities and these securities are not only government securities but also industrial and transport stocks and shares, so that money trade conquers the direct control over a portion of the production by which, taken as a whole, it is itself controlled, then the reaction of money trading on production becomes still stronger and more complicated. The money traders have become the owners of railways, mines, iron works, etc. These means of production take on a double aspect if their working has to be directed sometimes in the immediate interests of production but sometimes also according to the requirements of the shareholders, in so far as they are money traders. The most striking example of this is the

American railways, whose working is entirely dependent on the stock exchange operations of a Jay Gould or a Vanderbilt, etc., these having nothing whatever to do with the particular railway concerned and its interests as a means of communication. And even here in England we have seen struggles lasting for tens of years between different railway companies over the boundaries of their respective territories - struggles in which an enormous amount of money was thrown away, not in the interests of production and communications but simply because of a rivalry which usually only had the object of facilitating the stock exchange dealings of the shareholding money traders.

With these few indications of my conception of the relation of production to commodity trade and of both to money trading, I have already also answered, in essence, your questions about "historical materialism" generally. The thing is easiest to grasp from the point of view of the division of labour. Society gives rise to certain common functions which it cannot dispense with. The persons selected for these functions form a new branch of the division of labour *within society*. This gives them particular interests, distinct too from the interests of those who gave them their office ; they make themselves independent of the latter and--the state is in being. And now the development is the same as it was with commodity trade and later with money trade; the new independent power, while having in the main to follow the movement of production, also, owing to its inward independence (the relative independence originally transferred to it and gradually further developed) reacts in its turn upon the conditions and course of production. It is the interaction of two unequal forces: on 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 also 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 established and endowed with relative independence itself, from the movement of the state power on the one hand and of the opposition simultaneously engendered on the other. Just as the movement of the industrial market is, in the main and with the reservations already indicated, reflected in the money market and, of course, in inverted form, so the struggle between the classes already existing and already in conflict with one another is reflected in the struggle between government and opposition, but also in inverted form, no longer directly but indirectly, not as a class struggle but as a fight for political principles, and so distorted that it has taken us thousands of years to get behind it again.

The reaction of the state power upon economic development can be one of three kinds: it can run in the same direction, and then development is more rapid; it can oppose the line of development, in which case nowadays state power in every great nation will go to pieces in the long run; or it can cut off the economic development from certain paths, and impose on it certain others. This case ultimately reduces itself to one of the two previous ones. But it is obvious that in cases two and three the political power can do great damage to the economic development and result in the squandering of great masses of energy and material.

Then there is also the case of the conquest and brutal destruction of economic resources, by which, in certain circumstances, a whole local or national economic development could formerly be ruined. Nowadays such a case usually has the opposite effect, at least among great nations: in the long run the defeated power often gains more economically, politically and morally than the victor.

It is similar with law. As soon as the new division of labour which creates professional lawyers becomes necessary, another new and independent sphere is opened up which, for all its general dependence on production and trade, still has its own capacity for reacting upon these spheres as well. In a modern state, law must not only correspond to the general economic position and be its expression, but must also be an expression which is *consistent in itself*, and which does not, owing to inner contradictions, look glaringly inconsistent. And in order to achieve this, the faithful reflection of economic conditions is more and more infringed upon. All the more so the more rarely it happens that a code of law is the blunt, unmitigated, unadulterated expression of the domination of a class--this in itself would already offend the "conception of justice." Even in the Code Napoleon the pure logical conception of justice held by the revolutionary bourgeoisie of 1792-96 is already adulterated in many ways, and in so far as it is embodied there has daily to undergo all sorts of attenuation owing to the rising power of the proletariat. Which does not prevent the Code Napoleon from being the statute book which serves as a basis for every new code of law in every part of the world. Thus to a great extent the course of the "development of law"

only consists: first in the attempt to do away with the contradictions arising from the direct translation of economic relations into legal principles, and to establish a harmonious system of law, and then in the repeated breaches made in this system by the influence and pressure of further economic development, which involves it in further contradictions (I am only speaking here of civil law for the moment).

The reflection of economic relations as legal principles is necessarily also a topsy turvy one: it happens without the person who is acting being conscious of it; the jurist imagines he is operating with *a priori* principles, whereas they are really only economic reflexes; so everything is upside down. And it seems to me obvious that this inversion, which, so long as it remains unrecognised, forms what we call *ideological conception*, reacts in its turn upon the economic basis and may, within certain limits, modify it. The basis of the law of inheritance-- assuming that the stages reached in the development of the family are equal--is an economic one. But it would be difficult to prove, for instance, that the absolute liberty of the testator in England and the severe restrictions imposed upon him in France are only due in every detail to economic causes. Both react back, however, on the economic sphere to a very considerable extent, because they influence the division of property.

As to the realms of ideology which soar still higher in the air, religion, philosophy, etc., these have a prehistoric stock, found already in existence and taken over in the historic period, of what we should to-day call bunk. These various false conceptions of nature, of man's own being, of spirits, magic forces, etc., have for the most part only a negative economic basis; but the low economic development of the prehistoric period is supplemented and also partially conditioned and even caused by the false conceptions of nature. And even though economic necessity was the main driving force of the progressive knowledge of nature and becomes ever more so, it would surely be pedantic to try and find economic causes for all this primitive nonsense. The history of science is the history of the gradual clearing away of this nonsense or of its replacement by fresh but already less absurd nonsense. The people who deal with this belong in their turn to special spheres in the division of labour and appear to themselves to be working in an independent field. And in so far as they form an independent group within the social division of labour, in so far do their productions, including their errors, react back as an influence upon the whole development of society, even on its economic development. But all the same they themselves remain under the dominating influence of economic development. In philosophy, for instance, this can be most readily proved in the bourgeois period. Hobbes was the first modern materialist (in the eighteenth century sense) but he was an absolutist in a period when absolute monarchy was at its height throughout the whole of Europe and when the fight of absolute monarchy versus the people was beginning in England. Locke, both in religion and politics, was the child of the class compromise of 1688. The English deists and their more consistent successors, the French materialists, were the true philosophers of the bourgeoisie, the French even of the bourgeois revolution. The German petty bourgeois runs through German philosophy from [Kant](#) to [Hegel](#), sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. But the philosophy of every epoch, since it is a definite sphere in the division of labour, has as its presupposition certain definite intellectual material handed down to it by its predecessors, from which it takes its start. And that is why economically backward countries can still play first fiddle in philosophy: France in the eighteenth century compared with England, on whose philosophy the French based themselves, and later Germany in comparison with both. But the philosophy both of France and Germany and the general blossoming of literature at that time were also the result of a rising economic development. I consider the ultimate supremacy of economic development established in these spheres too, but it comes to pass within conditions imposed by the particular sphere itself: in philosophy, for instance, through the operation of economic influences (which again generally only act under political, etc., disguises) upon the existing philosophic material handed down by predecessors. Here economy creates nothing absolutely new (*a novo*), but it determines the way in which the existing material of thought is altered and further developed, and that too for the most part indirectly, for it is the political, legal and moral reflexes which exercise the greatest direct influence upon philosophy.

About religion I have said the most necessary things in the last section on [Feuerbach](#).

If therefore Barth supposes that we deny any and every reaction of the political, etc., reflexes of the economic movement upon the movement itself, he is simply tilting at windmills. He has only got to look at Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*, which deals almost exclusively with the *particular* part played by political struggles and

events; of course, within their general dependence upon economic conditions. Or *Capital*, the section on the working day, for instance, where legislation, which is surely a political act, has such a trenchant effect. Or the section on the history of the bourgeoisie. (Chapter XXIV.) Or why do we fight for the political dictatorship of the proletariat if political power is economically impotent? Force (that is state power) is also an economic power.

But I have no time to criticise the book now. I must first get Vol. III out and besides I think too that [Bernstein](#), for instance, could deal with it quite effectively.

What these gentlemen all lack is dialectic. They never see anything but here cause and there effect. That this is a hollow abstraction, that such metaphysical polar opposites only exist in the real world during crises, while the whole vast process proceeds in the form of interaction (though of very unequal forces, the economic movement being by far the strongest, most elemental and most decisive) and that here everything is relative and nothing is absolute--this they never begin to see. Hegel has never existed for them.

Production process as content of capital. Productive and unproductive labour (productive labour—that which produces capital).—The worker relates to his labour as exchange value, the capitalist as use value etc.—He divests himself [entäussert sich] of labour as the wealth-producing power. (Capital appropriates it as such.) Transformation of labour into capital etc. Sismondi, Cherbuliez, Say, Ricardo, Proudhon etc.

[Labour Process and Process of Valorisation]

Nothing can emerge at the end of the process which did not appear as a presupposition and precondition at the beginning. But, on the other hand, everything also has to come out. Thus, if at the end of the process of production, which was begun with the presuppositions of capital, capital appears to have vanished as a formal relation, then this can have taken place only because the invisible threads which draw it through the process have been overlooked. Let us therefore consider this side.

The first result, then, is this:

(a) Capital becomes the process of production through the incorporation of labour into capital; initially, however, it becomes the *material* process of production; the process of production in general, so that the process of the production of capital is not distinct from the material process of production as such. Its formal character is completely extinguished. Because capital has exchanged a part of its objective being for labour, its objective being is itself internally divided into object and labour; the connection between them forms the production process, or, more precisely, the *labour process*. With that, the *labour process posited prior to value, as point of departure*—which, owing to its abstractness, its pure materiality, is common to all forms of production—here reappears *again within capital*, as a process which proceeds within its substance and forms its content. (It will be seen that even within the production process itself this *extinguishing of the formal character* is merely a semblance.) [9]

In so far as capital is value, but appears as a process initially in the form of the simple production process, the production process posited in no particular *economic* form, but rather, the production process pure and simple, to that extent—depending on which particular aspect of the simple production process (which, as such, as we saw, by no means presupposes capital, but is common to all modes of production) is fixed on—it can be said that capital becomes product, or that it is instrument of labour or raw material for labour. Further, if it is conceived in one of the aspects which confronts labour as material or as mere means, then it is correct to say that capital is not productive, [*] because it is then regarded merely as the object, the material which confronts labour; as merely passive. The correct thing, however, is that it appears not as one of these aspects, nor as a difference within one of these aspects, nor as mere result (product), but rather as the simple production process itself; that this latter now appears as the self-propelling *content* of capital.

(b) Now to look at the side of the form-character, such as it preserves and modifies itself in the production process.

As *use value*, labour exists only *for capital*, and is itself the use value of capital, i.e. the mediating activity by means of which it *realizes* [verwerter] itself. Capital, as that which reproduces and increases its value, is autonomous exchange value (money), as a process, as the *process of realization*. Therefore, labour does not exist as a use value for the worker; *for* him it is therefore not *power productive of wealth*, [and] not a means or the activity of gaining wealth. He brings it as a use value into the exchange with capital, which then confronts him not as capital but rather as *money*. In relation to the worker, it is capital as capital only in the consumption of labour, which initially falls outside this exchange and is independent of it. A *use value* for capital, labour is a *mere exchange value* for the worker; available *exchange value*. It is posited as such in the act of exchange with capital, through its sale for money. The use value of a thing does not concern its seller as such, but only its buyer. The property of saltpetre, that it can be used to make gunpowder, does not determine the price of saltpetre; rather, this price is determined by the cost of production of saltpetre, by the amount of labour objectified in it. The value of use values which enter circulation as prices is not the product of circulation, although it realizes itself only in circulation; rather, it is *presupposed* to it, and is realized only through exchange for money. Similarly, the labour

which the worker sells as a *use value* to capital is, for the worker, his *exchange value*, which he wants to realize, but which is already *determined* prior to this act of exchange and presupposed to it as a condition, and is determined like the value of every other commodity by supply and demand; or, in general, which is our only concern here, by the cost of production, the amount of objectified labour, by means of which the labouring capacity of the worker has been produced and which he therefore obtains for it, as its equivalent. The exchange value of labour, the realization of which takes place in the process of exchange with the capitalist, is therefore presupposed, predetermined, and only undergoes the formal modification which every only ideally posited price takes on when it is realized. It is not determined by the use value of labour. It has a use value for the worker himself only in so far as it is *exchange value*, not in so far as it produces exchange values. It has exchange value for capital only in so far as it is use value. It is a use value, as distinct from exchange value, not for the worker himself, but only for capital. The worker therefore sells labour as a simple, predetermined exchange value, determined by a previous process—he sells labour itself as *objectified labour*; i.e. he sells labour only in so far as it already objectifies a definite amount of labour, hence in so far as its equivalent is already measured, given; capital buys it as living labour, as the general productive force of wealth; activity which increases wealth. It is clear, therefore, that the worker cannot become rich in this exchange, since, in exchange for his labour capacity as a fixed, available magnitude, he surrenders its *creative power*, like Esau his birthright for a mess of pottage. Rather, he necessarily impoverishes himself, as we shall see further on, because the creative power of his labour establishes itself as the power of capital, as an *alien power* confronting him. He *divests* himself [*entäußert sich*] of labour as the force productive of wealth; capital appropriates it, as such. The separation between labour and property in the product of labour, between labour and wealth, is thus posited in this act of exchange itself. What appears paradoxical as *result* is already contained in the presupposition. The economists have expressed this more or less empirically. Thus the productivity of his labour, his labour in general, in so far as it is not a *capacity* but a motion, *real labour*, *comes* to confront the worker as an *alien power*; capital, inversely, realizes itself through the *appropriation of alien labour*. (At least the possibility of realization is thereby posited; as result of the exchange between labour and capital. The relation is realized only in the act of production itself, where capital really consumes the alien labour.) Just as labour, as a *presupposed* exchange value, is exchanged for an equivalent in money, so the latter is again exchanged for an equivalent in *commodities*, which are consumed. In this process of exchange, labour is not productive; it becomes so only for capital; it can take out of circulation only what it has thrown into it, a *predetermined* amount of commodities, which is as little its own product as it is its own value, Sismondi says that the workers exchange their labour for grain, which they consume, while their labour 'has become *capital* for its master'. (Sismondi, VI.) [13] "Giving their labour in exchange, the workers *transform* it into capital.' (id., VIII.) [14] By selling his labour to the capitalist, the worker obtains a right only to the *price of labour*, not to the *product of his labour*, nor to the value which *his labour has added to it*. (Cherbuliez XXVIII.) 'Sale of labour = *renunciation of all fruits of labour*.' (loc.cit.) [15] Thus all the progress of civilization, or in other words every increase in the *powers of social production*[*gesellschaftliche Produktivkräfte*], if you like, in the *productive powers of labour itself*— such as results from science, inventions, division and combination of labour, improved means of communication, creation of the world market, machinery etc. - enriches not the worker but rather capital; hence it only magnifies again the power dominating over labour; increases only the productive power of capital. Since capital is the antithesis of the worker, this merely increases the *objective power* standing over labour. The *transformation of labour* (as living, purposive activity) into *capital* is, *in itself*, the result of the exchange between capital and labour, in so far as it gives the capitalist the title of ownership to the product of labour (and command over the same). *This transformation is posited only in the production process itself*. Thus, the question whether capital is productive or not is absurd. Labour itself is *productive only* if absorbed into capital, where capital forms the basis of production, and where the capitalist is therefore in command of production. The productivity of labour becomes the productive force of capital just as the general exchange value of commodities fixes itself in money. Labour, such as it exists *for itself* in the worker in opposition to capital, that is, labour in its *immediate being*, separated from capital, is *not productive*. Nor does it ever become *productive* as an activity of the worker so long as it merely enters the simple, only formally transforming process of circulation. Therefore, those who demonstrate that the productive force ascribed to capital is a *displacement*, a *transposition*

of the productive force of labour, [16] forget precisely that capital itself is essentially this *displacement, this transposition*, and that wage labour as such presupposes capital, so that, from its standpoint as well, capital is this *transubstantiation*; the necessary process of positing its own powers as *alien* to the worker. Therefore, the demand that wage labour be continued but capital suspended is self-contradictory, self-dissolving. Others say, even economists, e.g. Ricardo, Sismondi etc., that *only labour* is productive, not capital. [17] But then they do not conceive capital [18] in its *specific character as form*, as a *relation of production* reflected into itself, but think only about its material substance, raw material etc. But these material elements do not make capital into capital. Then, however, they recall that capital is also in another respect a *value*, that is, something *immaterial*, something indifferent to its material consistency. Thus, Say: '*Capital is always an immaterial essence, because it is not material which makes capital, but the value of this material, a value which has nothing corporeal about it.*' (Say, 21.) [19] Or: Sismondi: '*Capital is a commercial idea.*' (Sismondi, LX.) [20] But then they recall that capital is a different economic quality as well, other than *value*, since otherwise it would not be possible to speak of capital *as distinct from value* at all, and, if all capitals were value, all values as such would still not be capital. Then they take refuge again in its material form within the production process, e.g. when Ricardo explains that capital is 'accumulated labour employed in the production of new labour', [21] i.e. merely as *instrument of labour* or *material for labour*. In this sense Say even speaks of the '*productive service of capital*', [22] on which remuneration is supposed to be based, as if the instrument of labour as such were entitled to thanks from the worker, and as if it were not precisely because of him that it is posited as instrument of labour, as *productive*. This presupposes the autonomy of the instrument of labour, i.e. of its *social* character, i.e. its character as capital, in order to derive the privileges of capital from it. Proudhon's phrase '*le capital vaut, le travail produit*' [23] means absolutely nothing more than: capital is value, and, since nothing further is here said about capital other than that it is value, that value is value (the subject of the judgement is here only another name for the predicate) [24]; and labour produces, is productive labour, i.e. labour is labour, since it is precisely nothing apart from '*produire*'. [25] It must be obvious that these identical judgements do not contain any particularly deep wisdom, and that above all, they cannot express a relation in which value and labour enter into connection, in which they connect and divide in relation to one another, and where they do not lie side by side in mutual indifference. Already the fact that it is *labour* which confronts capital as subject, i.e. the worker only in his character as *labour*, and not *he himself*, should open the eyes. This alone, disregarding capital, already contains a relation, a relation of the worker to his own activity, which is by no means the '*natural*' one, but which itself already contains a specific *economic* character.

To the extent that we are considering it here, as a relation distinct from that of value and money, capital is *capital in general*, i.e. the incarnation of the qualities which distinguish value as capital from value as pure value or as money. Value, money, circulation etc., prices etc. are presupposed, as is labour etc. But we are still concerned neither with a *particular* form of capital, nor with an *individual* capital as distinct from other individual capitals etc. We are present at the process of its becoming. This dialectical process of its becoming is only the ideal expression of the real movement through which capital comes into being. The later relations are to be regarded as developments coming out of this germ. But it is necessary to establish the specific form in which it is posited at a *certain* point. Otherwise confusion arises.

Notes:

9. See below, discussion of the "Realization Process".

13. Sismondi, *Nouveaux Principes*, Vol. I, p. 90.

14. *ibid.*, p. 105.

15. Cherbuliez, *Richesse ou pauvreté* pp 58, 64.

16. See above, n. 7.

17. In Ricardo: *On the Principles of Political Economy*, pp. 320-37. In Sismondi: *Études*, Vol. I, p. 22.

18. The MELI edition gives *lassen* (let, leave) rather than *fassen* (grasp, conceive, formulate); this is almost certainly either a misprint (the first of two on that page) or a misreading.

19. Say, *Traité d'économie politique*, Vol. II, p. 429 n.

20. Sismondi, *Études*, Vol. II, p. 273.

21. This is Adam Smith's phrase, not Ricardo's (Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Vol. II, p. 355).
22. Say, *Traité d'économie politique*, Vol II, p. 425.
23. 'Capital has value, labour produces.' Proudhon, *Système des contradictions économiques*, Vol. I, p. 61.
24. Cf. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 633: 'In the judgement the subject is determined by the predicate... the predicate is determined in the subject.'
25. 'The act of producing'.

Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, NOTEBOOK IV, mid-December 1857- 22 January 1858, continued, 450-454.

Surplus labour or surplus value becomes surplus capital. All determinants of capitalist production now appear as results of (wage) labour itself. The realization process [Verwirklichungsprozess] of labour at the same time its de-realization process [Entwirklichungsprozess]

The new value, then, [is] itself posited as capital again, as objectified labour entering into the process of exchange with living labour, and hence dividing itself into a constant part -- the objective conditions of labour, material and instrument -- and the conditions for the subjective condition of labour, the existence of living labour capacity, the necessaries, subsistence goods for the worker. With this second entrance by capital in this form, some points appear clarified which were altogether unclear in its first occurrence -- as money in transition from its role as value to its role as capital. Now they are solved through the process of realization and production itself. In the first encounter, the *presuppositions* themselves appeared to come in from the outside, out of circulation; as external presuppositions for the arising of capital; hence not emergent from its inner essence, and not explained by it. These *external* presuppositions will now appear as moments of the motion of capital itself, so that it has itself -- regardless how they may arise historically -- pre-posed them as its own moments.

Within the production process itself, surplus value, the surplus value procured through compulsion by capital, appeared as *surplus labour*, itself in the form of living labour, which, however, since it cannot create something out of nothing, finds its objective conditions laid out before it. Now this *surplus labour* appears in objectified form as *surplus product*, and, in order to realize itself as capital, this surplus product divides into a double form: as *objective condition of labour* -- material and instrument; as subjective -- consumption goods for the living labour now to be put to work. *The* general form as value -- objectified labour -- and objectified labour coming out of circulation -- is of course the general, self-evident presupposition. Further: the surplus product in its totality -- which objectifies surplus labour in its totality -- now appears as *surplus capital* (in contrast to the original capital, before it had undertaken this cycle), i.e. as independent exchange value, in which living labour capacity encounters its *specific use value*. All moments which confronted living labour capacity, and employed it as *alien, external* powers, and which consumed it under *certain conditions independent of itself*, are now posited as *its own product and result*.

Firstly: surplus value or the surplus product are nothing but a specific sum of objectified living labour -- the sum of surplus labour. This new *value* which confronts living labour as independent, as engaged in exchange with it, as capital, is the *product of labour*. It is itself nothing other than the *excess of labour as such above necessary labour* -- in objective form and hence as *value*.

Secondly: the particular forms which this value must adopt in order to realize itself anew, i.e. to posit itself as capital -- on one side as raw material and instrument, on the other as subsistence goods for labour during the act of production -- are likewise, therefore, only *particular* forms of surplus labour itself. Raw material and instrument are produced by it in such relations -- or, it is itself objectively posited in production as raw material and instrument in such a proportion -- that a given sum of necessary labour -- i.e. living labour which reproduces (the value of) the consumption goods -- can objectify itself in it, and objectify itself in it continuously, i.e. can always begin anew the diremption into the objective and subjective conditions of its self-preservation and self-reproduction. In addition to this, living labour, in the process of reproducing its objective conditions, has at the same time posited raw material and instrument in such proportions that it can realize itself in them as *surplus labour, as labour beyond the necessary*, and can hence make them into material for the creation of *new* values. The objective conditions of *surplus labour* -- which are restricted to the proportion of raw material and instrument beyond the requirements of necessary labour, whereas the objective conditions of necessary labour divide within their objectivity into objective and subjective, into objective moments of labour as well as subjective

(consumption goods for living labour) -- therefore now appear, are therefore now posited, as the product, result, objective form, external existence of surplus labour itself. Originally, by contrast, the fact that instrument and necessities were on hand in the amounts which made it possible for living labour to realize itself not only as *necessary*, but also as *surplus* labour -- this appeared alien to living labour itself, appeared as an act of capital. *Thirdly*: The independent, for-itself existence [*Fürsichsein*] of value *vis-à-vis* living labour capacity -- hence its existence as capital -- the objective, self-sufficient indifference, the *alien quality* [*Fremdheit*] of the objective conditions of labour *vis-a-vis* living labour capacity, which goes so far that these conditions confront the person of the worker in the person of the capitalist -- as personification [53] with its own will and interest -- this absolute *divorce, separation of property*, i.e. of the objective conditions of labour from living labour capacity -- that they confront him as *alien property*, as the reality of other juridical persons, as the absolute realm of *their* will -- and that labour therefore, on the other side, appears as *alien labour* opposed to the value personified in the capitalist, or the conditions of labour -- this absolute separation between property and labour, between living labour capacity and the conditions of its realization, between objectified and living labour, between value and value-creating activity -- hence also the alien quality of the content of labour for the worker himself -- this divorce now likewise appears as a product of labour itself, as objectification of its own moments. For, in the new act of production itself -- which merely confirmed the exchange between capital and living labour which preceded it -- surplus labour, and hence the surplus product, the total product of labour in general (of surplus labour as well as necessary labour), has now been posited as capital, as independent and indifferent towards living labour capacity, or as exchange value which confronts its mere use value. Labour capacity has appropriated for itself only the subjective conditions of necessary labour -- the means of subsistence for actively producing labour capacity, i.e. for its reproduction as mere labour capacity separated from the conditions of its realization -- and it has posited these conditions themselves as *things, values*, which confront it in an alien, commanding personification. The worker emerges not only not richer, but emerges rather poorer from the process than he entered. For not only has he produced the conditions of necessary labour as conditions belonging to capital; but also the value-creating possibility, the realization [*Verwertung*] which lies as a possibility within him, now likewise exists as surplus value, surplus product, in a word as capital, as master over living labour capacity, as value endowed with its own might and will, confronting him in his abstract, objectless, purely subjective poverty. He has produced not only the alien wealth and his own poverty, but also the relation of this wealth as independent, self-sufficient wealth, relative to himself as the poverty which this wealth consumes, and from which wealth thereby draws new vital spirits into itself, and realizes itself anew. All this arose from the act of exchange, in which he exchanged his living labour capacity for an amount of objectified labour, except that this objectified labour -- these external conditions of his being, and the independent externality [*Ausserihmsein*] (to him) of these objective conditions -- now appear as posited by himself, as *his own product*, as his own self-objectification as well as the objectification of himself as a power independent of himself, which moreover rules over him, rules over him through his own actions.

In *surplus capital*, all moments are products of *alien labour* -- *alien surplus labour* transformed into capital; means of subsistence for necessary labour; the objective conditions -- material and instrument -- whereby necessary labour can reproduce the value exchanged for it in means of subsistence; finally the amount of material and instrument required so that new surplus labour can realize itself in them, or a new surplus value can be created.

It no longer seems here, as it still did in the first examination of the production process, as if capital, for its part, brought with it any value whatever from circulation. Rather, the objective conditions of labour now appear as labour's product -- both to the extent that they are value in general, and as use values for production. But while capital thus appears as the product of labour, so does the product of labour likewise appear as capital -- no longer as a simple product, nor as an exchangeable commodity, but as *capital*; objectified labour as mastery, command over living labour. The product of labour appears as *alien property*, as a mode of existence confronting living labour as independent, as *value* in its being for itself; the product of labour, objectified labour, has been endowed by living labour with a soul of its own, and establishes itself opposite living labour as an *alien power*: both these situations are themselves the product of labour. Living labour therefore now appears from its own

standpoint as acting within the production process in such a way that, as it realizes itself in the objective conditions, it simultaneously repulses this realization from itself as an alien reality, and hence posits itself as insubstantial, as mere penurious labour capacity in face of this reality alienated [*entfremdet*] from it, belonging not to it but to others; that it posits its own reality not as a being for it, but merely as a being for others, and hence also as mere other-being [*Anderssein*], or being of another opposite itself. This realization process is at the same time the de-realization process of labour. It posits itself objectively, but it posits this, its objectivity, as its own not-being or as the being of its not-being -- of capital. It returns back into itself as the mere possibility of value-creation or realization [*Verwertung*]; because the whole of real wealth, the world of real value and likewise the real conditions of its own realization [*Verwirklichung*] are posited opposite it as independent existences. As a consequence of the production process, the possibilities resting in living labour's own womb exist outside it as realities -- but as *realities alien* to it, which form wealth in opposition to it.

Notes:

53. The original text has 'personifications', evidently referring back to 'conditions'.

Marx, Grundrisse, 461-3.

Now, if we initially examine the relation such as it has become, value having become capital, and living labour confronting it as mere use value, so that living labour appears as a mere means to realize objectified, dead labour, to penetrate it with an animating soul while losing its own soul to it --and having produced, as the end-product, alien wealth on one side and [, on the other,] the penury which is living labour capacity's sole possession -- then the matter is simply this, that the process itself, in and by itself, posits the real objective conditions of living labour (namely, material in which to realize itself, instrument with which to realize itself, and necessities with which to stoke the flame of living labour capacity, to protect it from being extinguished, to supply its vital processes with the necessary fuels) and posits them as alien, independent existences -- or as the mode of existence of an *alien person*, as self-sufficient values for-themselves, and hence as values which form wealth alien to an isolated and subjective labour capacity, wealth of and for the capitalist. The objective conditions of living labour appear as *separated, independent* [*verselbständigte*] values opposite living labour capacity as subjective being, which therefore appears to them only as a value of *another kind* (not as value, but different from them, as use value). Once this separation is given, the production process can only produce it anew, reproduce it, and reproduce it on an expanded scale. How it does this, we have seen. The objective conditions of living labour capacity are presupposed as having an existence independent of it, as the objectivity of a subject distinct from living labour capacity and standing independently over against it; the reproduction and *realization* [*Verwertung*], i.e. the expansion of these *objective conditions*, is therefore at the same time their own reproduction and new production as the wealth of an alien subject indifferently and independently standing over against labour capacity. What is reproduced and produced anew [*neuproduziert*] is not only the *presence* of these objective conditions of living labour, *but also their presence as independent values, i.e. values belonging to an alien subject, confronting this living labour capacity*. The objective conditions of labour attain a subjective existence *vis-à-vis* living labour capacity -- capital turns into capitalist; on the other side, the merely subjective presence of the labour capacity confronted by its own conditions gives it a merely indifferent, objective form as against them -- it is merely a *value* of a particular use value *alongside* the conditions of its own realization [*Verwertung*] as *values* of another use value. Instead of their being realized [*realisiert*] in the production process as the conditions of its realization [*Verwirklichung*], what happens is quite the opposite: it comes out of the process as mere condition for *their* realization [*Verwertung*] and preservation as values for-themselves opposite living labour capacity. The material on which it works is *alien* material; the instrument is likewise an *alien* instrument; its labour appears as a mere accessory to their substance and hence objectifies itself in things not *belonging to it*. Indeed, living labour itself appears as *alien vis-à-vis* living labour capacity, whose labour it is, whose own life's expression [*Lebensäußerung*] it is, for it has been surrendered to capital in exchange for objectified labour, for the product of labour itself. Labour capacity relates to its labour as to an alien, and if capital were willing, to pay it *without* making it labour it would enter the bargain with pleasure. Thus labour capacity's own labour is as alien to it -- and

it really is, as regards its direction etc. -- as are material and instrument. Which is why the product then appears to it as a combination of alien material, alien instrument and alien labour -- as *alien property*, and why, after production, it has become poorer by the life forces expended, but otherwise begins the drudgery anew, existing as a mere subjective labour capacity separated from the conditions of its life. The recognition [*Erkennung*] of the products as its own, and the judgment that its separation from the conditions of its realization is improper -- forcibly imposed -- is an enormous [advance in] awareness [*Bewusstsein*], itself the product of the mode of production resting on capital, and as much the knell to its doom as, with the slave's awareness that he *cannot be the property of another*, with his consciousness of himself as a person, the existence of slavery becomes a merely artificial, vegetative existence, and ceases to be able to prevail as the basis of production.

Marx, Grundrisse, 487-9.

Do we never find in antiquity an inquiry into which form of landed property etc. is the most productive, creates the greatest wealth? Wealth does not appear as the aim of production, although Cato may well investigate which manner of cultivating a field brings the greatest rewards, and Brutus may even lend out his money at the best rates of interest. [1] The question is always which mode of property creates the best citizens. Wealth appears as an end in itself only among the few commercial peoples -- monopolists of the carrying trade -- who live in the pores of the ancient world, like the Jews in medieval society. Now, wealth is on one side a thing, realized in things, material products, which a human being confronts as subject; on the other side, as value, wealth is merely command over alien labour not with the aim of ruling, but with the aim of private consumption etc. It appears in all forms in the shape of a thing, be it an object or be it a relation mediated through the object, which is external and accidental to the individual. Thus the old view, in which the human being appears as the aim of production, regardless of his limited national, religious, political character, seems to be very lofty when contrasted to the modern world, where production appears as the aim of mankind and wealth as the aim of production. In fact, however, when the limited bourgeois form is stripped away, what is wealth other than the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces etc., created through universal exchange? The full development of human mastery over the forces of nature, those of so-called nature as well as of humanity's own nature? The absolute working-out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself, not as measured on a *predetermined yardstick*? Where he does not reproduce himself in one specificity, but produces his totality? Strives not to remain something he has become, but is in the absolute movement of becoming? In bourgeois economics -- and in the epoch of production to which it corresponds -- this complete working-out of the human content appears as a complete emptying-out, this universal objectification as total alienation, and the tearing-down of all limited, one-sided aims as sacrifice of the human end-in-itself to an entirely external end. This is why the childish world of antiquity appears on one side as loftier. On the other side, it really is loftier in all matters where closed shapes, forms and given limits are sought for. It is satisfaction from a limited standpoint; while the modern gives no satisfaction; or, where it appears satisfied with itself, it is *vulgar*.

What Mr Proudhon calls the *extra-economic* origin of property, by which he understands just landed property, [2] is the *pre-bourgeois* relation of the individual to the objective conditions of labour, and initially to the *natural* objective conditions of labour -- for, just as the working subject appears naturally as an individual, as natural being -- so does the first objective condition of his labour appear as nature, earth, as his inorganic body; he himself is not only the organic body, but also the subject of this inorganic nature. This condition is not his product but something he finds to hand -- presupposed to him as a natural being apart from him. Before we analyse this further, one more point: the worthy Proudhon would not only be able to, but would have to, accuse *capital* and *wage labour* -- as forms of property -- of having an *extra-economic* origin. For the encounter with the objective conditions of labour as separate from him, as *capital* from the worker's side, and the encounter with the *worker* as propertyless, as an abstract worker from the capitalist's side -- the exchange such as takes place between value and living labour, presupposes a *historic process*, no matter how much capital and labour themselves reproduce this relation and work out its objective scope, as well as its depth -- a historic process, which, as we saw, forms the history of the origins of capital and wage labour. In other words: the *extra-economic origin* of property means

nothing else than the *historic origin* of the bourgeois economy, of the forms of production which are theoretically or ideally expressed by the categories of political economy. But the fact that pre-bourgeois history, and each of its phases, also has its own *economy* and an *economic foundation* for its movement, is at bottom only the tautology that human life has since time immemorial rested on production, and, in one way or another, on *social* production, whose relations we call, precisely, economic relations.

Notes:

1. Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, Vol. V, 21, lines 10-13; Vol. VI, 1, lines 3-7; Vol. VI, 2, lines 7-10.
2. P.-J. Proudhon, *Système des contradictions économiques*, Vol. II, p. 265.

Marx, Grundrisse, 704-706.

Contradiction between the foundation of bourgeois production (value as measure) and its development. Machines etc.

The exchange of living labour for objectified labour – i.e. the positing of social labour in the form of the contradiction of capital and wage labour – is the ultimate development of the *value-relation* and of production resting on value. Its presupposition is – and remains – the mass of direct labour time, the quantity of labour employed, as the determinant factor in the production of wealth. But to the degree that large industry develops, the creation of real wealth comes to depend less on labour time and on the amount of labour employed than on the power of the agencies set in motion during labour time, whose ‘powerful effectiveness’ is itself in turn out of all proportion to the direct labour time spent on their production, but depends rather on the general state of science and on the progress of technology, or the application of this science to production. (The development of this science, especially natural science, and all others with the latter, is itself in turn related to the development of material production.) Agriculture, e.g., becomes merely the application of the science of material metabolism, its regulation for the greatest advantage of the entire body of society. Real wealth manifests itself, rather – and large industry reveals this – in the monstrous disproportion between the labour time applied, and its product, as well as in the qualitative imbalance between labour, reduced to a pure abstraction, and the power of the production process it superintends. Labour no longer appears so much to be included within the production process; rather, the human being comes to relate more as watchman and regulator to the production process itself. (What holds for machinery holds likewise for the combination of human activities and the development of human intercourse.) No longer does the worker insert a modified natural thing [*Naturgegenstand*] as middle link between the object [*Objekt*] and himself; rather, he inserts the process of nature, transformed into an industrial process, as a means between himself and inorganic nature, mastering it. He steps to the side of the production process instead of being its chief actor. In this transformation, it is neither the direct human labour he himself performs, nor the time during which he works, but rather the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery over it by virtue of his presence as a social body – it is, in a word, the development of the social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth. The *theft of alien labour time, on which the present wealth is based*, appears a miserable foundation in face of this new one, created by large-scale industry itself. As soon as labour in the direct form has ceased to be the great well-spring of wealth, labour time ceases and must cease to be its measure, and hence exchange value [must cease to be the measure] of use value. The *surplus labour of the mass* has ceased to be the condition for the development of general wealth, just as the *non-labour of the few*, for the development of the general powers of the human head. With that, production based on exchange value breaks down, and the direct, material production process is stripped of the form of penury and antithesis. The free development of individualities, and hence not the reduction of necessary labour time so as to posit surplus labour, but rather the general reduction of the necessary labour of society to a minimum, which then corresponds to the artistic, scientific etc. development of the individuals in the time set free, and with the means created, for all of them. Capital itself is the moving contradiction, [in] that it presses to reduce labour time to a minimum, while it posits labour time, on the other side, as sole measure and source of wealth. Hence it diminishes labour time in the necessary form so as to increase it in the superfluous form; hence posits the superfluous in growing measure as a condition – question of life or death – for the necessary. On the one side,

then, it calls to life all the powers of science and of nature, as of social combination and of social intercourse, in order to make the creation of wealth independent (relatively) of the labour time employed on it. On the other side, it wants to use labour time as the measuring rod for the giant social forces thereby created, and to confine them within the limits required to maintain the already created value as value. Forces of production and social relations – two different sides of the development of the social individual – appear to capital as mere means, and are merely means for it to produce on its limited foundation. In fact, however, they are the material conditions to blow this foundation sky-high. ‘Truly wealthy a nation, when the working day is 6 rather than 12 hours. *Wealth* is not command over surplus labour time’ (real wealth), ‘but rather, *disposable time* outside that needed in direct production, for *every individual* and the whole society.’ (*The Source and Remedy* etc. 1821, p. 6.)

PART II: THE MARXIST VIEW OF CHANGE

Questions:

1. What is the relationship between philosophical idealism and dialectical materialism? Between dialectical materialism and materialism? How does Marx characterize Feuerbach's philosophical errors in the Theses?
2. What is the essence of dialectics? How can it be tested?
3. Why is it difficult to simplify the study of dialectics?
4. Ted Allen has written that the policy begun in colonial Virginia conferring a privileged status on European-Americans in relation to African-Americans was the "invention" of the white race. What do you think of the notion that the white race was "invented"? Is it possible to speak of "race" as having an origin in historical times?
5. Lenin connected the "betrayal" of the Second International to the new stage reached by capitalism. Would the failure of the Communist parties after 60 years to establish socialism in any country constitute conclusive evidence of another change in historical stages? (Debate over the definition of socialism is not the intended focus of this question, although it obviously must be considered part of the discussion.)
6. How does the process of production in the U.S. today shape workers' attitudes toward consumption? What was different during the Great Depression? How will communism be different?
7. Is the U.S. working class backward? Explain your answer.
8. What is meant by "negation of the negation"? Give examples. Is this a conservative or a revolutionary concept?
9. Find applications of Lenin's elements of dialectics in the *Grundrisse* passages in this and the previous session. Give particular attention to any examples of the "negation of the negation."
10. What is the Marxist organization and who are we?

- **Reread: Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach"**

Marx, *Grundrisse*, 88-94.

(2) THE GENERAL RELATION OF PRODUCTION TO DISTRIBUTION, EXCHANGE, CONSUMPTION

Before going further in the analysis of production, it is necessary to focus on the various categories which the economists line up next to it.

The obvious, trite notion: in production the members of society appropriate (create, shape) the products of nature in accord with human needs; distribution determines the proportion in which the individual shares in the product; exchange delivers the particular products into which the individual desires to convert the portion which distribution has assigned to him; and finally, in consumption, the products become objects of gratification, of individual appropriation. Production creates the objects which correspond to the given needs; distribution divides them up according to social laws; exchange further parcels out the already divided shares in accord with individual needs; and finally, in consumption, the product steps outside this social movement and becomes a direct object and servant of individual need, and satisfies it in being consumed. Thus production appears as the point of departure, consumption as the conclusion, distribution and exchange as the middle, which is however itself twofold, since distribution is determined by society and exchange by individuals. The person objectifies himself in production, the thing subjectifies itself in the person; ^[9] in distribution, society mediates between production and consumption in the form of general, dominant determinants; in exchange the two are mediated by the chance characteristics of the individual.

Distribution determines the relation in which products fall to individuals (the amount); exchange determines the production ^[10] in which the individual demands the portion allotted to him by distribution.

Thus production, distribution, exchange and consumption form a regular syllogism; production is the generality, distribution and exchange the particularity, and consumption the singularity in which the whole is joined together. This is admittedly a coherence, but a shallow one. Production is determined by general natural laws, distribution by social accident, and the latter may therefore promote production to a greater or lesser extent; exchange stands between the two as formal social movement; and the concluding act, consumption, which is conceived not only as a terminal point but also as an end-in-itself, actually belongs outside economics except in so far as it reacts in turn upon the point of departure and initiates the whole process anew.

The opponents of the political economists – whether inside or outside its realm – who accuse them of barbarically tearing apart things which belong together, stand either on the same ground as they, or beneath them. Nothing is more common than the reproach that the political economists view production too much as an end in itself, that distribution is just as important. This accusation is based precisely on the economic notion that the spheres of distribution and of production are independent, autonomous neighbours. Or that these moments were not grasped in their unity. As if this rupture had made its way not from reality into the textbooks, but rather from the textbooks into reality, and as if the task were the dialectic balancing of concepts, and not the grasping of real relations!

[Consumption and Production]

(a₁) Production is also immediately consumption. Twofold consumption, subjective and objective: the individual not only develops his abilities in production, but also expends them, uses them up in the act of production, just as natural procreation is a consumption of life forces. Secondly: consumption of the means of production, which become worn out through use, and are partly (e.g. in combustion) dissolved into their elements again. Likewise, consumption of the raw material, which loses its natural form and composition by being used up. The act of production is therefore in all its moments also an act of consumption. But the economists admit this. Production as directly identical with consumption, and consumption as directly coincident with production, is termed by them *productive consumption*. This identity of production and consumption amounts to Spinoza's thesis: *determinatio est negatio*. ^[11]

But this definition of productive consumption is advanced only for the purpose of separating consumption as identical with production from consumption proper, which is conceived rather as the destructive antithesis to production. Let us therefore examine consumption proper.

Consumption is also immediately production, just as in nature the consumption of the elements and chemical substances is the production of the plant. It is clear that in taking in food, for example, which is a form of consumption, the human being produces his own body. But this is also true of every kind of consumption which in one way or another produces human beings in some particular aspect. Consumptive production. But, says economics, this production which is identical with consumption is secondary, it is derived from the destruction of the prior product. In the former, the producer objectified himself, in the latter, the object he created personifies itself. Hence this consumptive production – even though it is an immediate unity of production and consumption – is essentially different from production proper. The immediate unity in which production coincides with consumption and consumption with production leaves their immediate duality intact.

Production, then, is also immediately consumption, consumption is also immediately production. Each is immediately its opposite. But at the same time a mediating movement takes place between the two. Production mediates consumption; it creates the latter's material; without it, consumption would lack an object. But consumption also mediates production, in that it alone creates for the products the subject for whom they are products. The product only obtains its 'last finish' ^[12] in consumption. A railway on which no trains run, hence which is not used up, not consumed, is a railway only *dunamei* ^[13] and not in reality. Without production, no consumption; but also, without consumption, no production; since production would then be purposeless. Consumption produces production in a double way, (1) because a product becomes a real product only by being consumed. For example, a garment becomes a real garment only in the act of being worn; a house where no one lives is in fact not a real house; thus the product, unlike a mere natural object, proves itself to be, *becomes*, a product only through consumption. Only by decomposing the product does consumption give the product the finishing touch; for the product is production not as ^[14] objectified activity, but rather only as object for the active

subject; (2) because consumption creates the need for *new* production, that is it creates the ideal, internally impelling cause for production, which is its presupposition. Consumption creates the motive for production; it also creates the object which is active in production as its determinant aim. If it is clear that production offers consumption its external object, it is therefore equally clear that consumption *ideally posits* the object of production as an internal image, as a need, as drive and as purpose. It creates the objects of production in a still subjective form. No production without a need. But consumption reproduces the need.

Production, for its part, correspondingly (1) furnishes the material and the object for consumption. ^[15] Consumption without an object is not consumption; therefore, in this respect, production creates, produces consumption. (2) But the object is not the only thing which production creates for consumption. Production also gives consumption its specificity, its character, its finish. Just as consumption gave the product its finish as product, so does production give finish to consumption. *Firstly*, the object is not an object in general, but a specific object which must be consumed in a specific manner, to be mediated in its turn by production itself. Hunger is hunger, but the hunger gratified by cooked meat eaten with a knife and fork is a different hunger from that which bolts down raw meat with the aid of hand, nail and tooth. Production thus produces not only the object but also the manner of consumption, not only objectively but also subjectively. Production thus creates the consumer. (3) Production not only supplies a material for the need, but it also supplies a need for the material. As soon as consumption emerges from its initial state of natural crudity and immediacy – and, if it remained at that stage, this would be because production itself had been arrested there – it becomes itself mediated as a drive by the object. The need which consumption feels for the object is created by the perception of it. The object of art – like every other product – creates a public which is sensitive to art and enjoys beauty. Production thus not only creates an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object. Thus production produces consumption (1) by creating the material for it; (2) by determining the manner of consumption; and (3) by creating the products, initially posited by it as objects, in the form of a need felt by the consumer. It thus produces the object of consumption, the manner of consumption and the motive of consumption. Consumption likewise produces the producer's *inclination* by beckoning to him as an aim-determining need.

The identities between consumption and production thus appear threefold:

(1) *Immediate identity*: Production is consumption, consumption is production. Consumptive production. Productive consumption. The political economists call both productive consumption. But then make a further distinction. The first figures as reproduction, the second as productive consumption. All investigations into the first concern productive or unproductive labour; investigations into the second concern productive or non-productive consumption.

(2) [In the sense] that one appears as a means for the other, is mediated by the other: this is expressed as their mutual dependence; a movement which relates them to one another, makes them appear indispensable to one another, but still leaves them external to each other. Production creates the material, as external object, for consumption; consumption creates the need, as internal object, as aim, for production. Without production no consumption; without consumption no production. [This identity] figures in economics in many different forms.

(3) Not only is production immediately consumption and consumption immediately production, not only is production a means for consumption and consumption the aim of production, i.e. each supplies the other with its object (production supplying the external object of consumption, consumption the conceived object of production); but also, each of them, apart from being immediately the other, and apart from mediating the other, in addition to this creates the other in completing itself, and creates itself as the other. Consumption accomplishes the act of production only in completing the product as product by dissolving it, by consuming its independently material form, by raising the inclination developed in the first act of production, through the need for repetition, to its finished form; it is thus not only the concluding act in which the product becomes product, but also that in which the producer becomes producer. On the other side, production produces consumption by creating the specific manner of consumption; and, further, by creating the stimulus of consumption, the ability to consume, as a need. This last identity, as determined under (3), (is) frequently cited in economics in the relation of demand and supply, of objects and needs, of socially created and natural needs.

Thereupon, nothing simpler for a Hegelian than to posit production and consumption as identical. And this has been done not only by socialist belletrists but by prosaic economists themselves, e.g. Say, ^[16] in the form that when one looks at an entire people, its production is its consumption. Or, indeed, at humanity in the abstract. Storch ^[17] demonstrated Say's error, namely that e.g. a people does not consume its entire product, but also creates means of production, etc., fixed capital, etc. To regard society as one single subject is, in addition, to look at it wrongly; speculatively. With a single subject, production and consumption appear as moments of a single act. The important thing to emphasize here is only that, whether production and consumption are viewed as the activity of one or of many individuals, they appear in any case as moments of one process, in which production is the real point of departure and hence also the predominant moment. Consumption as urgency, as need, is itself an intrinsic moment of productive activity. But the latter is the point of departure for realization and hence also its predominant moment; it is the act through which the whole process again runs its course. The individual produces an object and, by consuming it, returns to himself, but returns as a productive and self-reproducing individual. Consumption thus appears as a moment of production.

In society, however, the producer's relation to the product, once the latter is finished, is an external one, and its return to the subject depends on his relations to other individuals. He does not come into possession of it directly. Nor is its immediate appropriation his purpose when he produces in society. *Distribution* steps between the producers and the products, hence between production and consumption, to determine in accordance with social laws what the producer's share will be in the world of products.

Now, does distribution stand at the side of and outside production as an autonomous sphere?

Notes:

9. *MEW* XIII substitutes 'in consumption'.

10. *MEW* XIII substitutes 'products'.

11. 'Determination is negation', i.e., given the undifferentiated self-identity of the universal world substance, to attempt to introduce particular determinations is to negate this self-identity. (Spinoza, *Letters*, No. 50, to J. Jelles, 2 June 1674).

12. In English in the original.

13. 'Potentially'. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Bk VIII, Ch. 6, 2.

14. The manuscript has: 'for the product is production not only as...'. *MEW* XIII substitutes: 'for the product is a product not as...'.

15. The manuscript has 'for production'.

16. Jean-Baptiste Say (1767-1832), 'the inane Say', who 'superficially condensed political economy into a textbook' (Marx), a businessman who popularized and vulgarized the doctrines of Adam Smith in his *Traité d'économie politique*, Paris, 1803.

17. Heinrich Friedrich Storch (1766-1835), Professor of Political Economy in the Russian Academy of Sciences at St Petersburg. Say issued Storch's work *Cours d'économie politique* with critical notes in 1823; he attacked Say's interpretation of his views in *Considérations sur la nature du revenu national*, Paris, 1824, pp. 144—59.

Marx, Grundrisse, 98-102.

Exchange and production

Circulation itself [is] merely a specific moment of exchange, or [it is] also exchange regarded in its totality.

In so far as *exchange* is merely a moment mediating between production with its production-determined distribution on one side and consumption on the other, but in so far as the latter itself appears as a moment of production, to that extent is exchange obviously also included as a moment within the latter.

It is clear, firstly, that the exchange of activities and abilities which takes place within production itself belongs directly to production and essentially constitutes it. The same holds, secondly, for the exchange of products, in so far as that exchange is the means of finishing the product and making it fit for direct consumption. To that extent, exchange is an act comprised within production itself. Thirdly, the so-called exchange between dealers and dealers is by its very organization entirely determined by production, as well as being itself a producing activity. Exchange appears as independent of and indifferent to production only in the final phase where the product is exchanged directly for consumption. But (1) there is no exchange without division of labour,

whether the latter is spontaneous, natural, or already a product of historic development; (2) private exchange presupposes private production; (3) the intensity of exchange, as well as its extension and its manner, are determined by the development and structure of production. For example. Exchange between town and country; exchange in the country, in the town etc. Exchange in all its moments thus appears as either directly comprised in production or determined by it.

The conclusion we reach is not that production, distribution, exchange and consumption are identical, but that they all form the members of a totality, distinctions within a unity. Production predominates not only over itself, in the antithetical definition of production, but over the other moments as well. The process always returns to production to begin anew. That exchange and consumption cannot be predominant is self-evident. Likewise, distribution as distribution of products; while as distribution of the agents of production it is itself a moment of production. A definite production thus determines a definite consumption, distribution and exchange as well as *definite relations between these different moments*. Admittedly, however, *in its one-sided form*, production is itself determined by the other moments. For example if the market, i.e. the sphere of exchange, expands, then production grows in quantity and the divisions between its different branches become deeper. A change in distribution changes production, e.g. concentration of capital, different distribution of the population between town and country, etc. Finally, the needs of consumption determine production. Mutual interaction takes place between the different moments. This the case with every organic whole.

(3) The Method of Political Economy

When we consider a given country politico-economically, we begin with its population, its distribution among classes, town, country, the coast, the different branches of production, export and import, annual production and consumption, commodity prices etc.

It seems to be correct to begin with the real and the concrete, with the real precondition, thus to begin, in economics, with e.g. the population, which is the foundation and the subject of the entire social act of production. However, on closer examination this proves false. The population is an abstraction if I leave out, for example, the classes of which it is composed. These classes in turn are an empty phrase if I am not familiar with the elements on which they rest. E.g. wage labour, capital, etc. These latter in turn presuppose exchange, division of labour, prices, etc. For example, capital is nothing without wage labour, without value, money, price etc. Thus, if I were to begin with the population, this would be a chaotic conception [*Vorstellung*] of the whole, and I would then, by means of further determination, move analytically towards ever more simple concepts [*Begriff*], from the imagined concrete towards ever thinner abstractions until I had arrived at the simplest determinations. From there the journey would have to be retraced until I had finally arrived at the population again, but this time not as the chaotic conception of a whole, but as a rich totality of many determinations and relations. The former is the path historically followed by economics at the time of its origins. The economists of the seventeenth century, e.g., always begin with the living whole, with population, nation, state, several states, etc.; but they always conclude by discovering through analysis a small number of determinant, abstract, general relations such as division of labour, money, value, etc. As soon as these individual moments had been more or less firmly established and abstracted, there began the economic systems, which ascended from the simple relations, such as labour, division of labour, need, exchange value, to the level of the state, exchange between nations and the world market. The latter is obviously the scientifically correct method. The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse. It appears in the process of thinking, therefore, as a process of concentration, as a result, not as a point of departure, even though it is the point of departure in reality and hence also the point of departure for observation [*Anschaung*] and conception. Along the first path the full conception was evaporated to yield an abstract determination; along the second, the abstract determinations lead towards a reproduction of the concrete by way of thought. In this way Hegel fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as the product of thought concentrating itself, probing its own depths, and unfolding itself out of itself, by itself, whereas the method of rising from the abstract to the concrete is only the way in which thought appropriates the concrete, reproduces it as the concrete in the mind. But this is by no means the process by which the concrete itself comes into being. For example, the simplest economic category, say e.g. exchange value, presupposes

population, moreover a population producing in specific relations; as well as a certain kind of family, or commune, or state, etc. It can never exist other than as an abstract, one-sided relation within an already given, concrete, living whole. As a category, by contrast, exchange value leads an antediluvian existence. Therefore, to the kind of consciousness – and this is characteristic of the philosophical consciousness – for which conceptual thinking is the real human being, and for which the conceptual world as such is thus the only reality, the movement of the categories appears as the real act of production – which only, unfortunately, receives a jolt from the outside – whose product is the world; and – but this is again a tautology – this is correct in so far as the concrete totality is a totality of thoughts, concrete in thought, in fact a product of thinking and comprehending; but not in any way a product of the concept which thinks and generates itself outside or above observation and conception; a product, rather, of the working-up of observation and conception into concepts. The totality as it appears in the head, as a totality of thoughts, is a product of a thinking head, which appropriates the world in the only way it can, a way different from the artistic, religious, practical and mental appropriation of this world. The real subject retains its autonomous existence outside the head just as before; namely as long as the head's conduct is merely speculative, merely theoretical. Hence, in the theoretical method, too, the subject, society, must always be kept in mind as the presupposition.

But do not these simpler categories also have an independent historical or natural existence predating the more concrete ones? That depends. Hegel, for example, correctly begins the Philosophy of Right with possession, this being the subject's simplest juridical relation. But there is no possession preceding the family or master-servant relations, which are far more concrete relations. However, it would be correct to say that there are families or clan groups which still merely *possess*, but have no *property*. The simple category therefore appears in relation to property as a relation of simple families or clan groups. In the higher society it appears as the simpler relation of a developed organization. But the concrete substratum of which possession is a relation is always presupposed. One can imagine an individual savage as possessing something. But in that case possession is not a juridical relation. It is incorrect that possession develops historically into the family. Possession, rather, always presupposes this 'more concrete juridical category'. There would still always remain this much, however, namely that the simple categories are the expressions of relations within which the less developed concrete may have already realized itself before having posited the more many-sided connection or relation which is mentally expressed in the more concrete category; while the more developed concrete preserves the same category as a subordinate relation. Money may exist, and did exist historically, before capital existed, before banks existed, before wage labour existed, etc. Thus in this respect it may be said that the simpler category can express the dominant relations of a less developed whole, or else those subordinate relations of a more developed whole which already had a historic existence before this whole developed in the direction expressed by a more concrete category. To that extent the path of abstract thought, rising from the simple to the combined, would correspond to the real historical process.

§ 33

In no science is the need to begin with the subject matter itself, without preliminary reflections, felt more strongly than in the science of logic. In every other science the subject matter and the scientific method are distinguished from each other; also the content does not make an absolute beginning but is dependent on other concepts and is connected on all sides with other material. These other sciences are, therefore, permitted to speak of their ground and its context and also of their method, only as premises taken for granted which, as forms of definitions and such-like presupposed as familiar and accepted, are to be applied straight-way, and also to employ the usual kind of reasoning for the establishment of their general concepts and fundamental determinations.

§ 34

Logic on the contrary, cannot presuppose any of these forms of reflection and laws of thinking, for these constitute part of its own content and have first to be established within the science. But not only the account of scientific method, but even the Notion itself of the science as such belongs to its content, and in fact constitutes its final result; what logic is cannot be stated beforehand, rather does this knowledge of what it is first emerge as the final outcome and consummation of the whole exposition. Similarly, it is essentially within the science that the subject matter of logic, namely, thinking or more specifically *comprehensive* thinking is considered; the Notion of logic has its genesis in the course of exposition and cannot therefore be premised. Consequently, what is premised in this Introduction is not intended, as it were, to establish the Notion of Logic or to justify its method scientifically in advance, but rather by the aid of some reasoned and historical explanations and reflections to make more accessible to ordinary thinking the point of view from which this science is to be considered.

§ 35

When logic is taken as the science of thinking in general, it is understood that this thinking constitutes the *mere form* of a cognition that logic abstracts from all *content* and that the so-called second *constituent* belonging to cognition, namely its *matter*, must come from somewhere else; and that since this matter is absolutely independent of logic, this latter can provide only the formal conditions of genuine cognition and cannot in its own self contain any real truth, not even be the *pathway* to real truth because just that which is essential in truth, its content, lies outside logic.

§ 36

But in the first place, it is quite inept to say that logic abstracts from all *content*, that it teaches only the rules of thinking without any reference to *what* is thought or without being able to consider its nature. For as thinking and the rules of thinking are supposed to be the subject matter of logic, these directly constitute its peculiar content; in them, logic has that second constituent, a matter, about the nature of which it is concerned.

§ 37

But secondly, the conceptions on which the Notion of logic has rested hitherto have in part already been discarded, and for the rest, it is time that they disappeared entirely and that this science were grasped from a higher standpoint and received a completely changed shape.

§ 38

Hitherto, the Notion of logic has rested on the separation, presupposed once and for all in the ordinary consciousness, of the *content* of cognition and its *form*, or of *truth* and *certainty*. First, it is assumed that the material of knowing is present on its own account as a ready-made world apart from thought, that thinking on its own is empty and comes as an external form to the said material, fills itself with it and only thus acquires a content and so becomes real knowing.

§ 39

Further, these two constituents — for they are supposed to be related to each other as constituents, and cognition is compounded from them in a mechanical or at best chemical fashion — are appraised as follows: the object is regarded as something complete and finished on its own account, something which can entirely dispense with thought for its actuality, while thought on the other hand is regarded as defective because it has to complete itself with a material and moreover, as a pliable indeterminate form, has to adapt itself to its material. Truth is the

agreement of thought with the object, and in order to bring about this agreement — for it does not exist on its own account — thinking is supposed to adapt and accommodate itself to the object.

§ 40

Thirdly, when the difference of matter and form, of object and thought is not left in that nebulous indeterminateness but is taken more definitely, then each is regarded as a sphere divorced from the other. Thinking therefore in its reception and formation of material does not go outside itself; its reception of the material and the conforming of itself to it remains a modification of its own self, it does not result in thought becoming the other of itself; and self-conscious determining moreover belongs only to thinking. In its relation to the object, therefore, thinking does not go out of itself to the object; this, as a thing-in-itself, remains a sheer beyond of thought.

§ 41

These views on the relation of subject and object to each other express the determinations which constitute the nature of our ordinary, phenomenal consciousness; but when these prejudices are carried out into the sphere of reason as if the same relation obtained there, as if this relation were something true in its own self, then they are errors — the refutation of which throughout every part of the spiritual and natural universe is *philosophy*, or rather, as they bar the entrance to philosophy, must be discarded at its portals.

§ 42

Ancient metaphysics had in this respect a higher conception of thinking than is current today. For it based itself on the fact that the knowledge of things obtained through thinking is alone what is really true in them, that is, things not in their immediacy but as first raised into the form of thought, as things *thought*. Thus this metaphysics believed that thinking (and its determinations) is not anything alien to the object, but rather is its essential nature, or that things and the thinking of them — our language too expresses their kinship — are explicitly in full agreement, thinking in its immanent determinations and the true nature of things forming one and the same content.

§ 43

But *reflective* understanding took possession of philosophy. We must know exactly what is meant by this expression which moreover is often used as a slogan; in general it stands for the understanding as abstracting, and hence as separating and remaining fixed in its separations. Directed against reason, it behaves as ordinary common sense and imposes its view that truth rests on sensuous reality, that thoughts are only thoughts, meaning that it is sense perception which first gives them filling and reality and that reason left to its own resources engenders only figments of the brain. In this self-renunciation on the part of reason, the Notion of truth is lost; it is limited to knowing only subjective truth, only phenomena, appearances, only something to which the nature of the object itself does not correspond: knowing has lapsed into opinion.

§ 44

However, this turn taken by cognition, which appears as a loss and a retrograde step, is based on something more profound on which rests the elevation of reason into the loftier spirit of modern philosophy. The basis of that universally held conception is, namely, to be sought in the insight into the necessary conflict of the determinations of the understanding with themselves. The reflection already referred to is this, to transcend the concrete immediate object and to determine it and separate it. But *equally* it must transcend these its *separating* determinations and straightway *connect* them. It is at the stage of this connecting of the determinations that their conflict emerges. This connecting activity of reflection belongs in itself to reason and the rising above those determinations which attains to an insight into their conflict is the great negative step towards the true Notion of reason. But the insight, when not thorough-going, commits the mistake of thinking that it is reason which is in contradiction with itself; it does not recognise that the contradiction is precisely the rising of reason above the limitations of the understanding and the resolving of them, Cognition, instead of taking from this stage the final step into the heights, has fled from the unsatisfactoriness of the categories of the understanding to sensuous existence, imagining that in this it possesses what is solid and self-consistent. But on the other hand, since this knowledge is self-confessedly knowledge only of appearances, the unsatisfactoriness of the latter is admitted, but at the same time presupposed: as much as to say that admittedly, we have no proper knowledge of things-in-

themselves but we do have a proper knowledge of them within the sphere of appearances, as if, so to speak, only the *kind of objects* were different, and one kind, namely things-in-themselves, did not fall within the scope of our knowledge but the other kind, phenomena, did. This is like attributing to someone a correct perception, with the rider that nevertheless he is incapable of perceiving what is true but only what is false. Absurd as this would be, it would not be more so than a true knowledge which did not know the object as it is in itself.

§ 45

The criticism of the forms of the understanding has had the result already mentioned, that these forms do not apply to things-in-themselves. This can have no other meaning than that these forms are in themselves something untrue. But then if they are allowed to remain valid for subjective reason and experience, the criticism has not produced any alteration in them: they are left in the same shape for the subject knower as they formerly possessed for the object. If, however, they are inadequate for the thing-in-itself, still less must the understanding to which they are supposed to belong put up with them and rest content with them. If they cannot be determinations of the thing-in-itself, still less can they be determinations of the understanding to which one ought at least to concede the dignity of a thing-in-itself. The determinations of finite and infinite conflict in the same way, whether they are applied to time and space, to the world, or are determinations within the mind — just as black and white produce grey whether they are mixed on a canvas or on the palette. If our conception of the *world* is dissolved by the transference to it of the determinations of infinite and finite, still more is *spirit* itself, which contains both of them, inwardly self-contradictory and self-dissolving: it is not the nature of the material or the object to which they are applied or in which they occur that can make a difference for it is only through those determinations and in accordance with them that the object contains the contradiction.

§ 46

The forms of objective thinking, therefore, have been removed by this criticism only from the thing; but they have been left in the subject just as they were originally. That is to say, this criticism did not consider these forms on their own merits and according to their own peculiar content, but simply took them as accepted starting points from subjective logic: so that there was no question of an immanent deduction of them as forms of subjective logic, still less of a dialectical consideration of them.

§ 47

Transcendental idealism in its more consistent development, recognised the nothingness of the spectral thing-in-itself left over by the Kantian philosophy, this abstract shadow divorced from all content, and intended to destroy it completely. This philosophy also made a start at letting reason itself exhibit its own determinations. But this attempt, because it proceeded from a subjective standpoint, could not be brought to a successful conclusion. Later this standpoint, and with it too the attempt to develop the content of pure science, was abandoned.

§ 48

But what is commonly understood by logic is considered without any reference whatever to metaphysical significance. This science in its present state has, it must be admitted, no content of a kind which the ordinary consciousness would regard as a reality and as a genuine subject matter. But it is not for this reason a *formal* science lacking significant truth. Moreover, the region of truth is not to be sought in that matter which is missing in logic, a deficiency to which the unsatisfactoriness of the science is usually attributed. The truth is rather that the insubstantial nature of logical forms originates solely in the way in which they are considered and dealt with.

When they are taken as fixed determinations and consequently in their separation from each other and not as held together in an organic unity, then they are dead forms and the spirit which is their living, concrete unity does not dwell in them. As thus taken, they lack a substantial content — a matter which would be substantial in itself. The content which is missing in the logical forms is nothing else than a solid foundation and a concretion of these abstract determinations; and such a substantial being for them is usually sought outside them.

But logical reason itself is the substantial or real being which holds together within itself every abstract determination and is their substantial, absolutely concrete unity. One need not therefore look far for what is commonly called a matter; if logic is supposed to lack a substantial content, then the fault does not lie with its subject matter but solely with the way in which this subject matter is grasped.

§ 49

This reflection leads up to the statement of the point of view from which logic is to be considered, how it differs from previous modes of treatment of this science which in future must always be based on this, the only true standpoint.

§ 50

In the *Phenomenology of Mind*, I have exhibited consciousness in its movement onwards from the first immediate opposition of itself and the object to absolute knowing. The path of this movement goes through every form of the *relation of consciousness to the object* and has the Notion of science of its result.

This Notion therefore (apart from the fact that it emerges within logic itself) needs no justification here because it has received it in that work; and it cannot be justified in any other way than by this emergence in consciousness, all the forms of which are resolved into this Notion as into their truth. To establish or explain the Notion of science ratiocinatively can at most achieve this, that a general idea of the Notion is presented to our thinking and a historical knowledge of it is produced; but a definition of science — or more precisely of logic — has its proof solely in the already mentioned necessity of its emergence in consciousness. The definition with which any science makes an absolute beginning. cannot contain anything other than the precise and correct expression of what is *imagined* to be the *accepted and familiar* subject matter and aim of the science. That precisely *this* is what is imagined is an historical asseveration in respect of which one can only appeal to such and such as recognised facts; or rather the plea can be advanced that such and such could be accepted as recognised facts. There will always be someone who will adduce a case, an instance, according to which something more and different is to be understood by certain terms the definition of which must therefore be made more precise or more general and the science too, must be accommodated thereto. This again involves argumentation about what should be admitted or excluded and within what limits and to what extent; but argumentation is open to the most manifold and various opinions, on which a decision can finally be determined only arbitrarily. In this method of beginning a science with its definition, no mention is made of the need to demonstrate the *necessity* of its *subject matter* and therefore of the science itself.

§ 51

The Notion of pure science and its deduction is therefore presupposed in the present work in so far as the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is nothing other than the deduction of it. Absolute knowing is the *truth* of every mode of consciousness because, as the course of the *Phenomenology* showed, it is only in absolute knowing that separation of the *object* from the *certainty of itself* is completely eliminated: truth is now equated with certainty and this certainty with truth.

§ 52

Thus pure science presupposes liberation from the opposition of consciousness. It contains *thought in so far as this is just as much the object in its own self, or the object in its own self in so far as it is equally pure thought*. As science, truth is pure self-consciousness in its self-development and has the shape of the self, so that the absolute truth of being is the known Notion and the Notion as such is the absolute truth of being.

§ 53

This objective thinking then, is the content of pure science. Consequently, far from it being formal, far from it standing in need of a matter to constitute an actual and true cognition, it is its content alone which has absolute truth, or, if one still wanted to employ the word matter, it is the veritable matter — but a matter which is not external to the form, since this matter is rather pure thought and hence the absolute form itself. Accordingly, logic is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought. This realm is truth as it is without veil and in its own absolute nature. It can therefore be said that this content is the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite mind.

§ 54

Anaxagoras is praised as the man who first declared that *Nous*, thought, is the principle of the world, that the essence of the world is to be defined as thought. In so doing he laid the foundation for an intellectual view of the universe, the pure form of which must be logic.

What we are dealing with in logic is not a thinking *about* something which exists independently as a base for our thinking and apart from it, nor forms which are supposed to provide mere signs or distinguishing marks of truth; on the contrary, the necessary forms and self-consciousness of thought are the content and the ultimate truth itself.

§ 55

To get some idea of this one must discard the prejudice that truth must be something tangible. Such tangibility is, for example, imported even into the Platonic Ideas which are in God's thinking, as if they are, as it were, existing things but in another world or region; while the world of actuality exists outside that region and has a substantial existence distinct from those Ideas and only through this distinction is a substantial reality. The Platonic Idea is the universal, or more definitely the Notion of an object; only in its Notion does something possess actuality and to the extent that it is distinct from its Notion it ceases to be actual and is a non-entity; the side of tangibility and sensuous self-externality belongs to this null aspect. But on the other side, one can appeal to the conceptions of ordinary logic itself; for it is assumed, for example, that the determinations contained in definitions do not belong only to the knower, but are determinations of the object, constituting its innermost essence and its very own nature. Or, if from given determinations others are inferred, it is assumed that what is inferred is not something external and alien to the object, but rather that it belongs to the object itself, that to the thought there is a correspondent being.

§ 56

It is implied generally in the use of forms of the Notion, of judgment, syllogism, definition, division, etc., that they are not merely forms of self-conscious thinking but also of the objective understanding.

Thought is an expression which attributes the determination contained therein primarily to consciousness. But inasmuch as it is said that understanding, reason, is in the objective world, that mind and nature have universal laws to which their life and changes conform, then it is conceded that the determinations of thought equally have objective value and existence.

§ 57

The critical philosophy had, it is true, already turned metaphysics into logic but it, like the later idealism, as previously remarked, was overawed by the object, and so the logical determinations were given an essentially subjective significance with the result that these philosophies remained burdened with the object they had avoided and were left with the residue of a thing-in-itself, an infinite obstacle, as a beyond. But the liberation from the opposition of consciousness which the science of logic must be able to presuppose lifts the determinations of thought above this timid, incomplete standpoint and demands that they be considered not with any such limitation and reference but as they are in their own proper character, as logic, as pure reason.

§ 58

Kant moreover considers logic, that is, the aggregate of definitions and propositions which ordinarily passes for logic, to be fortunate in having attained so early to completion before the other sciences; since Aristotle, it has not lost any ground, but neither has it gained any, the latter because to all appearances it seems to be finished and complete. Now if logic has not undergone any change since Aristotle — and in fact, judging by modern compendiums of logic the changes frequently consist mainly in omissions — then surely the conclusion which should be drawn is that it is all the more in need of a total reconstruction; for spirit, after its labours over two thousand years, must have attained to a higher consciousness about its thinking and about its own pure, essential nature.

A comparison of the forms to which spirit has raised itself in the practical and religious sphere and in every branch of science both physical and mental, with the form presented by logic which is spirit's consciousness of its own pure essence, reveals so vast a difference that the utter inadequacy and unworthiness of the latter consciousness in comparison with the higher consciousness displayed in those other spheres cannot fail to strike the most superficial observer.

§ 59

In point of fact the need for a reconstruction of logic has long since been felt. In form and in content, logic, as exhibited in the text-books, may be said to have fallen into contempt. It is still dragged in, but more from a feeling

that one cannot dispense with logic altogether and because the tradition of its importance still survives, rather than from a conviction that such commonplace content and occupation with such empty forms is valuable and useful.

§ 60

The additions of psychological, pedagogic and even physiological material which logic received in the past have subsequently been recognised almost universally as disfigurements. A great part of these psychological, pedagogic and physiological observations, laws and rules, whether they occur in logic or anywhere else, must appear very shallow and trivial in themselves; and without exception all those rules such as, for example, that one must think out and test what one reads in books or hears by word of mouth, that when one's sight is not good one should help one's eyes by wearing spectacles — rules which in textbooks of so-called applied logic were solemnly set out in paragraphs and put forward as aids to the attainment of truth — these must strike everyone as superfluous — except only the writer or teacher who finds difficulty in expanding by some means or other the otherwise scanty and life-less content of logic.'

§ 61

Regarding this content, the reason why logic is so dull and spiritless has already been given above. Its determinations are accepted in their unmoved fixity and are brought only into external relation with each other. In judgments and syllogisms the operations are in the main reduced to and founded on the quantitative aspect of the determinations; consequently everything rests on an external difference, on mere comparison and becomes a completely analytical procedure and mechanical calculation. The deduction of the so-called rules and laws, chiefly of inference, is not much better than a manipulation of rods of unequal length in order to sort and group them according to size — than a childish game of fitting together the pieces of a coloured picture puzzle. Consequently, this thinking has been equated, not incorrectly, with reckoning, and reckoning again with this thinking. In arithmetic, numbers are regarded as devoid of any concrete conceptual content, so apart from their wholly external relationship they have no meaning, and neither in themselves nor in their interrelationships are thoughts. When it is calculated in mechanical fashion that three-fourths multiplied by two-thirds makes one-half, this operation contains about as much and as little thought as calculating whether in a logical figure this or that kind of syllogism is valid.

§ 62

Before these dead bones of logic can be quickened by spirit, and so become possessed of a substantial, significant content, its method must be that which alone can enable it to be pure science. In the present state of logic one can scarcely recognise even a trace of scientific method. It has roughly the form of an empirical science. The empirical sciences have found for their own appropriate purposes their own peculiar method, such as it is, of defining and classifying their material. Pure mathematics, too, has its method which is appropriate for its abstract objects and for the quantitative form in which alone it considers them. I have said what is essential in the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* about this method and, in general, the subordinate form of scientific method which can be employed in mathematics; but it will also be considered in more detail in the logic itself. Spinoza, Wolff and others have let themselves be misled in applying it also to philosophy and in making the external course followed by Notion-less quantity, the course of the Notion, a procedure which is absolutely contradictory.

Hitherto philosophy had not found its method; it regarded with envy the systematic structure of mathematics, and, as we have said, borrowed it or had recourse to the method of sciences which are only amalgams of given material, empirical propositions and thoughts — or even resorted to crude rejection of all method. However, the exposition of what alone can be the true method of philosophical science falls within the treatment of logic itself; for the method is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of logic.

In the *Phenomenology of Mind* I have expounded an example of this method in application to a more concrete object, namely to consciousness. Here we are dealing with forms of consciousness each of which in realising itself at the same time resolves itself, has for its result its own negation — and so passes into a higher form. All that is necessary to achieve scientific progress — and it is essential to strive to gain this quite *simple* insight — is the recognition of the logical principle that the negative is just as much positive, or that what is self-contradictory does not resolve itself into a nullity, into abstract nothingness, but essentially only into the negation

of its *particular* content, in other words, that such a negation is not all and every negation but the negation of a specific subject matter which resolves itself, and consequently is a specific negation, and therefore the result essentially contains that from which it results; which strictly speaking is a tautology, for otherwise it would be an immediacy, not a result. Because the result, the negation, is a *specific* negation, it has *content*. It is a fresh Notion but higher and richer than its predecessor; for it is richer by the negation or opposite of the latter, therefore contains it, but also something more, and is the unity of itself and its opposite. It is in this way that the system of Notions as such has to be formed — and has to complete itself in a purely continuous course in which nothing extraneous is introduced.

§ 63

I could not pretend that the method which I follow in this system of logic — or rather which this system in its own self follows — is not capable of greater completeness, of much elaboration in detail; but at the same time I know that it is the only true method. This is self-evident simply from the fact that it is not something distinct from its object and content; for it is the inwardness of the content, the dialectic which it possesses within itself, which is the mainspring of its advance. It is clear that no expositions can be accepted as scientifically valid which do not pursue the course of this method and do not conform to its simple rhythm, for this is the course of the subject matter itself.

§ 64

In conformity with this method, I would point out that the divisions and headings of the books, sections and chapters given in this work as well as the explanations associated with them, are made to facilitate a preliminary survey and strictly are only of *historical* value. They do not belong to the content and body of the science but are compilations of an external reflection which has already run through the whole of the exposition and consequently knows and indicates in advance the sequence of its moments before these are brought forward by the subject matter itself.

§ 65

Similarly in the other sciences, such preliminary definitions and divisions are in themselves nothing else but such external indications; but even within the particular science they are not raised above this status. Even in logic, for example, we may be told perhaps that 'logic has two main parts, the theory of elements and methodology', then under the former there straightway follows perhaps the superscription, *Laws of Thought*; and then, *Chapter I: Concepts. First Section: Of the Clearness of Concepts*, and so on. These definitions and divisions, made without any deduction or justification, constitute the systematic framework and the entire connectedness of such sciences. Such a logic regards it as its vocation to talk about the necessity of *deducing* concepts and truths from principles; but as regards what it calls method, the thought of a deduction of it simply does not occur to it. The procedure consists, perhaps, in grouping together what is similar and making what is simple precede what is complex, and other external considerations.

But as regards any inner, necessary connectedness, there is nothing more than the list of headings of the various parts and the transition is effected simply by saying *Chapter II*, or *We come now to the judgments*, and the like.

§ 66

The superscriptions and divisions, too, which appear in this system are not themselves intended to have any other significance than that of a list of contents. Besides, the *immanent coming-to-be* of the distinctions and the *necessity* of their connection with each other must present themselves in the exposition of the subject matter itself for it falls within the spontaneous progressive determination of the Notion.

§ 67

That which enables the Notion to advance itself is the already mentioned *negative* which it possesses within itself; it is this which constitutes the genuine dialectical moment. Dialectic in this way acquires an entirely different significance from what it had when it was considered as a separate part of Logic and when its aim and standpoint were, one may say, completely misunderstood. Even the *Platonic* dialectic, in the Parmenides itself and elsewhere even more directly, on the one hand, aims only at abolishing and refuting assertions through themselves and on the other hand, has for its result simply nothingness.

Dialectic is commonly regarded as an external, negative activity which does not pertain to the subject matter itself, having its ground in mere conceit as a subjective itch for unsettling and destroying what is fixed and substantial, or at least having for its result nothing but the worthlessness of the object dialectically considered.

§ 68

Kant rated dialectic higher — and this is among his greatest merits — for he freed it from the seeming arbitrariness which it possesses from the standpoint of ordinary thought and exhibited it as a *necessary function of reason*. Because dialectic was held to be merely the art of practising deceptions and producing illusions, the assumption was made forthwith that it is only a spurious game, the whole of its power resting solely on concealment of the deceit and that its results are obtained only surreptitiously and are a subjective illusion. True, Kant's expositions in the antinomies of pure reason, when closely examined as they will be at length in the course of this work, do not indeed deserve any great praise; but the general idea on which he based his expositions and which he vindicated, is the *objectivity of the illusion* and the *necessity of the contradiction* which belongs to the nature of thought determinations: primarily, it is true, with the significance that these determinations are applied by reason to *things in themselves*; but their nature is precisely what they are in reason and with reference to what is intrinsic or in itself.

This result, grasped in its positive aspect, is nothing else but the inner negativity of the determinations as their self-moving soul, the principle of all natural and spiritual life. But if no advance is made beyond the abstract negative aspect of dialectic, the result is only the familiar one that reason is incapable of knowing the infinite; a strange result for — since the infinite is the Reasonable — it asserts that reason is incapable of knowing the Reasonable.

§ 69

It is in this dialectic as it is here understood, that is, in the grasping of opposites in their unity or of the positive in the negative, that speculative thought consists.

It is the most important aspect of dialectic, but for thinking which is as yet unpractised and unfree it is the most difficult. Such thinking, if it is still engaged in breaking itself of the habit of employing sensuously concrete terms and of ratiocination, must first practise abstract thinking, hold fast Notions in their *determinateness* and learn to cognise by means of them. An exposition of logic to this end would, in its method, have to keep to the division of the subject above-mentioned and with regard to the more detailed contents, to the definitions given for the particular Notions without touching on the dialectical aspect. As regards its external structure, such an exposition would resemble the usual presentation of this science, but it would also be distinguished from it with respect to the content and still would serve for practice in abstract thinking, though not in speculative thinking, a purpose which can never be realised by the logic which has become popular through the addition of psychological and anthropological material. It would give to mind the picture of a methodically ordered whole, although the soul of the structure, the method (which dwells in the dialectical aspect) would not itself appear in it.

§ 70

Finally, with respect to education and the relation of the individual to logic, I would further remark that this science, like grammar, appears in two different aspects or values. It is one thing for him who comes to it and the sciences generally for the first time, but it is another thing for him who comes back to it from these sciences. He who begins the study of grammar finds in its forms and laws dry abstractions, arbitrary rules, in general an isolated collection of definitions and terms which exhibit only the value and significance of what is implied in their immediate meaning; there is nothing to be known in them other than themselves. On the other hand, he who has mastered a language and at the same time has a comparative knowledge of other languages, he alone can make contact with the spirit and culture of a people through the grammar of its language; the same rules and forms now have a substantial, living value. Similarly, he who approaches this science at first finds in logic an isolated system of abstractions which, confined within itself, does not embrace within its scope the other knowledges and sciences.

On the contrary, when contrasted with the wealth of the world as pictorially conceived, with the apparently real content of the other sciences, and compared with the promise of absolute science to unveil the essential being of this wealth, the inner nature of mind and the world, the truth, then this science in its abstract

shape, in the colourless, cold simplicity of its pure determinations looks as if it could achieve anything sooner than the fulfilment of its promise and seems to confront that richness as an empty, insubstantial form. The first acquaintance with logic confines its significance to itself alone; its content passes only for a detached occupation with the determinations of thought, *alongside* which other scientific activities possess on their own account a matter and content of their own, on which logic may perhaps have a formal influence, though an influence which comes only from itself and which if necessary can of course also be dispensed with so far as the scientific structure and its study are concerned.

The other sciences have on the whole discarded the correct method, that is, a sequence of definitions, axioms, theorems and their proofs, etc.; so-called natural logic now has its own validity in the sciences and manages to get along without any special knowledge of the nature of thought itself. But the matter and content of these sciences is held to be completely independent of logic and also has more appeal for sense, feeling, figurate conception, and practical interest of any kind.

§ 71

At first, therefore, logic must indeed be learnt as something which one understands and sees into quite well but in which, at the beginning, one feels the lack of scope and depth and a wider significance. It is only after profounder acquaintance with the other sciences that logic ceases to be for subjective spirit a merely abstract universal and reveals itself as the universal which embraces within itself the wealth of the particular — just as the same proverb, in the mouth of a youth who understands it quite well, does not possess the wide range of meaning which it has in the mind of a man with the experience of a lifetime behind him, for whom the meaning is expressed in all its power. Thus the value of logic is only apprehended when it is preceded by experience of the sciences; it then displays itself to mind as the universal truth, not as a *particular knowledge alongside* other matters and realities, but as the essential being of all these latter.

§ 72

Now although the mind is not conscious of this power of logic at the beginning of its study, it none the less receives within itself through such study the power which leads it into all truth. The system of logic is the realm of shadows, the world of simple essentialities freed from all sensuous concreteness. The study of this science, to dwell and labour in this shadowy realm, is the absolute culture and discipline of consciousness. In logic, consciousness is busy with something remote from sensuous intuitions and aims, from feelings, from the merely imagined world of figurate conception. Considered from its negative aspect, this business consists in holding off the contingency of ordinary thinking and the arbitrary selection of particular grounds — or their opposites — as valid.

§ 73

But above all, thought acquires thereby self-reliance and independence. It becomes at home in abstractions and in progressing by means of Notions free from sensuous substrata, develops an unsuspected power of assimilating in rational form all the various knowledges and sciences in their complex variety, of grasping and retaining them in their essential character, stripping them of their external features and in this way extracting from them the logical element, or what is the same thing, filling the abstract basis of Logic acquired by study with the substantial content of absolute truth and giving it the value of a universal which no longer stands as a particular alongside other particulars but includes them all within its grasp and is their essence, the absolutely True.

5. The absolute is subject –

[Φ 17](#). In my view – a view which the developed exposition of the system itself can alone justify – everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as Substance but as Subject as well. At the same time we must note that concrete substantiality implicates and involves the universal or the immediacy of knowledge itself, as well as that immediacy which is being, or immediacy *qua* object *for* knowledge. If the generation which heard God spoken of as the One Substance was shocked and revolted by such a characterisation of his nature, the reason lay partly in the instinctive feeling that in such a conception self-consciousness was simply submerged, and not preserved. But partly, again, the opposite position, which maintains thinking to be merely subjective thinking, abstract universality as such, is exactly the same bare uniformity, is undifferentiated, unmoved substantiality. And even if, in the third place, thought combines with itself the being of substance, and conceives immediacy or intuition (*Anschauung*) as thinking, it is still a question whether this intellectual intuition does not fall back into that inert, abstract simplicity, and exhibit and expound reality itself in an unreal manner.

6. – and what this is

[Φ 18](#). The living substance, further, is that being which is truly subject, or, what is the same thing, is truly realised and actual (*wirklich*) solely in the process of positing itself, or in mediating with its own self its transitions from one state or position to the opposite. As subject it is pure and simple negativity, and just on that account a process of splitting up what is simple and undifferentiated, a process of duplicating and setting factors in opposition, which [process] in turn is the negation of this indifferent diversity and of the opposition of factors it entails. True reality is merely this process of reinstating self-identity, of reflecting into its own self in and from its other, and is not an original and primal unity as such, not an immediate unity as such. It is the process of its own becoming, the circle which presupposes its end as its purpose, and has its end for its beginning; it becomes concrete and actual only by being carried out, and by the end it involves.

[Φ 19](#). The life of God and divine intelligence, then, can, if we like, be spoken of as love disporting with itself; but this idea falls into edification, and even sinks into insipidity, if it lacks the seriousness, the suffering, the patience, and the labour of the negative. *Per se* the divine life is no doubt undisturbed identity and oneness with itself, which finds no serious obstacle in otherness and estrangement, and none in the surmounting of this estrangement. But this “per se” is abstract generality, where we abstract from its real nature, which consists in its being objective, to itself, conscious of itself on its own account (*für sich zu sein*); and where consequently we neglect altogether the self-movement which is the formal character of its activity. If the form is declared to correspond to the essence, it is just for that reason a misunderstanding to suppose that knowledge can be content with the “per se”, the essence, but can do without the form, that the absolute principle, or absolute intuition, makes the carrying out of the former, or the development of the latter, needless. Precisely because the form is as necessary to the essence as the essence to itself, absolute reality must not be conceived of and expressed as essence alone, i.e. as immediate substance, or as pure self-intuition of the Divine, but as form also, and with the entire wealth of the developed form. Only then is it grasped and expressed as really actual.

[Φ 20](#). The truth is the whole. The whole, however, is merely the essential nature reaching its completeness through the process of its own development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a result, that only at the end is it what it is in very truth; and just in that consists its nature, which is to be actual, subject, or self-becoming, self-development. Should it appear contradictory to say that the Absolute has to be conceived essentially as a result, a little consideration will set this appearance of contradiction in its true light. The beginning, the principle, or the Absolute, as at first or immediately expressed, is merely the universal. If we say “all animals”, that does not pass for zoology; for the same reason we see at once that the words absolute, divine, eternal, and so on do not express what is implied in them; and only mere words like these, in point of fact, express intuition as the immediate. Whatever is more than a word like that, even the mere transition to a proposition, is a form of mediation, contains a process towards another state from which we must return once more. It is this process of mediation, however, that is rejected with horror, as if absolute knowledge were being

surrendered when more is made of mediation than merely the assertion that it is nothing absolute, and does not exist in the Absolute.

Φ 21. This horrified rejection of mediation, however, arises as a fact from want of acquaintance with its nature, and with the nature of absolute knowledge itself. For mediating is nothing but self-identity working itself out through an active self-directed process; or, in other words, it is reflection into self, the aspect in which the ego is for itself, objective to itself. It is pure negativity, or, reduced to its utmost abstraction, the process of bare and simple becoming. The ego, or becoming in general, this process of mediating, is, because of its being simple, just immediacy coming to be, and is immediacy itself. We misconceive therefore the nature of reason if we exclude reflection or mediation from ultimate truth., and do not take it to be a positive moment of the Absolute. It is reflection which constitutes truth the final result, and yet at the same time does away with the contrast between result and the process of arriving at it. For this process is likewise simple, and therefore not distinct from the form of truth, which consists in appearing as simple in the result; it is indeed just this restoration and return to simplicity. While the embryo is certainly, in itself, implicitly a human being, it is not so explicitly, it is not by itself a human being (*für sich*); man is explicitly man only in the form of developed and cultivated reason, which has made itself to be what it is implicitly. Its actual reality is first found here. But this result arrived at is itself simple immediacy; for it is self-conscious freedom, which is at one with itself, and has not set aside the opposition it involves and left it there, but has made its account with it and become reconciled to it.

Φ 22. What has been said may also be expressed by saying that reason is purposive activity. The exaltation of so-called nature at the expense of thought misconceived, and more especially the rejection of external purposiveness, have brought the idea of purpose in general into disrepute. All the same, in the sense in which Aristotle, too, characterises nature as purposive activity, purpose is the immediate, the undisturbed, the unmoved which is self-moving; as such it is subject. Its power of moving, taken abstractly, is its existence for itself, or pure negativity. The result is the same as the beginning solely because the beginning is purpose. Stated otherwise, what is actual and concrete is the same as its inner principle or notion simply because the immediate *qua* purpose contains within it the self or pure actuality. The realised purpose, or concrete actuality, is movement and development unfolded. But this very unrest is the self; and it is one and the same with that immediacy and simplicity characteristic of the beginning just for the reason that it is the result, and has returned upon itself – while this latter again is just the self, and the self is self-referring and self-relating identity and simplicity.

Φ 23. The need to think of the Absolute as subject, has led men to make use of statements like “God is the eternal”, the “moral order of the world”, or “love”, etc. In such propositions the truth is just barely stated to be Subject, but not set forth as the process of reflectively mediating itself with itself. In a proposition of that kind we begin with the word God. By itself this is a meaningless sound, a mere name; the predicate says afterwards *what* it is, gives it content and meaning: the empty beginning becomes real knowledge only when we thus get to the end of the statement. So far as that goes, why not speak alone of the eternal, of the moral order of the world, etc., or, like the ancients, of pure conceptions such as being, the one, etc., i.e. of what gives the meaning without adding the meaningless sound at all? But this word just indicates that it is not a being or essence or universal in general that is put forward, but something reflected into self, a subject. Yet at the same time this acceptance of the Absolute as Subject is merely anticipated, not really affirmed. The subject is taken to be a fixed point, and to it as their support the predicates are attached, by a process falling within the individual knowing about it, but not looked upon as belonging to the point of attachment itself; only by such a process, however, could the content be presented as subject. Constituted as it is, this process cannot belong to the subject; but when that point of support is fixed to start with, this process cannot be otherwise constituted, it can only be external. The anticipation that the Absolute is subject is therefore not merely not the realisation of this conception; it even makes realisation impossible. For it makes out the notion to be a static point, while its actual reality is self-movement, self-activity.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, On the Question of Dialectics (1915)

The splitting of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts (see the quotation from Philo on [Heraclitus](#) at the beginning of Section III, “On Cognition,” in [Lasalle’s](#) book on Heraclitus^[1]) is the *essence* (one of the “essentials,” one of the principal, if not the principal, characteristics or features) of dialectics. That is precisely how [Hegel](#), too, puts the matter ([Aristotle](#) in his *Metaphysics* continually *grapples* with it and *combats* Heraclitus and Heraclitean ideas).

The correctness of this aspect of the content of [dialectics](#) must be tested by the history of science. This aspect of dialectics (e.g. in [Plekhanov](#)) usually receives inadequate attention: the identity of opposites is taken as the sum-total of *examples* [“for example, a seed,” “for example, primitive communism.” The same is true of [Engels](#). But it is “in the interests of popularisation...”] and not as a *law of cognition* (and as a law of the objective world).

In mathematics: + and —. Differential and integral.

In mechanics: action and reaction.

In physics: positive and negative electricity.

In chemistry: the combination and dissociation of atoms.

In social science: the class struggle.

The [identity of opposites](#) (it would be more correct, perhaps, to say their “unity,”—although the difference between the terms identity and unity is not particularly important here. In a certain sense both are correct) is the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, *mutually exclusive*, opposite tendencies in *all* phenomena and processes of nature (*including* mind and society). The condition for the knowledge of all processes of the world in their “*self-movement*,” in their spontaneous development, in their real life, is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites. Development is the “struggle” of opposites. The two basic (or two possible? Or two historically observable?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, *and* development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation).

In the first conception of motion, *self*-movement, its *driving* force, its source, its motive, remains in the shade (or this source is made *external*—God, subject, etc.). In the second conception the chief attention is directed precisely to knowledge of the source of “*self*”-movement.

The first conception is lifeless, pale and dry. The second is living. The second *alone* furnishes the key to the “self-movement” of everything existing; it alone furnishes the key to “leaps,” to the “break in continuity,” to the “transformation into the opposite,” to the destruction of the old and the emergence of the new. The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.

NB: The distinction between [subjectivism](#) (scepticism, sophistry, etc.) and dialectics, incidentally, is that in [\(objective\)](#) dialectics the difference between the [relative and the absolute](#) is itself relative. For objective dialectics there *is* an absolute *within* the relative. For subjectivism and sophistry the relative is only relative and excludes the absolute.

In his *Capital*, Marx first analyses the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday *relation* of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, viz., the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this “cell” of [bourgeois society](#)) analysis reveals *all* the contradictions (or the germs of *all* contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows us the development (*both* growth *and* movement) of these contradictions and of this society in the Σ ^[2] of its individual parts. From its beginning to its end.

Such must also be the method of exposition (i.e., study) of dialectics in general (for with Marx the dialectics of bourgeois society is only a particular case of dialectics). To begin with what is the simplest, most ordinary, common, etc., with **any proposition**: the leaves of a tree are green; John is a man; Fido is a dog, etc. Here already we have *dialectics* (as Hegel’s genius recognised): the **individual** is the *universal*. (cf. Aristoteles, *Metaphisik*, translation by Schegler, Bd. II, S. 40, 3. Buch, 4. Kapitel, 8-9: “denn natürlich kann man nicht der

Meinung sin, daß es ein Haus (a house in general) gebe außer den sichtbaren Häusern,” “ού γρ ἄν ὑείημεν εἶναι τινα οἰχίαν παρα τῆς τινός οἰχίας”).^[3] Consequently, the opposites (the individual is opposed to the universal) are identical: the individual exists only in the connection that leads to the universal. The universal exists only in the individual and through the individual. Every individual is (in one way or another) a universal. Every universal is (a fragment, or an aspect, or the essence of) an individual. Every universal only approximately embraces all the individual objects. Every individual enters incompletely into the universal, etc., etc. Every individual is connected by thousands of transitions with other **kinds** of individuals (things, phenomena, processes) etc. *Here already* we have the elements, the germs, the concepts of *necessity*, of objective connection in nature, etc. Here already we have the contingent and the necessary, the phenomenon and the essence; for when we say: John is a man, Fido is a dog, *this* is a leaf of a tree, etc., we *disregard* a number of attributes as *contingent*; we separate the essence from the appearance, and counterpose the one to the other.

Thus in any proposition we can (and must) disclose as in a “nucleus” (“cell”) the germs of *all* the elements of dialectics, and thereby show that dialectics is a property of all human knowledge in general. And natural science shows us (and here again it must be demonstrated in *any* simple instance) objective nature with the same qualities, the transformation of the individual into the universal, of the contingent into the necessary, transitions, modulations, and the reciprocal connection of opposites. Dialectics *is* the theory of knowledge of (Hegel and) Marxism. This is the “aspect” of the matter (it is not “an aspect” but the *essence* of the matter) to which Plekhanov, not to speak of other Marxists, paid no attention.

* * *

Knowledge is represented in the form of a series of circles both by Hegel (see [Logic](#)) and by the modern “epistemologist” of natural science, the eclectic and foe of Hegelianism (which he did not understand!), Paul Volkmann (see his *Erkenntnistheoretische Grundzüge*,^[4] S.)

“Circles” in philosophy: [is a chronology of persons essential? No!]
Ancient: from Democritus to Plato and the dialectics of Heraclitus.
Renaissance: Descartes versus Gassendi (Spinoza?)
Modern: Holbach—Hegel (via Berkeley, Hume, Kant). Hegel—Feuerbach—Marx

Dialectics as *living*, many-sided knowledge (with the number of sides eternally increasing), with an infinite number of shades of every approach and approximation to reality (with a philosophical system growing into a whole out of each shade)—here we have an immeasurably rich content as compared with “metaphysical” [materialism](#), the fundamental *misfortune* of which is its inability to apply dialectics to the Bildertheorie,^[5] to the process and development of knowledge.

Philosophical [idealism](#) is *only* nonsense from the stand point of crude, simple, metaphysical materialism. From the standpoint of *dialectical* materialism, on the other hand, philosophical idealism is a *one-sided*, exaggerated, überschwengliches (Dietzgen)^[6] development (inflation, distension) of one of the features, aspects, facets of knowledge, into an absolute, *divorced* from matter, from nature, apotheosised. Idealism is clerical obscurantism. True. But philosophical idealism is (“*more correctly*” and “*in addition*”) a *road* to clerical obscurantism || NB this through one of the shades of the infinitely complex *knowledge* (dialectical) of man. || aphorism

Human knowledge is not (or does not follow) a straight line, but a curve, which endlessly approximates a series of circles, a spiral. Any fragment, segment, section of this curve can be transformed (transformed one-sidedly) into an independent, complete, straight line, which then (if one does not see the wood for the trees) leads into the quagmire, into clerical obscurantism (where it is *anchored* by the class interests of the ruling classes). Rectilinearity and one-sidedness, woodenness and petrification, subjectivism and subjective blindness—voilà the epistemological roots of idealism. And clerical obscurantism (= philosophical idealism), of course, has *epistemological* roots, it is not groundless; it is a *sterile flower* undoubtedly, but a sterile flower that grows on the living tree of living, fertile, genuine, powerful, omnipotent, objective, absolute human knowledge.

^[1] See p. 348 of this volume—*Ed.*

^[2] summation—*Ed.*

^[3] “for, of course, one cannot hold the opinion that there can be a house (in general) apart from visible houses.”—*Ed.*

^[4] P. Volkmann, *Erkenntnistheoretische Grundzüge der Naturwissenschaften*, Leipzig-Berlin, 1910, p. 35.—*Ed.*

^[5] theory of reflection—*Ed.*

^[6] The reference to the use by [Josef Dietzgen](#) of the term “überschwenglich,” which means: exaggerated, excessive, infinite; for example, in the book *Kleinere philosophische Schriften (Minor Philosophical Writings)*, Stuttgart, 1903, p. 204, Dietzgen uses this term as follows: “absolute and relative are not infinitely separated.”

Lenin, Summary/Elements of Dialectics (1914)

1. the *objectivity* of consideration (not examples, not divergencies, but the Thing-in-itself).
2. the entire totality of the manifold *relations* of this thing to others.
3. the *development* of this thing, (phenomenon, respectively), its own movement, its own life.
4. the internally contradictory *tendencies (and sides)* in this thing.
5. the thing (phenomenon, etc.) as the sum *and unity of opposites*.
6. the *struggle*, respectively unfolding, of these opposites, contradictory strivings, etc.
7. the union of analysis and synthesis—the break-down of the separate parts and the totality, the summation of these parts.
8. the relations of each thing (phenomenon, etc.) are not only manifold, but general, universal. Each thing (phenomenon, process, etc.) is connected with *every other*.
9. not only the unity of opposites, but the *transitions* of *every* determination, quality, feature, side, property into *every other* (into its opposite?).
10. the endless process of the discovery of *new sides*, relations, etc.
11. the endless process of the deepening of man’s knowledge of the thing, of phenomena, processes, etc., from appearance to essence and from less profound to more profound essence.
12. from co-existence to causality and from one form of connection and reciprocal dependence to another, deeper, more general form.
13. the repetition at a higher stage of certain features, properties, etc., of the lower and
14. the apparent return to the old (negation of the negation).
15. the struggle of content with form and conversely. The throwing off of the form, the transformation of the content.
16. the transition of quantity into quality and *vice versa* (15 and 16 are examples of 9).

In brief, dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. This embodies the essence of dialectics, but it requires explanations and development.

Lenin, “Once Again on the Trade Unions” (1921), 92-4

During the December 30 discussion, Bukharin reasoned as follows:

“Comrade Zinoviev has said that the trade unions are a school of communism, and Trotsky has said that they are a technical and administrative apparatus for industrial management. I see no logical grounds for proof that either proposition is wrong; both, and a combination of both, are right” (p. 48).

Bukharin and his “group” or “faction” make the same point in their thesis 6: “On the one hand, they [the trade unions] are a school of communism . . . and on the other, they are—increasingly—a component part of the economic apparatus and of state administration in general” (*Pravda*, January 16).

That is where we find Comrade Bukharin’s fundamental theoretical mistake, which is substitution of eclecticism (especially popular with the authors of diverse “fashionable” and reactionary philosophical systems) for Marxist dialectics.

When Comrade Bukharin speaks of “logical” grounds, his whole reasoning shows that he takes—unconsciously, perhaps—the standpoint of formal or scholastic logic, and not of dialectical or Marxist logic. Let me explain this by taking the simple example which Comrade Bukharin himself gives. In the December 30 discussion he said:

“Comrades, many of you may find that the current controversy suggests something like this: two men come in and invite each other to define the tumbler on the lectern. One says: ‘It is a glass cylinder, and a curse on anyone who says different.’ The other one says: ‘A tumbler is a drinking vessel, and a curse on anyone who says different.’” (p. 46).

The reader will see that Bukharin’s example was meant to give me a popular explanation of the harm of one-track thinking. I accept it with gratitude, and in the one-good turn-deserves-another spirit offer a popular explanation of the difference between dialectics and eclecticism.

A tumbler is assuredly both a glass cylinder and a drinking vessel. But there are more than these two properties, qualities or facets to it; there are an infinite number of them, an infinite number of “mediacies” and inter-relationships with the rest of the world. A tumbler is a heavy object which can be used as a missile; it can serve as a paper weight, a receptacle for a captive butterfly, or a valuable object with an artistic engraving or design, and this has nothing at all to do with whether or not it can be used for drinking, is made of glass, is cylindrical or not quite, and so on and so forth.

Moreover, if I needed a tumbler just now for drinking, it would not in the least matter how cylindrical it was, and whether it was actually made of glass; what would matter though would be whether it had any holes in the bottom, or anything that would cut my lips when I drank, etc. But if I did not need a tumbler for drinking but for a purpose that could be served by any glass cylinder, a tumbler with a cracked bottom or without one at all would do just as well, etc.

Formal logic, which is as far as schools go (and should go, with suitable abridgements for the lower forms), deals with formal definitions, draws on what is most common, or glaring, and stops there. When two or more different definitions are taken and combined at random (a glass cylinder and a drinking vessel), the result is an eclectic definition which is indicative of different facets of the object, and nothing more.

Dialectical logic demands that we should go further. Firstly, if we are to have a true knowledge of an object we must look at and examine all its facets, its connections and “mediacies”. That is something we cannot ever hope to achieve completely, but the rule of comprehensiveness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity. Secondly, dialectical logic requires that an object should be taken in development, in change, in “self-movement” (as Hegel sometimes puts it). This is not immediately obvious in respect of such an object as a tumbler, but it, too, is in flux, and this holds especially true for its purpose, use and *connection* with the surrounding world. Thirdly, a full “definition” of an object must include the whole of human experience, both as a criterion of truth and a practical indicator of its connection with human wants. Fourthly, dialectical logic holds that “truth is always concrete, never abstract”, as the late Plekhanov liked to say after Hegel. (Let me add in parenthesis for the benefit of young Party members that you *cannot* hope to become a *real*, intelligent Communist without making a study—

and I mean *study*—of all of Plekhanov’s philosophical writings, because nothing better has been written on Marxism anywhere in the world.^[3b])

Notes:

[3b] By the way, it would be a good thing, first, if the current edition of Plekhanov’s works contained a special volume or volumes of all his philosophical articles, with detailed indexes, etc., to be included in a series of standard textbooks on communism; secondly I think the workers’ state must demand that professors of philosophy should have a knowledge of Plekhanov’s exposition of Marxist philosophy and ability to impart it to their students. But all that is a digression from “propaganda” to “administration”—*Lenin*.

MOVEMENTS OF CATEGORIES

... Hegel says:

“But it is in the nature of the content and that alone which lives and stirs in philosophic cognition, while it is the very reflection of the content, which itself originates and determines the nature of philosophy”.

- Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 35.

This is the key to the Hegelian dialectic and therefore to Marxist thinking. We shall meet it again and again, and shall take it from every point of view until we get it. Thought is not an instrument you apply to a content. The content moves, develops, changes and creates new categories of thought, and gives them direction....

There is a philosophical term in Hegel for thinking in finite categories. He calls it Understanding. When you recognize that the categories of thought are not finite but move, and when you know *how and why they move*, then your method is the method of Reason. Don't think you know that categories move. You don't. You just don't until you know how and why. You be patient and humble. Hegel says it 1,000 times. *All error*, in thought *and action*, comes from this. *All error. All.* He is right, so we will, if you please, look and stop and look again and in and out and in and out and round and round and about, constantly setting off in different directions from the same spot.

“Understanding makes determinations and maintains them” (*Ibid.*, 36). There is a reformist international, Mensheviks, a revolutionary international, Bolsheviks, there are general strikes, soviets (1917 model), a Bolshevik party, etc. We fit what we perceive into these categories. At every plenum we study them, we clarify them, and we change them a little. In reality, the old categories hold us by the throat, especially *thinkers*. The Russian revolution of February caused violent changes in Lenin's categories. World War I set him revising the categories of the 2nd International. You can for years at plenums and conventions, etc., develop and clarify and objectivize the subjective and subjectivize the objective and make a truly grand display of movement and opposition and so on, only to show by 1938, and to have exposed in 1941 that all our conceptions of revolutionary and reformist internationals of 1940 were the same old ones we had in 1917. *We*. But even this category, we, can be a finite, fixed determination or a dialectical category of Reason (caught you that time with everything down. I *warned* you to be careful). Yes. Let us examine “we.” For one thing many of us splitters *had at the back of our minds* that the Stalinists *were* going to support Stalin. Nobody said so. But it played a part in our calculations. So the “we” who still supported Leon Trotsky's views in 1940 were not the “we” who did so in 1938. But nothing was said. It took us six years after the fact to clarify this matter and show what was the importance of this in Leon Trotsky's calculations. No, the error of errors is to *begin* by believing you *know* that categories change and Leon Trotsky didn't. He would have been able to lecture you on changing categories most profoundly. He talked about it all the time. But fixed and finite determinations held him by the throat to the end.

What we have to do therefore is to make one great experience of thinking in terms of Understanding and thinking about the same object in terms of Reason. We have the Logic, we have our experience with Trotskyism. Let us master them, testing one by the other. I can go so far as to say that in the Marxist movement, if you and some other person or group consistently clash in your estimate of some object, some problem, then one is right, he is using Reason, and the other, probably Understanding. There are various degrees of Understanding and Reason, but the dividing line is clear. In fact Hegel says there are three broad divisions of cognition:

1. Simple, every-day, commonsense, vulgar empiricism, ordinary perception.
2. Understanding.
3. Dialectics.

And, Holy heaven preserve us, *if* you do not get out to Dialectic and stay in Understanding too long you tumble right back into empiricism and commonsense. Again the Logic tells you how and why.

But, being humble and patient and inquiring, we ask, why should some use common sense or empirical perception, and some Understanding and some Dialectic? It is a question we shall touch upon *as far as necessary*, more in the later sections than here. But here again these categories as categories of thought will surprise us. They are not separate. *They are connected*. No man can think at all without this simple “perception,” the data of the senses, sometimes called intuition. *But if you stay there*, you get lost. You must break out of these fixed, limited, finite categories of sense, and you analyze, you so to speak, *classify*. You get a fine new set of thoughts and you fix sense data in those thoughts. A genuine empiricist sees the CIO as something that happened. It came, that’s all. A labor party? “I don’t think American workers will ever have one,” he says. Understanding, however, thinks in terms of the First International, Second International, Third International, in embryo. Hegel says that you need Understanding! You can’t go a step without it. You *must* have things *fixed*, in their categories, finite, limited, exact. All scientific thought must do form, Second International, Third (Lenin and his 21 points), you cannot move a step. You can’t begin to discuss. Strange, isn’t it, from a man who has been belaboring Understanding. This cognition is called Synthetic. It is associated with Kant. Understanding, therefore, is very important. Watch it again, it is a form of negation. It does not take objects as common sense, labels them, just as they are. It categorizes them, puts them in order, divides them into precise and limited, finite parts and groups. It negates. But precisely because it does not at once begin negating the determinations it has made it leads its user into trouble. He must move on to “mysticism,” reason, speculative truth. It is because Understanding is a *necessary* state that it is so dangerous. And note that it gets into trouble because the great sin of Analytic cognition is repeated by Synthetic Understanding when it makes logical determinations, thinks them out and keeps them permanent! It creates universals, a great state in thought, but the universals it creates assume permanence. They must therefore remain abstract.

Whether you say with Marx that schema reflects the material basis or with Hegel that material basis reflects the schema which is only Mind working itself out, the point is the connection between the two. Hegel, we remember, said most emphatically and will say it again that as the object moves, and it must move, spirit, philosophical knowing, moves too. The categories move and at a certain stage they have to change into new categories. Logic is the analysis of this movement of philosophical cognition, but movement of the different stages of philosophical, i.e., correct cognition, gives us the movement of the object. Which comes first, who gets the credit, is not important for us now. And one can learn plenty from Hegel about the Method and ignore his eternal mind. The study of philosophy is the study of the method of correct thinking. You must know categorization in general, movement in general, changes in categories in general, and then you can examine an object, e.g. the labor movement, its method of change, etc., conscious always of the general laws as exemplified in the particular concrete. Thus there is a Universal logic of say drama, which is expressed in Greek, Elizabethan, classical or Sbarbaria drama, i.e., in a particular form of classification; a concrete, an individual example of it at a particular time in Aeschylus, or Racine or Shaw. Alas! Aristotle studies Sophocles & Co. and laid down certain categories which he drew from them. These he called the “Poetics.” And, oh! the rivers of sweat and conflicts of centuries in which men said that drama was to be fitted into those. A clear case of Understanding. Clear? Not clear to a good dialectician. What objective impulses in society *maintained* them as valid? And there is where a serious philosophical cognition can begin.

Hegel is going to make a tremendous organization and analysis of thoughts, categories, etc. But he takes time out to say, *and we will forget this at our peril*, that categories, the forms of logic, are in Desire, Will, etc., *human feelings and actions*. We abstract them to think about them. But they come from there. He says again that categories are used in everyday life—Battle, War, Nation are categories, for they sum up, generalize, an endless multitude of particular things, actions, etc. They help us to determine objective relations. Such categories have

been called Natural Logic. This warns us that the whole magnificent structure is rooted in the concrete. We are going to think about it and analyze it and speculate, but every serious movement has come from below. Consciousness, logic as the science of thought, though itself therefore is the link between us and *things*. But we had better here get hold of something else which this emphasis on the concrete means. Trotsky spent years, and we with him, pointing out how the workers were mistaken and deceived by Stalinism. Some of us still say that. Hegelianism is merciless on the talk of such deception. This support of Stalinism by the workers is an objective fact, one of the most potent objective facts. To say that the workers are fooled is to condemn the workers as being play-things of chance. No. The phenomenon of Stalinism requires that you take it as an impulse from below and incorporate it into your categories and drive *them* forward.

This emphasis on the concrete is the most difficult thing to grasp about the dialectic. I'll tell you why at once, in simple terms, which will become more and more complex. It involves the mental apparatus (and this Kant's immortal contribution) with which you look at things. Here is a crude example. Having been trained to see reptiles as a crawling snake or lizard you cannot possibly look at a bird and recognize that its structure is so to speak reptilian. You have to strip the bird of its feathers, open it, examine it, and then *this is the thing*, organize in your mind a new conception of reptilian structure which includes birds. Until this is done, you will continue to exclude birds. They, you will say, they are different. You reject them. It is an elementary static example. What Hegel is saying is this, Stalinism is concrete truth, you watch it, accept it, respect it. That is the *truth*. But we are not empiricists. So our ideas, our speculative reason, our mental spectacles, our theory must be strenuously and systematically expanded so as to include Stalinism as a necessary, an inevitable, form of development of the labor movement. The workers are *not* mistaken. They are *not* deceived. Not in any serious sense of these words. They are making an experience that is necessary to their own development. Stop saying that they are deceived. Set down and reorganize your categories to fit this phenomenon. Let go that tight grip of your old categories which puts you in the position where all you do is to shout at Stalinism and predict it will do things which it does not do.

Chapter Seven: The Labour-Process and the Process of Producing Surplus-Value

SECTION 1. THE LABOUR-PROCESS OR THE PRODUCTION OF USE-VALUES

The capitalist buys labour-power in order to use it; and labour-power in use is labour itself. The purchaser of labour-power consumes it by setting the seller of it to work. By working, the latter becomes actually, what before he only was potentially, labour-power in action, a labourer. In order that his labour may re-appear in a commodity, he must, before all things, expend it on something useful, on something capable of satisfying a want of some sort. Hence, what the capitalist sets the labourer to produce, is a particular use-value, a specified article. The fact that the production of use-values, or goods, is carried on under the control of a capitalist and on his behalf, does not alter the general character of that production. We shall, therefore, in the first place, have to consider the labour-process independently of the particular form it assumes under given social conditions. Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material re-actions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway. We are not now dealing with those primitive instinctive forms of labour that remind us of the mere animal. An immeasurable interval of time separates the state of things in which a man brings his labour-power to market for sale as a commodity, from that state in which human labour was still in its first instinctive stage. We pre-suppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realises a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will. And this subordination is no mere momentary act. Besides the exertion of the bodily organs, the process demands that, during the whole operation, the workman's will be steadily in consonance with his purpose. This means close attention. The less he is attracted by the nature of the work, and the mode in which it is carried on, and the less, therefore, he enjoys it as something which gives play to his bodily and mental powers, the more close his attention is forced to be.

The elementary factors of the labour-process are 1, the personal activity of man, *i.e.*, work itself, 2, the subject of that work, and 3, its instruments.

PART III: FROM HEGEL TO MARX

Questions:

1. In the conflict between master and slave described by Hegel, at what points can each be described as "class conscious"?
2. "My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, *i.e.*, the process of thinking, which, under the name of "the Idea," he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of "the Idea." With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought." [*Capital I*: 191] What, then, is the relationship of Marx to Hegel?
3. Compare Lenin's statement that "the result of activity is the test of subjective cognition and the criterion of *objectivity which truly is*" [38:219] with his statement that the essence of dialectics "must be tested by the history of science." [38:357] Would Gramsci agree with Lenin's tests?

- Reread: Karl Marx, *Capital I* (177-8); Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (100-1)

G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, 228-40

A: Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage

Φ 178. SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it *is* only by being acknowledged or "recognized". The conception of this its unity in its duplication, of infinitude realizing itself in self-consciousness, has many sides to it and encloses within it elements of varied significance. Thus its moments must on the one hand be strictly kept apart in detailed distinctiveness, and, on the other, in this distinction must, at the same time, also be taken as not distinguished, or must always be accepted and understood in their opposite sense. This double meaning of what is distinguished lies in the nature of self-consciousness: — of its being infinite, or directly the opposite of the determinateness in which it is fixed. The detailed exposition of the notion of this spiritual unity in its duplication will bring before us the process of Recognition.

1. Duplicated Self-Consciousness

Φ 179. Self-consciousness has before it another self-consciousness; it has come outside itself. This has a double significance. First it has lost its own self, since it finds itself as an *other* being; secondly, it has thereby sublated that other, for it does not regard the other as essentially real, but sees its own self in the other.

Φ 180. It must cancel this its other. To do so is the sublation of that first double meaning, and is therefore a second double meaning. First, it must set itself to sublimate the other independent being, in order thereby to become certain of itself as true being, secondly, it thereupon proceeds to sublimate its own self, for this other is itself.

Φ 181. This sublation in a double sense of its otherness in a double sense is at the same time a return in a double sense into its self. For, firstly, through sublation, it gets back itself, because it becomes one with itself again through the cancelling of *its* otherness; but secondly, it likewise gives otherness back again to the other self-consciousness, for it was aware of being in the other, it cancels this its own being in the other and thus lets the other again go free.

Φ 182. This process of self-consciousness in relation to another self-consciousness has in this manner been represented as the action of one alone. But this action on the part of the one has itself the double significance of being at once its own action and the action of that other as well. For the other is likewise independent, shut up within itself, and there is nothing in it which is not there through itself. The first does not have the object before it only in the passive form characteristic primarily of the object of desire, but as an object existing independently for

itself, over which therefore it has no power to do anything for its own behalf, if that object does not *per se* do what the first does to it. The process then is absolutely the double process of both self-consciousnesses. Each sees the other do the same as itself; each itself does what it demands on the part of the other, and for that reason does what it does, only so far as the other does the same. Action from one side only would be useless, because what is to happen can only be brought about by means of both.

Φ 183. The action has then a *double entente* not only in the sense that it is an act done to itself as well as to the other, but also in the sense that the act *simpliciter* is the act of the one as well as of the other regardless of their distinction.

Φ 184. In this movement we see the process repeated which came before us as the play of forces; in the present case, however, it is found in consciousness. What in the former had effect only for us [contemplating experience], holds here for the terms themselves. The middle term is self-consciousness which breaks itself up into the extremes; and each extreme is this interchange of its own determinateness, and complete transition into the opposite. While *qua* consciousness, it no doubt comes outside itself, still, in being outside itself, it is at the same time restrained within itself, it exists for itself, and its self-externalization is for consciousness. *Consciousness* finds that it immediately is and is not another consciousness, as also that this other is for itself only when it cancels itself as existing for itself, and has self-existence only in the self-existence of the other. Each is the mediating term to the other, through which each mediates and unites itself with itself; and each is to itself and to the other an immediate self-existing reality, which, at the same time, exists thus for itself only through this mediation. They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another.

2. The Conflict of Self-Consciousness in Self-opposition

Φ 185. This pure conception of recognition, of duplication of self-consciousness within its unity, we must now consider in the way its process appears for self-consciousness. It will, in the first place, present the aspect of the disparity of the two, or the break-up of the middle term into the extremes, which, *qua* extremes, are opposed to one another, and of which one is merely recognized, while the other only recognizes.

Φ 186. Self-consciousness is primarily simple existence for self, self-identity by exclusion of every other from itself. It takes its essential nature and absolute object to be Ego; and in this immediacy, in this bare fact of its self-existence, it is individual. That which for it is other stands as unessential object, as object with the impress and character of negation. But the other is also a self-consciousness; an individual makes its appearance in antithesis to an individual. Appearing thus in their immediacy, they are for each other in the manner of ordinary objects. They are independent individual forms, modes of Consciousness that have not risen above the bare level of life (for the existent object here has been determined as life). They are, moreover, forms of consciousness which have not yet accomplished for one another the process of absolute abstraction, of uprooting all immediate existence, and of being merely the bare, negative fact of self-identical consciousness; or, in other words, have not yet revealed themselves to each other as existing purely for themselves, i.e., as self-consciousness. Each is indeed certain of its own self, but not of the other, and hence its own certainty of itself is still without truth. For its truth would be merely that its own individual existence for itself would be shown to it to be an independent object, or, which is the same thing, that the object would be exhibited as this pure certainty of itself. By the notion of recognition, however, this is not possible, except in the form that as the other is for it, so it is for the other; each in its self through its own action and again through the action of the other achieves this pure abstraction of existence for self.

Φ 187. The presentation of itself, however, as pure abstraction of self-consciousness consists in showing itself as a pure negation of its objective form, or in showing that it is fettered to no determinate existence, that it is not bound at all by the particularity everywhere characteristic of existence as such, and is *not* tied up with life. The process of bringing all this out involves a twofold action — action on the part of the other and action on the part of itself. In so far as it is the other's action, each aims at the destruction and death of the other. But in this there is implicated also the second kind of action, self-activity; for the former implies that it risks its own life. The relation of both self-consciousnesses is in this way so constituted that they prove themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle. They must enter into this struggle, for they must bring their certainty of

themselves, the certainty of being for themselves, to the level of objective truth, and make this a fact both in the case of the other and in their own case as well. And it is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained; only thus is it tried and proved that the essential nature of self-consciousness is not bare existence, is not the merely immediate form in which it at first makes its appearance, is not its mere absorption in the expanse of life. Rather it is thereby guaranteed that there is nothing present but what might be taken as a vanishing moment — that self-consciousness is merely pure self-existence, being-for-self. The individual, who has not staked his life, may, no doubt, be recognized as a Person; but he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness. In the same way each must aim at the death of the other, as it risks its own life thereby; for that other is to it of no more worth than itself; the other's reality is presented to the former as an external other, as outside itself; it must cancel that externality. The other is a purely existent consciousness and entangled in manifold ways; it must view its otherness as pure existence for itself or as absolute negation.

Φ 188. This trial by death, however, cancels both the truth which was to result from it, and therewith the certainty of self altogether. For just as life is the natural “position” of consciousness, independence without absolute negativity, so death is the natural “negation” of consciousness, negation without independence, which thus remains without the requisite significance of actual recognition. Through death, doubtless, there has arisen the certainty that both did stake their life, and held it lightly both in their own case and in the case of the other; but that is not for those who underwent this struggle. They cancel their consciousness which had its place in this alien element of natural existence; in other words, they cancel themselves and are sublated as terms or extremes seeking to have existence on their own account. But along with this there vanishes from the play of change the essential moment, viz. that of breaking up into extremes with opposite characteristics; and the middle term collapses into a lifeless unity which is broken up into lifeless extremes, merely existent and not opposed. And the two do not mutually give and receive one another back from each other through consciousness; they let one another go quite indifferently, like things. Their act is abstract negation, not the negation characteristic of consciousness, which cancels in such a way that it preserves and maintains what is sublated, and thereby survives its being sublated.

3. Lord and Bondsman

Φ 189. In this experience self-consciousness becomes aware that *life* is as essential to it as pure self-consciousness. In immediate self-consciousness the simple ego is absolute object, which, however, is for us or in itself absolute mediation, and has as its essential moment substantial and solid independence. The dissolution of that simple unity is the result of the first experience; through this there is posited a pure self-consciousness, and a consciousness which is not purely for itself, but for another, i.e. as an existent consciousness, consciousness in the form and shape of thinghood. Both moments are essential, since, in the first instance, they are unlike and opposed, and their reflexion into unity has not yet come to light, they stand as two opposed forms or modes of consciousness. The one is independent, and its essential nature is to be for itself; the other is dependent, and its essence is life or existence for another. The former is the Master, or Lord, the latter the Bondsman.

Φ 190. The master is the consciousness that exists *for itself*; but no longer merely the general notion of existence for self. Rather, it is a consciousness existing on its own account which is mediated with itself through an other consciousness, i.e. through an other whose very nature implies that it is bound up with an independent being or with thinghood in general. The master brings himself into relation to both these moments, to a thing as such, the object of desire, and to the consciousness whose essential character is thinghood. And since the master, is (a) *qua* notion of self-consciousness, an immediate relation of self-existence, but (b) is now moreover at the same time mediation, or a being-for-self which is for itself only through an other — he [the master] stands in relation (a) immediately to both, (b) mediately to each through the other. The master relates himself to the bondsman mediately through independent existence, for that is precisely what keeps the bondsman in thrall; it is his chain, from which he could not in the struggle get away, and for that reason he proved himself to be dependent, to have his independence in the shape of thinghood. The master, however, is the power controlling this state of existence, for he has shown in the struggle that he holds it to be merely something negative. Since he is the power dominating existence, while this existence again is the power controlling the other [the bondsman], the master holds, *par consequente*, this other in subordination. In the same way the master relates himself to the thing

mediately through the bondsman. The bondsman being a self-consciousness in the broad sense, also takes up a negative attitude to things and cancels them; but the thing is, at the same time, independent for him and, in consequence, he cannot, with all his negating, get so far as to annihilate it outright and be done with it; that is to say, he merely works on it. To the master, on the other hand, by means of this mediating process, belongs the immediate relation, in the sense of the pure negation of it, in other words he gets the enjoyment. What mere desire did not attain, he now succeeds in attaining, viz. to have done with the thing, and find satisfaction in enjoyment. Desire alone did not get the length of this, because of the independence of the thing. The master, however, who has interposed the bondsman between it and himself, thereby relates himself merely to the dependence of the thing, and enjoys it without qualification and without reserve. The aspect of its independence he leaves to the bondsman, who labours upon it.

(a). Lordship

[Φ 191](#). In these two moments, the master gets his recognition through an other consciousness, for in them the latter affirms itself as unessential, both by working upon the thing, and, on the other hand, by the fact of being dependent on a determinate existence; in neither case can this other get the mastery over existence, and succeed in absolutely negating it. We have thus here this moment of recognition, viz. that the other consciousness cancels itself as self-existent, and, *ipso facto*, itself does what the first does to it. In the same way we have the other moment, that this action on the part of the second is the action proper of the first; for what is done by the bondsman is properly an action on the part of the master. The latter exists only for himself, that is his essential nature; he is the negative power without qualification, a power to which the thing is naught. And he is thus the absolutely essential act in this situation, while the bondsman is not so, he is an unessential activity. But for recognition proper there is needed the moment that what the master does to the other he should also do to himself, and what the bondsman does to himself, he should do to the other also. On that account a form of recognition has arisen that is one-sided and unequal.

[Φ 192](#). In all this, the unessential consciousness is, for the master, the object which embodies the truth of his certainty of himself. But it is evident that this object does not correspond to its notion; for, just where the master has effectively achieved lordship, he really finds that something has come about quite different from an independent consciousness. It is not an independent, but rather a dependent consciousness that he has achieved. He is thus not assured of self-existence as his truth; he finds that his truth is rather the unessential consciousness, and the fortuitous unessential action of that consciousness.

[Φ 193](#). The truth of the independent consciousness is accordingly the consciousness of the bondsman. This doubtless appears in the first instance outside itself, and not as the truth of self-consciousness. But just as lordship showed its essential nature to be the reverse of what it wants to be, so, too, bondage will, when completed, pass into the opposite of what it immediately is: being a consciousness repressed within itself, it will enter into itself, and change round into real and true independence.

(b). Fear

[Φ 194](#). We have seen what bondage is only in relation to lordship. But it is a self-consciousness, and we have now to consider what it is, in this regard, in and for itself. In the first instance, the master is taken to be the essential reality for the state of bondage; hence, for it, the truth is the independent consciousness existing for itself, although this truth is not taken yet as inherent in bondage itself. Still, it does in fact contain within itself this truth of pure negativity and self-existence, because it has experienced this reality within it. For this consciousness was not in peril and fear for this element or that, nor for this or that moment of time, it was afraid for its entire being; it felt the fear of death, the sovereign master. It has been in that experience melted to its inmost soul, has trembled throughout its every fibre, and all that was fixed and steadfast has quaked within it. This complete perturbation of its entire substance, this absolute dissolution of all its stability into fluent continuity, is, however, the simple, ultimate nature of self-consciousness, absolute negativity, pure self-referent existence, which consequently is involved in this type of consciousness. This moment of pure self-existence is moreover a fact for it; for in the master it finds this as its object. Further, this bondsman's consciousness is not only this total

dissolution in a general way; in serving and toiling the bondsman actually carries this out. By serving he cancels in every particular aspect his dependence on and attachment to natural existence, and by his work removes this existence away.

Φ 195. The feeling of absolute power, however, realized both in general and in the particular form of service, is only dissolution implicitly; and albeit the fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom, consciousness is not therein aware of being self-existent. Through work and labour, however, this consciousness of the bondsman comes to itself. In the moment which corresponds to desire in the case of the master's consciousness, the aspect of the non-essential relation to the thing seemed to fall to the lot of the servant, since the thing there retained its independence. Desire has reserved to itself the pure negating of the object and thereby unalloyed feeling of self. This satisfaction, however, just for that reason is itself only a state of evanescence, for it lacks objectivity or subsistence. Labour, on the other hand, is desire restrained and checked, evanescence delayed and postponed; in other words, labour shapes and fashions the thing. The negative relation to the object passes into the form of the object, into something that is permanent and remains; because it is just for the labourer that the object has independence. This negative mediating agency, this activity giving shape and form, is at the same time the individual existence, the pure self-existence of that consciousness, which now in the work it does is externalized and passes into the condition of permanence. The consciousness that toils and serves accordingly attains by this means the direct apprehension of that independent being as its self.

Φ 196. But again, shaping or forming the object has not only the positive significance that the bondsman becomes thereby aware of himself as factually and objectively self-existent; this type of consciousness has also a negative import, in contrast with its moment, the element of fear. For in shaping the thing it only becomes aware of its own proper negativity, existence on its own account, as an object, through the fact that it cancels the actual form confronting it. But this objective negative element is precisely alien, external reality, before which it trembled. Now, however, it destroys this extraneous alien negative, affirms and sets itself up as a negative in the element of permanence, and thereby becomes for itself a self-existent being. In the master, the bondsman feels self-existence to be something external, an objective fact; in fear self-existence is present within himself; in fashioning the thing, self-existence comes to be felt explicitly as his own proper being, and he attains the consciousness that he himself exists in its own right and on its own account (*an und für sich*). By the fact that the form is objectified, it does not become something other than the consciousness moulding the thing through work; for just that form is his pure self existence, which therein becomes truly realized. Thus precisely in labour where there seemed to be merely some outsider's mind and ideas involved, the bondsman becomes aware, through this re-discovery of himself by himself, of having and being a "mind of his own".

(c). The Formative Process of Self-Enfranchisement

For this reflection of self into self the two moments, fear and service in general, as also that of formative activity, are necessary: and at the same time both must exist in a universal manner. Without the discipline of service and obedience, fear remains formal and does not spread over the whole known reality of existence. Without the formative activity shaping the thing, fear remains inward and mute, and consciousness does not become objective for itself. Should consciousness shape and form the thing without the initial state of absolute fear, then it has a merely vain and futile "mind of its own"; for its form or negativity is not negativity *per se*, and hence its formative activity cannot furnish the consciousness of itself as essentially real. If it has endured not absolute fear, but merely some slight anxiety, the negative reality has remained external to it, its substance has not been through and through infected thereby. Since the entire content of its natural consciousness has not tottered and shaken, it is still inherently a determinate mode of being; having a "mind of its own" (*der eigene Sinn*) is simply stubbornness (*Eigensinn*), a type of freedom which does not get beyond the attitude of bondage. As little as the pure form can become its essential nature, so little is that form, considered as extending over particulars, a universal formative activity, an absolute notion; it is rather a piece of cleverness which has mastery within a certain range, but not over the universal power nor over the entire objective reality.

David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (1975), “Epilogue: Toussaint L’Overture and the Phenomenology of Mind” (557-564).

In 1802, General Charles Leclerc seized Toussaint L’Overture by an act of shameless treachery and shipped him off to France, advising the government that “you cannot keep Toussaint at too great a distance from the sea and put him in a position that is too safe. This man has raised the country to such a pitch of fanaticism that his presence would send it up again in flames.” But the country continued to burn, and on December 31, 1803, the Haitian leaders issued a formal declaration of independence. On October 4, 1804, before he ordered the massacre of the remaining white residents, General Dessalines was crowned emperor of Haiti; the crown came from the United States, on the good ship *Connecticut*.

Toussaint’s achievements had stunned the world. They had ensured British dominance in the Caribbean, had allowed Americans to expand westward into Louisiana and Missouri, and had tautened the nerves of slaveholders from Maryland to Brazil. The repercussions continued to unfold. Early in 1816, Simón Bolívar made his historic pledge to Alexandre Pétion, then one of the rulers of Haiti, having first tried to win aid from slaveholding Jamaica. In return for the arms and provisions given by Pétion, Bolívar promised that, if his cause were successful, he would free the slaves of Venezuela. Back on South American soil, Bolívar issued his decree to all Negro males from the age of fourteen to sixty: fight or remain in bondage.

Meanwhile, on April 7, 1803, Toussaint had died, at age fifty-seven, in a cold dungeon high in the Jura mountains. Maltreated, humiliated, constantly harassed by his jailers, he had futilely appealed to his new master, who was also the master of Europe:

I have had the misfortune to incur your anger; but as to fidelity and probity, I am strong in my conscience, and I dare to say with truth that among all the servants of the State none is more honest than I. I was one of your soldiers and the first servant of the Republic in San Domingo. I am to-day wretched, ruined, dishonored, a victim of my own services. Let your sensibility be touched at my position, you are too great in feeling and too just not to pronounce on my destiny.

Napoleon lacked the compassion of William Cowper’s evangelical benefactor and did not try to teach Toussaint “what path to shun, and what pursue.” But Napoleon apparently assumed that he had broken Toussaint’s spirit. When a prisoner himself, at St. Helena, he confessed that he had made a mistake in not governing St. Domingue through Toussaint L’Overture. Yet he seems to have thought of the black leader as an ungrateful slave, a bad nigger.

As one might expect of a German philosopher, G. W. F. Hegel was even less suspicious of Napoleon’s motives than Toussaint had been when leading the resistance in St. Domingue. As the French armies converged on Hegel’s university town of Jena, in October, 1806, the philosopher spoke in a letter of the “world-soul” of the messianic emperor. He saw the destruction of the Prussian army—which opened the way for Napoleon’s Berlin Decree, for the great commercial struggle with Britain, and for revolution in Latin America—as the culmination and end of human history. Yet with the sound of Napoleon’s thundering cannons in his ears, Hegel was completing a work that contained the most profound analysis of slavery ever written.

I began this book by summarizing the historical shifts in Western thought which prepared the way for eighteenth-century antislavery arguments. I have devoted considerable attention to the receptivity and social consequences of those arguments and have examined the issue of slavery as a testing ground for Western culture during a revolutionary age. Hegel’s analysis leads back to the level of abstract theory and to some of mankind’s ultimate questions. A brief summary cannot do justice to the complexities of Hegel’s argument. But since it marked the apex of a changing ethical consciousness, an attempt must be made to put it in some historical perspective.

The early modern philosophers had narrowed the ground for any defense of slavery, but in doing so had removed the institution from the supposed protections of an organic and hierarchical social order. Thus Thomas Hobbes gave an original twist to the ancient notion of enslaving prisoners of war. He envisioned a primal struggle between two combatants. The loser, in order to save his life, finally promises absolute obedience to the victor, in

return for subsistence and corporal liberty. By terms of the "compact," the slave can only will what his master wills. The master can be guilty of no injustice, since he has spared the slave's life.

For John Locke, on the other hand, slavery could arise only outside the social compact. All men retain, according to Locke, an original and absolute ownership of their own persons, and, by extension, an ownership of their labor and its produce. Hence within the voluntary social compact, every individual should be protected from "the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, Arbitrary Will of another Man." Yet any man may, by an act of violence, forfeit his life to another. Nor can such a criminal complain of injustice if his captor spares his life. For Locke, then, slavery always stood outside the bounds of a peaceful and rational order. "The perfect condition of Slavery is nothing else, but *the state of War continued, between a lawful Conqueror, and a Captive.*" The elemental struggle between two enemies defined slavery's essential and continuing character.

Primal combat was also Hegel's starting point, but the starting point for man's consciousness of himself as a fact of experience, and thus of his social identity. Whereas Locke had seen slavery as peripheral to society and history, Hegel saw it as the natal core of man's condition. Let us indulge in a bit of fantasy to introduce Hegel's point. Suppose that Napoleon and Toussaint L'Ouverture [leader of the slave revolt in Haiti], are alone in the world, and that each man is convinced he is the emperor of the universe. They are both solipsists, incapable of distinguishing an objective world independent of their own states of consciousness. And since they cannot detect an autonomous object outside themselves, they cannot find an autonomous subject within themselves.

When they first encounter each other, each man perceives the other as an undifferentiated extension of himself—much as young babies, we are told, perceive their parents. The illusion is shattered, however, when both Napoleon and Toussaint begin to discover that the other is an independent consciousness: "They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another." This discovery could be negated by murder, but then the murderer would be alone as before, having simply confirmed that the specter of another consciousness was part of the "natural" world. Insofar as each man is "human," his greatest desire is to be recognized as a being of transcendent and unique value—as distinct from a temporary system of repetitive biological functions. When the two men do in fact risk death in an elemental struggle, it is to test the truth of their own self-images of omnipotence and indeterminate existence. But Toussaint finally submits—as he did in history—because he prefers Napoleon's vision of truth to his own death. Napoleon accepts the submission—as he did in history—because it validates his own sense of omnipotence. Indeed, that conviction is no longer purely subjective. Toussaint's bondage is an objective proof that Napoleon's freedom is no illusion.

But the paradigm now becomes more complicated. Aristotle defined the slave as a tool or instrument, the mere extension of his master's physical nature. For Aristotle the slave also possessed the rudiments of a soul, allowing him a lower form of virtue if he performed his functions well. The early Christians, drawing on the Cynics, Sophists, and Stoics, also told slaves to be submissive and obedient, but recognized an essential inner freedom that transcended external condition. The world of the flesh did not matter. What mattered was the Christian promise to spare the life of the meanest slave, through all eternity, if he would submit to the greatest Master. Hegel synthesized both the Aristotelean and Christian notions of slavery, and lifted them to a new level.

The master, Hegel argued, sees the slave as an instrument of his own will and demands absolute obedience. Yet every day he must contradict this Aristotelean definition, since he is now dependent on another human life (having spared the life), and since he has found that the "slavish consciousness" is the object "which embodies the truth of his certainty of himself." The act of enslavement has created two opposed forms or modes of consciousness:

The master is the consciousness that exists for *itself*; but no longer merely the general notion of existence for self. Rather, it is a consciousness existing on its own account which is mediated with itself through an other consciousness, i.e. through an other whose very nature implies that it is bound up with an independent being or with thinghood in general.

Hegel developed an intricate dialectic of dependence and independence, of losing and finding one's identity in another consciousness, but his central point is that the master is caught in an "existential impasse," to use Alexander Kojève's phrase, because the master's identity depends on being recognized by a slavish and supposedly unessential consciousness. Even to outsiders, his identity consists of being a master who consumes the

produce of his slave's work. Accordingly, the master is incapable of transcending his own position, for which he risked his life and for which he could lose his life, should the slave decide on a second match of strength. The master is trapped by his own power, which he can only seek to maintain. He cannot achieve the true autonomy that can come only from the recognition by another consciousness that he regards as worthy of such recognition. The condition of omnipotent lordship, then, becomes the reverse of what it wants to be: dependent, static, and unessential.

At first the slave is dominated by fear and by the desire for self-preservation. Insofar as he assimilates the master's definition of his slavishness, he has denied his capacity for autonomous consciousness. His life becomes immersed in nature and in his work. Yet the slave's fear and desire for self-preservation necessarily counteract the master's image of a negative and unessential "thing." And the slave's labor, by transforming elements in the natural world, creates an objective reality that confirms and shapes his own consciousness of self:

Thus precisely in labour where there seemed to be merely some outsider's mind and ideas involved, the bondsman becomes aware, through this re-discovery of himself by himself, of having and being a "mind" of his own.

As Kojève has suggested, the product of work becomes for the slave the counterpart of the slave himself for the master. But unlike the master, the slave is not a consumer who looks upon "things" as merely the means of satisfying desires. The products he creates become an objective reality that validates the emerging consciousness of his subjective human reality. Through coerced labor, the slave alone acquires the qualities of fortitude, patience, and endurance. The slave alone has an interest in changing his condition, and thus looks to a future beyond himself. Only the slave, therefore, has the potentiality for escaping an imbalanced reciprocity and for becoming truly free.

It is not fanciful to see in Toussaint's actual deeds a message for later masters and wielders of power, or to see in Hegel's thoughts a message to slaves and the powerless. In their own ways both men were saying that situations of dominance and submission are not so simple as they seem, and that dominators can never be sure of the future. For a time Hegel perceived the Age of Revolution as the final drama of history, which would terminate the seemingly endless struggle between lords and bondsmen and make the ideal of freedom—which the Stoics had imprisoned within man's subjective soul, and which Christianity had projected to a spiritual afterlife—a worldly reality. What was truly new to the world, however, was not simply revolution, but a nation of former slaves who had achieved independence from a master race.

If Hegel was both naïve and visionary in acclaiming Napoleon as the incarnation of man's spirit of freedom, he was right in sensing that the Age of Revolution marked a major watershed, after which things could never be the same. In 1770, to cite the example that has concerned us, antislavery doctrine floated harmlessly in an abstract realm of theory and wishful thinking. By 1823, the black slaves of the New World had completed at least the initial stage of their long ordeal of emancipation. The conclusions of the preceding chapters extend forward in diverging lines of direction. They point, in other words, to struggles for various kinds of emancipation and hegemony, to incomplete definitions and achievements of liberty, and to emerging forms of slavery that went by different names. And apart from Hegel's infatuation with the notion of an all-powerful state, he bequeathed an ideal of freedom which went far beyond the legalistic conceptions of consent, contract, proprietorship, and physical constraint, and which therefore gained added meaning in the "post-historical" age. Hegel's ideal was simply that man can be an autonomous value only as he recognizes other men as autonomous values.

Like the ideal of Christian brotherhood, to which it bears a superficial resemblance, Hegel's ideal seems innocuous in the abstract. Any man might accept it, until he began to think what it really means, and how difficult it is to accept another person's consciousness—with all its distinctness, unknownness, and knowingness—on a parity with one's own. Nor did Hegel entertain any illusions about the difficulty of recognizing a not-me without trying to negate or dominate the threatening presence. This was the point of his paradigm of a primal struggle.

Moreover, the ideal of autonomous interaction helps to expose all the deceptions by which men and women have been re-enslaved. Toussaint after all, thought that he had won his cause and that he was still a free man; he reminded Napoleon that he had been "the first servant of the Republic in San Domingo"; he thought that

he had established his people's independence without dooming their future by a rash and total break with France. Hence his professions of loyalty to France were not without some truth. They were a mark, to be shared by many future black leaders, of his own supreme tragedy.

Beyond such forcible betrayals of faith, Hegel's test of autonomy illuminates the entire history of labor conflict and economic coercion. To cite only one example, it was not accidental in 1867 that when George M. Pullman pondered the need for ideal servants for his elegant railroad palace cars, he turned with inspiration to "what he considered a uniquely appropriate source: the recently freed slaves." And beyond all the overt and self-conscious acts of dominion, such as those that virtually re-enslaved the American blacks after the Civil War, we come to all the subtle stratagems, passive as well as aggressive; to all the interpersonal knots and invisible webs of ensnarement which are so much a part of the psychopathology of our everyday lives that they have been apparent only to a few poets, novelists, and exceptionally perceptive psychiatrists.

Slavery itself has the great virtue, as an ideal model, of being clear-cut. Yet the model is so clear-cut that both abolitionists and later historians often obscured the complexities of actual bondage, whose worst horrors and tragedies did not arise from physical coercion, and whose moments of dignity and humanity can seldom be recognized without ideological risk. Furthermore, as I have tried to suggest in this study, the model was so clear-cut that it tended to set slavery off from other species of barbarity and oppression—except when apologists said, in effect, why should Negro slaves complain when pauper children are starving and sailors are lashed every day?

It was Hegel's genius to endow lordship and bondage with such a rich resonance of meanings that the model could be applied to every form of physical and psychological domination. And the argument precluded the simple and sentimental solution that all bondsmen should become masters, and all masters the bondsmen. Above all, Hegel bequeathed a message that would have a profound impact on future thought, especially as Marx and Freud deepened the meaning of the message: that we can expect nothing from the mercy of God or from the mercy of those who exercise worldly lordship in His or other names; that man's true emancipation, whether physical or spiritual, must always depend on those who have endured and overcome some form of slavery.

Marx, *Capital*, I, 19-20,

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

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

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

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

Karl Marx
London, January 24, 1873

Letter from Marx to Engels in Manchester, January 14th 1858

... By the way, I am discovering some nice arguments. For instance, I have overthrown the whole doctrine of profit as it has existed up to now. The fact that by mere accident I again glanced through Hegel’s *Logik* (Freiligrath found some volumes of Hegel which originally belonged to Bakunin and sent them to me as a present) has been of great service to me as regards the *method* of dealing with the material. If there should ever be time for such work again, I should very much like to make accessible to the ordinary human intelligence—in two or three printer’s sheets—what is *rational* in the method which Hegel discovered but at the same time enveloped in mysticism...

What do you say about friend Jones? That the fellow has sold himself I am not yet willing to believe. His experience in 1848 may lie heavily on his stomach. With his great belief in himself he may think himself capable of exploiting the middle class or he may imagine that if only Ernest Jones were to become a member of Parliament, one way or another, the history of the world would be bound to take a new turn. The best of it is that Reynolds has now come out in his paper as a fanatical opponent of the middle class and of all compromise—of course out of spite against Jones. Mr. B. O’Brien, likewise, has now become an irrepressible Chartist at any price. The only excuse for Jones is the inertia which at present pervades the working class in England. However this may be, he is at present on the way to becoming a dupe of the middle class or a renegade. The fact that he, who used anxiously to consult me about every bit of rubbish, is now equally anxious to avoid me, shows anything but a good conscience...

There is a double error in Hegel.

The **first** emerges most clearly in the *Phänomenologie*, the birth-place of the Hegelian philosophy. When, for instance, wealth, state-power, etc., are understood by Hegel as entities estranged from the *human* being, this only happens in their form as thoughts ... They are thought-entities, and therefore merely an estrangement of *pure*, i.e., abstract, philosophical thinking. The whole process therefore ends with absolute knowledge. It is precisely abstract thought from which these objects are estranged and which they confront with their presumption of reality. The *philosopher* – who is himself an abstract form of estranged man – takes himself as the *criterion* of the estranged world. The whole *history of the alienation process* [*Entäußerungsgeschichte*] and the whole *process of the retraction* of the alienation is therefore nothing but the *history of the production* of abstract (i.e., absolute) ||XVII|[45] thought – of logical, speculative thought. The *estrangement*, [*Entfremdung*] which therefore forms the real interest of the transcendence [*Aufhebung*] of this alienation [*Entäußerung*], is the opposition of *in itself* and *for itself*, of *consciousness and self-consciousness*, of *object and subject* – that is to say, it is the opposition between abstract thinking and sensuous reality or real sensuousness within thought itself. All other oppositions and movements of these oppositions are but the *semblance*, the *cloak*, the *exoteric* shape of these oppositions which alone matter, and which constitute the *meaning* of these other, profane oppositions. It is not the fact that the human being *objectifies himself inhumanly*, in opposition to himself, but the fact that he *objectifies himself* [*selbst sich vergegenständlicht*] in *distinction* from and in *opposition* to abstract thinking, that constitutes the posited essence of the estrangement [*Entfremdung*] and the thing to be superseded [*aufzuhebende*].

||XVIII| The appropriation of man's essential powers, which have become objects – indeed, alien objects – is thus in the first place only an *appropriation* occurring in *consciousness*, in *pure thought*, i.e., in *abstraction*: it is the appropriation of these objects as *thoughts* and as *movement of thought*. Consequently, despite its thoroughly negative and critical appearance and despite the genuine criticism contained in it, which often anticipates far later development, there is already latent in the *Phänomenologie* as a germ, a potentiality, a secret, the uncritical positivism and the equally uncritical idealism of Hegel's later works – that philosophic dissolution and restoration of the existing empirical world.

In the second place: the vindication of the objective world for man – for example, the realisation that *sensuous consciousness* is not an *abstractly* sensuous consciousness but a *humanly* sensuous consciousness, that religion, wealth, etc., are but the estranged world of human objectification, of man's essential powers put to work and that they are therefore but the *path* to the true human world – this appropriation or the insight into this process appears in Hegel therefore in this form, that *sense*, *religion*, state power, etc., are *spiritual* entities; for only *mind* is the *true* essence of man, and the true form of mind is thinking mind, theological, speculative mind.

The *human character* of nature and of the nature created by history – man's products – appears in the form that they are *products* of abstract mind and as such, therefore, phases of *mind – thought-entities*. The *Phänomenologie* is, therefore, a hidden, mystifying and still uncertain criticism; but inasmuch as it depicts man's *estrangement*, even though man appears only as mind, there lie concealed in it *all* the elements of criticism, already *prepared* and *elaborated* in a manner often rising far above the Hegelian standpoint. The “unhappy consciousness”, the “honest consciousness”, the struggle of the “noble and base consciousness”, etc., etc. – these separate sections contain, but still in an estranged form, the *critical* elements of whole spheres such as religion, the state, civil life, etc. Just as *entities, objects*, appear as thought-entities, so the *subject* is always *consciousness* or *self-consciousness*; or rather the object appears only as *abstract* consciousness, man only as *self-consciousness*: the distinct forms of estrangement which make their appearance are, therefore, only various forms of consciousness and self-consciousness. Just as *in itself* abstract consciousness (the form in which the object is conceived) is merely a moment of distinction of self-consciousness, what appears as the result of the movement is the identity of self-consciousness with consciousness – absolute knowledge – the movement of abstract thought no longer directed outwards but proceeding now only within its own self: that is to say, the dialectic of pure thought is the result. |XVIII|

||XXIII| ^[46] The outstanding achievement of Hegel's *Phänomenologie* and of its final outcome, the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle, is thus first that Hegel conceives the self-creation of man as a process, conceives objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and as transcendence of this alienation; that he thus grasps the essence of *labour* and comprehends objective man – true, because real man – as the outcome of man's own labour. The *real, active* orientation of man to himself as a species-being, or his manifestation as a real species-being (i.e., as a human being), is only possible if he really brings out all his *species-powers* – something which in turn is only possible through the cooperative action of all of mankind, only as the result of history – and treats these powers as objects: and this, to begin with, is again only possible in the form of estrangement.

We shall now demonstrate in detail Hegel's one-sidedness – and limitations as they are displayed in the final chapter of the *Phänomenologie*, “Absolute Knowledge” – a chapter which contains the condensed spirit of the *Phänomenologie*, the relationship of the *Phänomenologie* to speculative dialectic, and also Hegel's *consciousness* concerning both and their relationship to one another.

Let us provisionally say just this much in advance: Hegel's standpoint is that of modern political economy. ^[47] He grasps *labour* as the *essence* of man – as man's essence which stands the test: he sees only the positive, not the negative side of labour. Labour is *man's coming-to-be* for himself within *alienation*, or as *alienated* man. The only labour which Hegel knows and recognises is *abstractly mental* labour. Therefore, that which constitutes the *essence* of philosophy – the *alienation of man who knows himself*, or *alienated science thinking itself* – Hegel grasps as its essence; and in contradistinction to previous philosophy he is therefore able to combine its separate aspects, and to present his philosophy as *the* philosophy. What the other philosophers did – that they grasped separate phases of nature and of human life as phases of self-consciousness, namely, of human life as phases of self-consciousness – is *known* to Hegel as the *doings* of philosophy. Hence his science is absolute.

Notes:

45. Here on page XVII of the third manuscript (part of which comprises a text relating to the section “Human Requirements and Division of Labour Under the Rule of Private Property”) Marx gave the note: “see p. XIII,” which proves that this text is the continuation of the section dealing with the critical analysis of the Hegelian dialectic begun on pp. XI-XII.

46. At the end of page XVIII of the third manuscript there is a note by Marx: “continued on p. XXII.” However number XXII was omitted by Marx in paging. The text of the given chapter is continued on the page marked by the author as XXIII, which is also confirmed by his remark on it: “see p. XVIII.”

47. Marx apparently refers here not only to the identity of Hegel's views on labour and some other categories of political economy with those of the English classical economists but also to his profound knowledge of economic writings. In lectures he delivered at Jena University in 1803-04 Hegel cited Adam Smith's work. In his *Philosophie des Rechts* (§ 189) he mentions Smith, Say and Ricardo and notes the rapid development of economic thought.

Lichtheim, Intro to Hegel's
Phenomenology of Mind

FORCHBOOK EDITION

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tradition (neither did Marx and Engels), though the Hegelian scheme is meant to conform with the natural sciences. So far as biology is concerned, it has been restated by a modern British philosopher, in entirely non-mystical language, as signifying that "man is the prolongation of a *nisus* to self-transcendence which begins blindly in nature."³ Hegel's thought here has evident affinities with the concept of "emergent evolution," whose most distinguished exponent in the present century was A. N. Whitehead. It has even been suggested that Whitehead rediscovered this aspect of Hegel's thinking without being aware of the source. There is no mystery about this parallelism, for the notion that the world can be arranged in a hierarchy of existences—with dead matter at the bottom, the animal creation next to it, and mind or spirit crowning the edifice—is soundly Aristotelian, and Whitehead no less than Hegel is in the great tradition of Western metaphysics when he attempts to sketch an ontology based on this principle.⁴

Hegel's treatment of the logical notions is involved in his concept of Mind or Spirit, as any reader of the *Phenomenology* is bound to discover before long. In the Platonic-Aristotelian manner he regards the pervasive movement underlying natural and historical processes as a manifestation of something more fundamental, namely a spiritual principle. This is the point where not only the contemporary empiricist, but the Cartesian and the Kantian too, is bound to part company with Hegel. Empiricists, whether philosophers or natural scientists, have few difficulties with the Kantian categories which, what-

³ G. R. G. Mure, *Retreat from Truth* (Oxford, 1958), 204.

⁴ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford, 1945), 127-8. "An historian of thought . . . will see Hegel as the point at which, through its own spontaneous development, eighteenth-century thought became sufficiently mature to understand Plato and Aristotle and therefore to connect its own problems with the problems which it found them discussing." (*Ibid.*, 128-9).

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INTRODUCTION

ever their shortcomings, are easily comprehensible as the logical form of experience. By contrast, they balk at the Hegelian idea of a spiritual reality conceived as a self-activating universal which is the final cause, or end, of all things. The objections to such a notion are indeed obvious, but from the Hegelian standpoint they reduce themselves to the assertion that reason can only operate upon the material of immediate experience, as it is delivered to the individual mind by sense-impression. This is doubtless the case in the natural sciences, where the observer places himself in thought outside his material, and then attempts to reconstitute it as a realm of universal laws or principles. The distinctive feature of this attitude, which Hegel describes as "Understanding," is that the subject takes its object as alien and external to itself. Hegel maintains that nature is generally below the level where the distinction between subject and object emerges (it is only *an sich*, not *fu \ddot{e} r sich*, not conscious of itself), and precisely for this reason the sciences of nature are not philosophical, though they provide the material for the philosophy of nature. Confronted with nature, the scientific understanding—itsself a rudimentary level of theorizing—can only treat its object as something external. But this procedure is not applicable to history and the works of man, for at this level the mind encounters its own conscious life, as it manifests itself in the creations of art, religion, and philosophy, etc.

Insofar as there is a link between Hegel's organicist, or anti-mechanistic, philosophy of nature and his philosophy of history (to which he devoted a good deal more attention), it appears in his attachment to a model of social reality familiar to every reader of the classics: the concept of society as a living entity. This again was a reaction to the mechanism of the Enlightenment which increasingly—since Bacon and Locke, not to mention their eighteenth-century French followers—had

tended to see society in the image of a machine. In rejecting this form of rationalism, Hegel fell in with the Romantic current, whose political influence had already made itself felt in Burke's critique of the French Revolution. Yet Hegel's attitude on this point is equivocal, and the long-run effect of his thought has not worked out uniformly in favor of political and social conservatism. The truth is that organicism can be given a radical interpretation if it is seen in evolutionary terms. Cycles of change can be viewed pessimistically as suggesting that there is nothing new under the sun; there is a notorious line of thought to this effect which runs from the cosmological myths of antiquity and the Orient, via the established religions, to pre-Enlightenment thinkers like Vico, and ultimately to Hegel in his more conservative moods. But the anthropomorphic model can also be used to legitimize such terms as "growth," "development," and even "revolution." Hegel's interpreters found as much in his approach to validate their criticism of the established order as to underpin the general conservatism of the Restoration era. A metaphor so general as to provide ammunition for Burke and Spengler on the one hand, Engels and Sartre on the other, can hardly be thought unambiguous. However this may be, the Benthamite model of society as a big machine—all the parts fitting more or less perfectly into each other—was unacceptable to Germans of Hegel's generation, and in repudiating it he lent his support to what was shortly to become one of the standard German arguments against Anglo-French rationalism and positivism.

In relation to the social sciences, this reaction made itself felt above all in the prominence given by German scholars to what was called the "historical method." This was described by Savigny, who around 1815 founded the "historical law school," in these terms:

There is no absolutely singular and separate human existence; rather what may be considered singular or indi-

vidual from one point of view, is part of a larger whole if seen from another viewpoint. Hence every individual human being . . . must be thought of as a member of a family and a people ("folk"), as the continuation and evolution of past epochs.

This line of thought goes back to Herder, but then so does Hegel's treatment of the subject in the *Philosophy of Right* (1821), his last published work and the occasion for a considerable outcry against him by contemporary and later liberals, though mainly on the grounds that he had underwritten an authoritarian doctrine of the State. Such a doctrine is not necessarily implied by a genetic view of history, nor by an organicist view of society, and the combination of all three in Hegel's later writings owes more to personal idiosyncrasy than to logical necessity.

Where Hegel left more lasting traces in the social sciences was in the indirect encouragement he gave to the notion that legal and political institutions are to be regarded as the outcome of slow "organic" growth from custom and usage. This attitude had respectable antecedents, including Montesquieu's writings as well as Burke's, but in the German context it acquired overtones lacking abroad. In particular, German writers came to assert that the "historical" approach was incompatible not merely with constitution-mongering and the *Code Napoléon*, but with theoretical economics of the British kind. This became a favorite conservative argument down to the 1890's, when organicist principles, and the *Volksgesist*, were mobilized to differentiate what then passed for theoretical economics in Germany from the Ricardian or Marxian approach—both condemned as "abstract" and "rationalistic." For this development Hegel was perhaps not responsible, but his influence worked in this direction, though it also underlay Marx's critique of liberal economics as "unhistorical." Hegelian thinking was more directly at work in the historiographical school founded by Leopold von Ranke and J. G. von

Droysen. The latter may be said to have foreshadowed Dilthey's principle that historical understanding ("Verstehen") is possible because in history we encounter shared human motivations. The historian, on this assumption, does not determine general laws in the manner of the scientist, but rather enters into the spirit of the collectivity, or the culture, whose unique flowering supplies his proper subject. The stress on uniqueness goes back to Herder and looks forward to Spengler. It is not quite Hegelian, since Hegel discerned a deeper spiritual regularity underlying the various national or folk cultures; but it is compatible with the organicist model and to that extent belongs to the general stream of Romantic theorizing about historical phenomena.

Hegelianism was also at work, in the later nineteenth century, in the reaction against Comte's mechanistic sociology. This is associated with the name of Durkheim, of whom it has been said that his position cannot be understood "if one overlooks his indebtedness to De Bonald, to Maistre, to Boeckh, to Fustel de Coulanges."⁵ The difficulty here lies in disentangling the Hegelian component from the general stream of Romanticism, which in France was fed by Catholic philosophy rather than by Hegel. The same applies to cultural anthropology, a related discipline whose Romantic and collectivist inspiration is obvious. Once more the organicist model is the starting point, but then Hegel was ambivalent on this topic. The self-revelation of the human spirit proceeds by stages, and these may be identified with historical collectivities, but Hegel also sees a progression towards freedom and self-consciousness where the true Romantics were inclined to lament the loss of a golden age or to extol the impenetrable mystery of folk cultures hermetically closed to each other. Perhaps Hegel should

be classed as a conservative liberal in the tradition of Montesquieu, rather than as a conservative *tout court*.

The preservation of part of the Hegelian heritage in Marxism must be seen in this context. Not surprisingly perhaps, the relationship between these two traditions is a dialectical one. Marx took over from Hegel the conception of history as a self-activating totality, but he rejected the Hegelian spiritualism which treated empirical facts as the external manifestation of a logical process. This, and not the alleged conflict between an "idealist" and a "materialist" theory of cognition (in neither of which Marx took any interest, though Engels unfortunately did) accounts for the incompatibility of Hegelian and Marxian modes of thought. The crucial text here is once more the *Phenomenology*. Hegel, in Marx's view, had rightly perceived that man creates himself in a lengthy process of which the motive force is human *praxis*, the actual practice of men living in society. "The outstanding thing in Hegel's *Phenomenology* is that Hegel grasps the self-creation of man as a process . . . and that he therefore grasps the nature of *labor* and conceives . . . man . . . as the result of his own labor."⁶ But Hegel had treated the actual material process as the manifestation of pre-existing principles. It was this theological spiritualism that Marx set out to correct. In this sense Marxism forms part of the general stream of positivism which in the later nineteenth century attempted to divorce sociology and history from their metaphysical antecedents. The divorce was never completed, and the originality of Marx's achievement lies in the fact that in some sense he went on being a Hegelian.

There remains the problem of Hegel's continuing relevance for the theory and practice of contemporary poli-

⁵ Werner J. Cahnman, "Max Weber and the Methodological Controversy in the Social Sciences," in *Sociology and History*, ed. Werner J. Cahnman and Ivan Jaksicoff (The Free Press of Glencoe 1964), 105.

⁶ *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844), MEGA I/3, 156. Cf. Karl Marx—*Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*, ed. T. B. Bottomore and M. Rubel (London, 1955), 2.

Author's Preface

Rosdolsky, Roman
The Making of Marx's "Capital"

In 1948, when I first had the good fortune to see one of the then very rare copies of Marx's *Rough Draft*,¹ it was clear from the outset that this was a work which was of fundamental importance for marxist theory. However, its unusual form and to some extent obscure manner of expression made it far from suitable for reaching a wide circle of readers. I therefore decided, first, to provide a 'commentary' on the work and, second, to make a scientific evaluation of some of the new findings which it contained. The first exercise (mainly covered by Parts II-VI) necessitated an exposition of the *Rough Draft's* most important arguments, as far as possible in Marx's own words. The second required detailed discussions of particular aspects, which are to be found in the first, introductory, and seventh, concluding, parts of this work.

Completion of the work presented a number of difficulties. Inhabiting a city whose libraries contained only very few German, Russian or French socialist works (let alone such indispensable periodicals as Kautsky's *Neue Zeit*) I was restricted to the few books in my own possession, and often doubted the practicability of the venture. But this was not the only problem. The more the work advanced, the clearer it became that I would only be able to touch upon the most important and theoretically interesting problem presented by the *Rough Draft* – that of the relation of Marx's work to Hegel, in particular to the *Logic* – and would not be able to deal with it in any greater depth.

Of all the problems in Marx's economic theory the most neglected has been that of his method, both in general and, specifically, in

¹ The *Rough Draft* was printed in Berlin in 1953, by the Dietz Verlag, under the title *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Rohentwurf)*, 1857-1858. Until that time there were only three or four copies of the original Moscow edition in the West. [The *Grundrisse* has been published in an English edition, translated with an Introduction by Martin Nicolaus, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1973.]

its relation to Hegel. Recent works contain for the most part platitudes which, to echo Marx's own words, betray the authors' own 'crude obsession with the material' and total indifference to Marx's method.

What would one make of a psychologist who was interested only in Freud's results, but rejected the question of the *manner* in which Freud obtained those results as being irrelevant or even 'metaphysical'? One could only shrug one's shoulders. But this is precisely how most present-day critics of, and 'experts' on, Marx judge his economic system. Either they totally refuse to discuss his dialectical method because they are opposed to 'metaphysics' (such as the adherents of 'modern theory') – this has the advantage of avoiding a real study of this method – or the critique is restricted to a few platitudes, better left unsaid. This even applies to such a prominent critic as Joseph Schumpeter.

Schumpeter writes in one of his last works that, although the author of *Capital* was a neo-Hegelian, it would be a 'mistake and an injustice to Marx's scientific powers . . . to make this element the master key to the system'. Of course, Marx retained his early love during the whole of his lifetime. He enjoyed certain formal analogies which may be found between his and Hegel's argument. He liked to testify to his Hegelianism and to use Hegelian terminology. But this is all. Nowhere did he betray positive science to metaphysics.²

What Schumpeter says here is, of course, nothing new. As early as 1922 Lukacs already complained about the bad habit of 'regarding the dialectic as a superficial stylistic ornament . . . Even otherwise conscientious scholars like Professor Vorländer, for example, believed that they could prove that Marx had "fitted" with Hegelian concepts "in only two places" and then again in a "third" place. Yet they failed to notice that a whole series of *categories of central importance and in constant use stem directly from Hegel's Logic*. We need only recall the Hegelian origin and the substantive and methodological importance of what is for Marx as fundamental a distinction as the one between *immediacy* and *mediation*. If this could go *unnoticed* then it must be just as true even today that Hegel is still treated as a "dead dog", and this despite the fact that he has once again become *persona grata* and even fashionable in the universities. What would Professor Vorländer say if a historian of philosophy contrived *not to notice* in the works of a successor of Kant, however critical and original, that

² J.A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, London: Unwin 1966, pp. 9-10.

the "synthetic unity of apperception", to take but one instance, was derived from the *Critique of Pure Reason*.³

It is clear that the four decades which have passed since the publication of Lukacs's pioneering study have brought no change. Admittedly, Schumpeter was not a professor of philosophy, as Vorländer was, and as an economic specialist was not, perhaps, obliged to read Lukacs's book (or, let us say, Lenin's *Philosophical Testament* which contains more or less the same). However he should not have simply passed over Marx himself. For example, the following well-known passage comes from Marx's own correspondence.

I am getting some nice developments, e.g. I have overthrown the entire doctrine of profit as previously conceived. In the method of working it was of great service to me that by mere accident I leafed through Hegel's *Logic* again.⁴

Does this really sound like mere 'formal analogies' or the simple use of Hegelian 'phraseology'? Shouldn't we rather conclude that even the most serious and professorial critics of Marx are guilty of a somewhat superficial approach?⁵

Marx's *Rough Draft* will put an end to this superficiality. If Hegel's influence on Marx's *Capital* can be seen explicitly only in a few footnotes, the *Rough Draft* must be designated as a massive reference to Hegel, in particular to his *Logic* – irrespective of how radically and materialistically Hegel was inverted! The publication of the *Grundrisse* means that academic critics of Marx will no longer be able to write without first having studied his method and its relation to Hegel. And whilst the *Rough Draft* does present a formidable task for both the opponents and supporters of marxism, its publication will

³ G.Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, London: Merlin 1971, xlv. What Lukacs says also applies to marxist theory in the period of the Second International. For example, O. Bauer answers the question "What connects the mature Marx with Hegel?" in 1911 in the following way. It is "the epistemological reflection on the essence of science, which is not a mere reflection of events, but rather "a product of the thinking head which appropriates the world in the only way it can" [a quote from Marx's Introduction to the *Grundrisse*], that is a piece of Kant, implanted in Hegel – developed by Marx, without Kant's knowledge, in Hegel's language, but free from the ontological re-interpretation of Kant by Hegel." (*Der Kampf* VI, pp. 189-190).

⁴ *Marx-Engels Werke (MEW)* Vol.29, p.260.
⁵ This fact was perfectly clear to Marx's philosophically educated contemporaries. Thus, Lassalle compared Marx's *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* with Hegel's *Phenomenology* and praised Marx as a 'Ricardo become socialist, and a Hegel become economist'. However, Engels regarded the 'German dialectical method', which underlay Marx's economic system, 'as a result which was of less significance than the materialist interpretation'.

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in the final analysis raise the general level of economic writing on Marx.⁹

In conclusion, a few words about the author. I am, by profession, neither an economist nor a philosopher. I would not have dared to write a commentary on the *Rough Draft* if a school of marxist theoreticians still existed today – as it did in the first thirty years of this century – which would have been better equipped to carry out this task. However, the last generation of notable marxist theoreticians for the most part fell victim to Hitler's and Stalin's terror, which interrupted the further development of the body of marxist ideas for several decades. Given these circumstances I feel obliged to offer this work to the reading public – as defective and incomplete as it might be – in the hope that a new generation will follow for whom, once more, Marx's theory will be a living source both of knowledge and the political practice which this knowledge directs.

March 1967

⁹ Unfortunately the author was far too optimistic in this respect (this Foreword was completed in 1955) . . . For, although Marx's *Grundrisse* has been in print for fourteen years it has passed almost unnoticed. The single, pleasing, exception is the work devoted to the *Grundrisse* by the Japanese scholar Kojiro Takagi. We should also cite *Der Begriff der Natur in der Lehre von Marx*, by Alfred Schmidt 1962. [An English translation by Ben Fowkes was published under the title *The Concept of Nature in Marx*, London: New Left Books 1971.] This work attaches great importance to the *Grundrisse* as a means of understanding the 'mature Marx'.

Lenin, Philosophical Notebooks

Full title of
Collected Works
G. W. Fr.
Hegel¹²

Collected Works of G. W. Fr.

Hegel,
Vol. III (Berlin, 1833)
(468 pages)

The Science of Logic.¹³

Part 1. *Objective Logic*.

Section 1. The Doctrine of Being.

(Bern: Log. I. 175)

"Complete edition by circle of friends of the deceased: Marheineke, Schulze, Gans, Henning, Hotho, Michelet, Förster."

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Vol. III,* p. 5—a shrewd statement about logic: it is a "prejudice" that it "teaches how to think" (just as physiology "teaches ... to digest"??)

... "logical science, which is the true content of genuine metaphysics or pure speculative philosophy...." (6)

... "Philosophy cannot borrow its method from a subordinate science, such as mathematics...." (6-7)

... "But it can be only the nature of the content which stirs in scientific cognition, while at the same time it is this very reflection of the content which itself initially posits and produces its determination." (7)

(The *moment* of scientific cognition—that is the essential thing.)
"Understanding (Verstand) makes deter-

* Hegel, *Werke*, Ed. III, Berlin, 1833.—Ed.

In the *Phenomenology of Mind* I have examined "the movement of consciousness, from the first direct contradiction (Gegensatz) between itself and the object, up to absolute knowledge. (34) This path goes through all the forms of the relation of consciousness to the object...."

"Truth, as science, is pure self-consciousness unfolding itself..." (35) "objective thinking" ... "the concept, as such, is that which exists in and for itself." (35) (36: clericalism, God, the realm of truth, etc., etc.) 37: Kant imparted "an essentially subjective signification" to "logical determinations." But "thought determinations" have "an objective value and existence." (37)

The old logic has fallen into Verachtung.* (38) It requires transformation.... 39—The old, formal logic is exactly like a child's game, making pictures out of jig-saw pieces (in Verachtung gekommen**). (38))

40 Philosophy must have its own method (not that of mathematics, *contra* Spinoza, Wolf und Andere***).

40-41: "For method is the consciousness of the form taken by the inner spontaneous movement of its content," and the rest of page 41 gives a good explanation of dialectics

"es ist der Inhalt in sich, die Dialektik, die er an ihm selbst hat, welche ihn fortbewegt." (42)

"The given sphere of phenomena is moved forward by the content itself of this sphere, the dialectic, which

NB

* disrepute—Ed.

** It has fallen into disrepute.—Ed.
*** and others—Ed.

it (this content) has in (an) itself" (i.e., the dialectic of its own movement).

"The negative is to an equal extent positive" (41)—negation is something definite, has a definite content, the inner contradictions lead to the replacement of the old content by a new, higher one.

In the old logic there is no transition, development (of concept and thought), there is not "*eines ineren, notwendigen Zusammehangs*"** (43) of all the parts and "Übergang"*** of some parts into others.

And Hegel puts forward two basic requirements:

- 1) "The necessity of connection" and
- 2) "the immanent emergence of distinctions.

Very important!! This is what it means, in my opinion:

1. *Necessary* connection, the objective connection of all the aspects, forces, tendencies, etc., of the given sphere of phenomena;

2. The "immanent emergence of distinctions"—the inner objective logic of evolution and of the struggle of the differences, polarity.

Shortcomings of the Platonic dialectics in Parmenides:44

"Dialectic is generally regarded as an external and negative procedure, that does not belong to the subject-matter itself, that is based on pure vanity, as a subjective craving to shake and break down what is fixed and true,—or that at best leads

* "*an iner, necessary connection*"—Ed.
** "transition"—Ed.

7-01028

NB

||| that the negative in general contains the ground of Becoming, the unrest of self-movement." (186)

183: "The ideality of Being-for-Self as totality thus, first, passes into reality, and into the most fixed and abstract of all, as *One*."

Dark waters...

The thought of the ideal passing into the real is *profound*: very important for history. But also in the personal life of man it is clear that this contains much truth. Against vulgar materialism. NB. The difference of the ideal from the material is also not unconditional, not *überschwenglich*. *

189—Note: The monads of Leibnitz. The principle of *Eins*** and its incompleteness in Leibnitz.

Obviously, Hegel takes his self-development of concepts, of categories, in connection with the entire history of philosophy. This gives still a *new* aspect to the whole *Logic*.

193 ... "It is an old proposition that *One* is *Many*, and more especially that the *Many* are *One*...."

195 ... "The distinction of *One* and *Many* has determined itself to be that of their relation to one another; this is divided into two relations, *Repulsion* and *Attraction*...."

* inordinate—Ed.
** the *One*—Ed.

ysese it. If this implies that "alles ein Entgegengesetztes ist,"* that everything has its positive and its negative determination, then it is all right. But if it is understood as it is generally understood, that, of all predicates, either a given one, or its not-Being, applies, then this is a "triviality"! "Spirit... sweet, not sweet? green, not green? The determination should lead to determinateness, but in this triviality it leads to nothing.

And then—Hegel says wittily—it is said that there is no third. There is a third in this thesis itself. *A* itself is the third, for *A* can be both + *A* and — *A*. "The Something" thus is itself the third term which was supposed to be excluded." (67)

This is shrewd and correct. Every concrete thing, every concrete something, stands in multifarious and often contradictory relations to everything else, ergo it is itself and some other.

Note 3 (at the end of Chapter 2, Section 1 of Book II of the *Logic*). "*The Law of Contradiction*."

"If now the primary Determinations of Reflection—Identity, Variety and Opposition—are established in a proposition, then the determination into which they pass over as into their truth (namely Contradiction) should much more so be comprehended and expressed in a proposition: *all things are contradictory in themselves*, in this meaning, that *this proposition* as opposed to the *others* expresses much better the *truth and essence of things*.—Contradiction,

* "everything is a term of an opposition"—*Ed.*

which emerges in Opposition, is no more than developed Nothing; and this is already contained in Identity, and occurred in the expression that the law of identity states nothing. This negation further determines itself into Variety and into Opposition, which now is posited Contradiction.

"But it has been a fundamental prejudice of hitherto existing logic and of ordinary imagination that Contradiction is a determination having less essence and immanence than Identity; but indeed, if there were any question of rank, and the two determinations had to be fixed as separate, Contradiction would have to be taken as the more profound and more fully essential. For as opposed to it Identity is only the determination of simple immediacy, or of dead Being, while Contradiction is the *root of all movement and vitality*, and it is only insofar as it contains a Contradiction that anything *moves and has its pulse and activity*."

"Ordinarily Contradiction is removed, first of all from things, from the existent and the true in general; and it is asserted that there is nothing contradictory. Next it is shifted into subjective reflection, which alone is said to posit it by relating and comparing it. But really it does not exist even in this reflection, for it is impossible to imagine or to think anything contradictory. Indeed, Contradiction, both in actuality and in thinking reflection, is considered an accident, a kind of abnormality or paroxysm of sickness which will soon pass away.

"With regard to the assertion that Contradiction does not exist, that it is non-existent, we may disregard this statement. In every experience there must be an ab-

solute determination of Essence—in every actuality as well as in every concept. The same remark has already been made above, under Infinity, which is Contradiction as it appears in the sphere of Being. But ordinary experience itself declares that at least there are a number of contradictory things, arrangements and so forth, the contradiction being present in them and not merely in an external reflection. But it must further not be taken only as an abnormality which occurs just here and there; it is the Negative in its essential determination, the *principle of all self-movement*, which consists of nothing else but an exhibition of Contradiction. External, sensible motion is itself its immediate existence. Something moves, not because it is here at one point of time and there at another, but because at one and the same point of time it is here and not here, and in this here both is and is not. We must grant the old dialecticians the contradictions which they prove in motion; but what follows is not that there is no motion, but rather that motion is *existent* Contradiction itself.

“And similarly internal self-movement proper, or impulse in general (the appetitive force or misus of the monad, the entelechy of absolutely simple Essence), is nothing else than the fact that something is in itself and is also the deficiency or the negative of itself, in one and the same respect. *Abstract* self-identity *Nas no vj-taliti* but the fact that Positive in itself is negativity causes it to pass outside itself and *to change*. Something therefore is living only insofar as it contains Contradiction, and is that force which can both comprehend and endure Contradiction. But

if an existent something cannot in its positive determination also encroach on its negative, cannot hold fast the one in the other and contain Contradiction within itself, then it is not living unity, or Ground, but perishes in Contradiction. Speculative thought consists only in this, that thought holds fast Contradiction and itself in Contradiction and not in that it allows itself to be dominated by it—as happens to imagination—or suffers its determinations to be resolved into others, or into Nothing.” (67-70)

Movement and “*self-movement*” (this NBI arbitrary (independent), spontaneous, internally-necessary movement), “change,” “movement and vitality,” “the principle of all self-movement,” “impulse” (Trieb) to “movement” and to “activity”—the opposite to “*dead Being*”—who would believe that this is the core of “Hegelianism,” of abstract and abstruse (ponderous, absurd?) Hegelianism? This core had to be discovered, understood, hinted, *überreitet*,* laid bare, refined, which is precisely what Marx and Engels did.

The idea of universal movement and change (1813 *Logic*) was conjectured before its application to life and society. In regard to society it was proclaimed earlier (1847) than it was demonstrated in application to man (1859).⁵³

“In movement, impulse, and the like, the *simplicity* of these determinations conceals the contradiction from imagination; but this contradiction immediately stands revealed in the determinations of relation. The most trivial examples—above and below, right and left, father and son, and so

simplicity
conceals

* rescued.—Ed.

ence of objectivity with the Notion.... But also *everything* actual, insofar as it is true, is the Idea... The individual Being is some one aspect of the Idea; hence it requires also other actualities, which likewise appear as existing specially for themselves; it is only in all of them together and in *their relation* that, the Notion is realised. The individual by itself does not correspond to its Notion; this limitation of its determinate existence constitutes its finitude and its downfall...."

is (only) one side of the Idea (of truth). Truth requires still other sides of reality, which likewise appear only as independent and individual (besonders für sich bestehende*). *Only in their totality* (zusammen), and in their *relation* (Beziehung) is truth realised.

The *totality of all sides* of the phenomenon, of reality and their (reciprocal) *relations*—that is what truth is composed of. The relations (= transitions = contradictions) of notions = the main content of logic, by which these concepts (and their relations, transitions, contradictions) are shown as reflections of the objective world. The dialectics of *things* produces the dialectics of *ideas*, and not vice versa.

Hegel brilliantly *divined* the dialectics of things (phenomena, the world, *nature*) in the dialectics of concepts #

This aphorism should be expressed more popularly, *without* the word dialectics: approximately as follows: In the alternation, reciprocal dependence of *all* notions, in the *identity of their opposites*, in the *transitions* of one no-

* existing specially for themselves. —Ed.

indeed *divined*, not more

tion into another, in the eternal change, movement of notions, Hegel brilliantly *divined* PRECISELY THIS RELATION OF THINGS, OF NATURE.

what constitutes dialectics?

=
 " mutual dependence of notions
 " all
 " without exception
 " transitions of notions from one into another
 " all
 " without exception.

The relativity of opposition between notions... the identity of opposites between notions.

= NB
 Every notion occurs in a certain relation, in a certain connection with *all* the others

"Truth is first of all taken to mean that I *know* how something *is*. This is truth, however, only in reference to consciousness, or formal truth, bare correctness. (§ 213, 386) Truth in the deeper sense, on the contrary, consists in the identity between objectivity and the Notion....

"A bad man is an untrue man, i.e., a man who does not behave in conformity with the notion of him, or his position. Nothing, however, can exist entirely devoid of identity between the notion and reality. Even what is bad and untrue *has being* only insofar as its reality still, somehow, conforms to its notion....

"Everything deserving the name of philosophy has always been based on the consciousness of an absolute unity of that *which the understanding accepts as valid only in its separation*...."

The Object of Logic

analysis elaborates it, the logical is certainly present only in Cognition; while conversely it is not only something posited but also something which is by itself. (280)

Logical concepts are subjective so long as they remain "abstract," in their abstract form, but at the same time they express also the "Things-in-themselves. Nature is both concrete and abstract, both phenomenon and essence, both moment and relation. Human concepts are subjective in their abstractness; separate, but objective as a whole, in the process, in the sum-total, in the tendency, in the source.

Very good is § 225 of the *Encyclopaedia* where "cognition" ("theoretical") and "will" ("practical activity") are depicted as two sides, two methods, two means of abolishing the "one-sidedness" both of subjectivity and of objectivity.

And further 281-282 very important on the *transition* of the categories into one another (and against Kant, p. 282), Logic, Vol. V, p. 282 (the end)*

"Kant ... takes up the determinate connection (the relation-notions and the synthetic principles themselves) from *formal logic* as *given*. They ought to have been deduced by the *exposition of the transition* of this simple unity of self-consciousness into these its determinations and distinctions; but Kant spared himself the trouble of demonstrating this veritably synthetic *Progress, that of the self-producing Notion*." (282)

* At this point Lenin's manuscript continues in the notebook "Hegel. Logic. Section III"—Ed.

Kant did not show the *formal* transition of the categories into one another.

286-287.—Turning once more to higher mathematics (showing, later on, that he is familiar with Gauss' solution of the equation $X^m-1=0$), Hegel again touches on the differential and integral calculus, and says to us:

"On this day mathematics by itself, that is, in a mathematical manner, has failed in justifying these operations, which are based upon this transition" ("from one magnitude to another"). "For the transition is not of a mathematical nature" Hegel says that Leibniz, to whom is ascribed the honour of having discovered the differential calculus, effected this transition "in a most inadequate manner, a manner both thoroughly notionless and unmathematical..." (287)

"Analytic cognition is the first premise of the whole syllogism,—the immediate relation of the Notion to the Object. Consequently, identity is the determination which it recognises as its own; it is only the apprehension of what is. Synthetic Cognition endeavours to form a Notion of what is, that is, to grasp the multiplicity of determinations in its unity. Hence it is the second premise of the syllogism in which terms various as such are related. Its goal is therefore necessity in general." (288)

Regarding the practice in certain sciences (e.g., physics) of taking various "forces," etc., for "explanation," and of pulling in (stretching), adjusting the facts, etc., Hegel makes the following clever remark:

"It is now seen that the so-called explanation and proof of the concrete element

remarkably correct and profound of the political economy of the bourgeoisie

against subjectivism and one-sidedness

i.e., Kant did not understand the *universal* law of the dialectics of the "Finite"?

which is brought into Propositions is partly a tautology and partly a confusion of the true relationship; partly, too, it is seen that this confusion served to disguise the trick of Cognition, which takes up the data of experience one-sidedly (the only manner in which it could reach its simple definitions and formulas), and does away with refutation from experience by proposing and taking as valid experience not in its concrete totality but as example, and only in that direction which is serviceable for the hypotheses and the theory. Concrete experience being thus subordinated to the presupposed determinations, the foundation of the theory is obscured, and is exhibited only from that side which is in conformity with the theory." (315-316)

The old metaphysics (e.g., of Wolf [example: ridiculous pomposity over trivialities, etc.]) was overthrown by Kant and Jacobi. Kant showed that "strict demonstration" led to antinomies,

"but he" (Kant) "did not reflect upon the nature of this demonstration, which is bound to a finite content; yet the two stand and fall together." (317)

Synthetic cognition is still not complete, for "the Notion does not become unity with itself in its object or its reality.... Hence in this Cognition the Idea does not yet reach truth because of the inadequacy of the object to the subjective Notion.—But the sphere of Necessity is the highest point of Being and of Reflection; in and for itself it passes over into the freedom of the Notion, while the inner identity passes over into its manifestation, which is the Notion as Notion...."

... "The Idea, insofar as the Notion is now for itself the Notion determinate in

and for itself, is the *Practical Idea*, or *Action*." (319) And the following § is headed "B: The Idea of the Good."

Theoretical cognition ought to give the object in its necessity, in its all-sided relations, in its contradictory movement, an- und für-sich.* But the human notion "definitively" catches this objective truth of cognition, seizes and masters it, only when the notion becomes "being-for-itself" in the sense of practice. That is, the practice of man and of mankind is the test, the criterion of the objectivity of cognition. Is that Hegel's idea? It is necessary to return to this.

Hegel on practice and the objectivity of cognition

Why is the transition from practice, from action, only to the "good," das Gute? That is narrow, one-sided! And the *useful*?

There is no doubt the useful also comes in. Or is this, according to Hegel, also das Gute?

All this in the chapter "The Idea of Cognition" (Chapter II)—in the transition to the "Absolute Idea" (Chapter III)—i.e., undoubtedly, in Hegel practice serves as a link in the analysis of the process of cognition, and indeed as the transition to objective ("absolute," according to Hegel) truth. Marx, consequently, clearly sides with Hegel in introducing the criterion of practice into the theory of knowledge: see the Theses on Feuerbach. ²¹

• in and for itself—Ed.

Practice in the theory
of knowledge:

Alias:
Man's consciousness
not only reflects the ob-
jective world, but cre-
ates it.

(320) "As subjective It" (der Begriff) "has again the presupposition of an otherness which is in itself; it is the *impulse* to realise itself, or the end which tries to give itself objectivity in the objective world, and to carry itself out, through itself. In the Theoretical Idea the subjective Notion stands opposed, as the universal which is indeterminate in and for itself, to the objective world, from which it draws determinate content and fulfilment. But in the Practical Idea it stands opposed as actual to the actual. But the self-certainty which the subject has in the fact of its determinateness in and for itself, is a certainty of its own actuality and of the *non-actuality* of the world:...."

The notion (=man), as

subjective, again presupposes an otherness which is in itself (=nature independent of man). This notion (= man) is the *impulse* to realise itself, to give itself objectivity in the objective world through itself, and to realise (fully) itself.

In the theoretical idea (in the sphere of theory) the subjective notion (cognition?), as the universal and in and for itself indeterminate, stands opposed to the objective world, from which it obtains determinate content and fulfilment.

In the practical idea (in the sphere of practice) this notion as the actual (acting?) stands opposed to the actual.

The self-certainty which the subject here suddenly instead of "Notion" has in its being in and for itself, as a determinate subject, is a certainty of its own actuality and of the *non-actuality* of the world.

i.e., that the world does not satisfy man and man decides to change it by his activity.

The essence:

The "good" is a "demand of external actuality", i.e., by the "good" is understood man's *practice* = the demand (1) also of *external* actuality (2).

Practice is higher than (theoretical) knowledge, for it has not only the dignity of universality, but also of immediate actuality.

"The activity of the end is not directed against itself...."

but aims, by destroying definite (sides, features, phenomena) of the *external* world, at giving itself reality in the form of *external actuality*...."

... "This determinateness, which is contained in the Notion, and is equal to it, and includes within itself the demand of the individual external actuality, is the *Good*. It appears with the dignity of absoluteness, because it is the totality of the Notion within itself—the objective in the form simultaneously of free unity and subjectivity. This Idea is *higher than the Idea of Cognition which has already been considered*, for it has not only the dignity of the universal but also of the *simply actual*...." (320-321)

"Consequently, the activity of the end is not directed against itself, for the purpose of absorbing and assimilating a given determination; it aims rather at positing its own determination, and, by transcending the determinations of the external world, at giving itself reality in the form of external actuality...."

(321) "The realised Good is good by virtue of what it is already in the Subjective End, in its Idea; realisation gives

it an external existence...." (322). "Presupposed to it (the Good) is the *objective world*, in the presupposition of which the subjectivity and finitude of the Good consists and which, as being other, pursues its own course; and in it even the realisation of the Good is exposed to obstacles, and may even be made impossible...." + (322-323) ... "Presupposed to it (the Good) is the *objective world*, in the presupposition of which the subjectivity and finitude of the Good consists *and which, as being other, pursues its own course*; and in it even the realisation of the Good is exposed to obstacles, and may even be made impossible...." + (322-323)

NB The "objective world" "pursues its own course, and man's practice, confronted by this objective world, encounters "obstacles in the realisation" of the End, even "impossibility...."

+ ... "Thus the Good remains an *Ought*; it is in and for itself, but Being, as last and abstract immediacy, remains determined against it as a not-Being too...." + (323)

The Good, welfare, well-meaning aspirations remain a SUBJECTIVE OUGHT....

+ + ... "Although the Idea of the perfected Good is an absolute postulate, it is no more than a postulate,—that is, the absolute infected with the *determinateness of subjectivity*. There are still *two worlds in opposition*: one a realm of *subjectivity* in the *pure spaces of trans- parent* thought, the other a realm of *objectivity* in the element of an externally manifold actuality, which is an unexplored realm of darkness. The complete development of the unresolved contradiction, of that absolute end which the barrier of this actuality insuperably opposes, has been considered more closely in *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 453 et seq...." (323)

Two worlds:
subjective
and
objective

A glibe at the pure "spaces of transparent thought" in the realm of subjectivity, which is confronted by the "darkness" of "objective," "manifold" actuality.

NB "In the latter" (= der theoretischen Idee* in contrast to der praktischen Idee**) ... "Cognition knows itself only as apprehension, as the self-identity of the Notion, which for itself is indeterminate; fulfilment, that is, objectivity determined in and for itself, is given to it, and that which truly is is the *actuality that is present independently of subjective positing*. The Practical Idea on the other hand counts this actuality (which at the same time opposes it as an insuperable barrier) as that which in and for itself is null, which is to receive its true determination and sole value through the ends of the Good. Will itself consequently bars the way to its own goal insofar as it separates itself from Cognition and external actuality does not, for it, retain the form of that which truly is; consequently the Idea of the Good can find its complement only in the Idea of the True." (323-324)

Cognition ... finds itself faced by that which truly is as actuality present independently of subjective opinions (Setzen***). (This is pure materialism) Man's will, his practice, itself blocks the attainment of its end ... in that it separates itself from cognition and does not recognise external actuality for that which truly is (for

* the Theoretical Idea—Ed.
** the Practical Idea—Ed.
*** positing—Ed.

Nota bene

objective truth). What is necessary is the *union of cognition and practice*.

And immediately following this:

... "But it makes this transition through itself" (the transition of the idea of truth into the idea of the Good, of theory into practice, and vice versa). "In the syllogism of action one premise is the immediate relation of the *good end to actuality*, of which it makes itself master, directing it (in the second premise) as *external means* against external actuality." (324)

NB

The "syllogism of action" ... For Hegel *action, practice, is a logical syllogism*, a figure of logic. And that is true! Not, of course, in the sense that the figure of logic has its other being in the practice of man (=absolute idealism), but vice versa: man's practice, repeating itself a thousand million times, becomes consolidated in man's consciousness by figures of logic. Precisely (and only) on account of this thousand-million-fold repetition, these figures have the stability of a pre-judice, an axiomatic character.

First premise: The *good end* (subjective end) versus *actuality* ("external actuality").

Second premise: The external *means* (instrument), (objective).

Third premise or conclusion: The coincidence of subjective and objective, the fest of subjective ideas, the criterion of objective truth.

... "The realisation of the Good in the

teeth of an opposing and other actuality is the mediation which is essential for the immediate relation and actualisation of the Good...." (325)

... "If now in spite of this" (through activity) "the end of the Good should not be realised, then this is a relapse of the Notion to the standpoint which the Notion has before its activity—the standpoint of that actuality which was determined as null and yet was presupposed as real. This relapse becomes a progress to bad infinity; it has its only ground in the fact that in the transcendence of this abstract reality the transcendence is equally immediately forgotten, or that it is forgotten that this reality has already been presupposed as non-objective actuality which is null in and for itself." (325)

NB:

The non-fulfilment of ends (of human activity) has as its cause (Grund) the fact that reality is taken as non-existent (nichtig), that its (reality's) objective actuality is not being recognised.

"By the activity of the objective Notion external actuality is altered, and its determination is accordingly transcended; and by this very process it loses merely apparent reality, external determinability, and nullity, and it is thus *posited* as being in and for itself...." (326) +

NB

The activity of man, who has constructed an objective picture of the world for himself, *changes external actuality*, abolishes its determinateness (= alters some sides or other, qualities, of it), and thus removes from it the features of Semblance, externality and

- 14) the apparent return to the old (negation of the negation).
 15) the struggle of content with form and conversely. The throwing off of the form, the transformation of the content.
 16) the transition of quantity into quality and vice versa. ((15 and 16 are *exemplis* of 9))

In brief, dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. This embodies the essence of dialectics, but it requires explanations and development.

+ (continuation. See the previous page. *)

... "Dialectics is one of those ancient sciences which has been most misjudged in modern metaphysics [here obviously = theory of knowledge and logic] and in the popular philosophy of ancients and moderns alike..." (336) Diogenes Laertius said of Plato that he was the father of dialectics, the third philosophical science (as Thales was the father of natural philosophy and Socrates of moral philosophy), but that those who are particularly loud in talking about this merit of Plato's give little thought to it....

... "Dialectics has often been considered an *art*, as though it rested upon a subjective *talent* and did not belong to the objectivity of the Notion..." (336-337) It is an important merit of Kant's to have re-introduced dialectics, to have recognised it as "necessary" (a property) "of reason" (337) but the result (of the application of dialectics) must be "opposite" (to Kantianism). See below.

Plato and dialectics

The objectivity of dialectics

* See p. 220 of this volume.—Ed.

"Creative" philosophy

What is philosophy? Is it a purely receptive or, at the very most, ordering activity? Or is it an absolutely creative activity? One must first define what is meant by "receptive," "ordering" and "creative." "Receptive" implies the certainty of an external world which is absolutely immutable, which exists "in general," objectively in the vulgar sense. "Ordering" is similar to "receptive." Although it implies an activity of thought, this activity is limited and narrow. But what does "creative" mean? Should it mean that the external world is created by thought? But what thought and whose? There is a danger of falling into solipsism,^[30] and in fact every form of idealism necessarily does fall into solipsism. To escape simultaneously from solipsism and from mechanistic conceptions implicit in the concept of thought as a receptive and ordering activity, it is necessary to put the question in an "historicist" fashion, and at the same time to put the "will" (which in the last analysis equals practical or political activity) at the base of philosophy. But it must be a rational, not an arbitrary, will, which is realised in so far as it corresponds to objective historical necessities, or in so far as it is universal history itself in the moment of its progressive actualisation. Should this will be represented at the beginning by a single individual, its rationality will be documented by the fact that it comes to be accepted by the many, and accepted permanently: that is, by becoming a culture, a form of "good sense," a conception of the world with an ethic that conforms to its structure. Until classical German philosophy, philosophy was conceived as a receptive, or at the most an ordering activity, i.e. as knowledge of a mechanism that functioned objectively outside man. Classical German philosophy introduced the concept of "creativity" of thought, but in an idealistic and speculative sense.

It seems that the philosophy of praxis alone has been able to take philosophy a step forward, basing itself on classical German philosophy but avoiding any tendency towards solipsism, and historicising thought in that it assumes it in the form of a conception of the world and of "good sense" diffused among the many (a diffusion which precisely would be inconceivable without rationality or historicity) and diffused in such a way as to convert itself into an active norm of conduct. Creative, therefore, should be understood in the "relative" sense, as thought which modifies the way of feeling of the many and consequently reality itself, which cannot be thought without this many.

Notes:

30. Solipsism: the form of subjective idealism which maintains that the self is the only object of knowledge.

that he would feel very embarrassed if he found himself obliged, in front of an ordinary public and in debate with a neo-scholastic, to defend, for example, the subjectivist point of view. He also observes how Catholicism tends, in its competition with idealist philosophy, to appropriate to its side natural and physical science. Elsewhere Missiroli has written that he foresees a period of decline of speculative philosophy and an ever-increasing diffusion of the experimental and "realistic" sciences. (In this other text, however, published by *Il Saggiatore*, he also foresees a wave of anti-clericalism. In other words he apparently no longer believes in the appropriation of science by Catholicism.) Also worth recalling is the "pumpkin polemic"⁸⁸ to be found in the volume of writings of Roberto Ardigò (*Scritti vari*, collected and arranged by G. Marchesini, Lemmonier, 1922). In a minor provincial clerical paper, some writer (a priest of the Episcopal Curia), in order to disqualify Ardigò in the eyes of a popular public, called him more or less "one of those philosophers who maintain that the cathedral (of Mantua or wherever it may be) only exists because they think it, and when they cease to think it the cathedral disappears" (etc.), a charge which was sharply resented by Ardigò who was a positivist and agreed with the Catholics as to the way of conceiving external reality.

It must be demonstrated that while the "subjectivist" conception has had its usefulness as a criticism of the philosophy of transcendence on the one hand and the naive metaphysics of common sense and of philosophical materialism on the other, it can find its truth and its historicist interpretation only in the concept of superstructures. As for its speculative form, it is no more than a mere philosophical romance.*

The point that must be made against the *Popular Manual* is that it has presented the subjectivist conception just as it appears from the point of view of common-sense criticism and that it has adopted the conception of the objective reality of the external world in its most trivial and uncritical sense without so much as a suspicion that

⁸⁸ The so-called *polemica della zucca*.

* A reference to a somewhat more realistic interpretation of subjectivism in classical German philosophy can be found in a review by G. De Ruggiero of some posthumous writings (letters, I think) of B. Constant published in *Critica* some years ago.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ The book referred to is the *Journal intime et lettres à sa famille* of Benjamin Constant (1767-1830), reviewed in *Critica*, January 1929.

it can run into objections on the grounds of mysticism, as indeed it has.*

However, if one analyses this idea it is not all that easy to justify a view of external objectivity understood in such a mechanical way. It might seem that there can exist an extra-historical and extra-human objectivity. But who is the judge of such objectivity? Who is able to put himself in this kind of "standpoint of the cosmos in itself" and what could such a standpoint mean? It can indeed be maintained that here we are dealing with a hangover of the concept of God, precisely in its mystic form of a conception of an unknown God. Engels' formulation that "the unity of the world consists in its materiality demonstrated by the long and laborious development of philosophy and natural science"⁹¹ contains the germ of the correct conception in that it has recourse to history and to man in order to demonstrate objective reality. Objective always means "humanly objective" which can be held to correspond exactly to "historically subjective": in other words, objective would mean "universal subjective".⁹² Man knows objectively in so far as knowledge is real for the whole human race *historically* unified in a single unitary cultural system. But this process of historical unification takes place through the disappearance of the internal contradictions which tear apart human society, while these contradictions themselves are the condition for the formation of groups and for the birth of ideologies which are not concretely universal but are immediately rendered transient by the practical origin of their substance. There exists therefore a struggle for objectivity (to free oneself from partial and fallacious ideologies) and this struggle is the same as the struggle for the cultural unification of the human race. What the idealists call "spirit" is not a point of departure but

* In the text presented to the London Congress the author of the *Popular Manual* refers to an accusation of mysticism, attributing it to Sombart and dismissing it contemptuously. Sombart certainly took it from Croce.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Werner Sombart (1863-1941): German economist and sociologist who became an ideologue of the conservative Right in the Weimar period.

⁹¹ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (*Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*, translated by Emil Burns, London [n.d.], p. 54). "The real unity of the world consists in its materiality, and this is proved not by a few juggling phrases but by a long and tedious development of philosophy and natural science."

⁹² The original phrase is *universale soggettivo* which is slightly ambiguous, as it could also be translated "subjective universal". The basic sense however would be the same: viz. that the unity of knowledge and being demanded by the subjectivist can only avoid the pitfalls of arbitrary relativism when there is a single knowing subject and an undivided human race so that knowledge becomes the same for all.

a point of arrival, it is the *ensemble* of the superstructures moving towards concrete and objectively universal unification and it is not a unitary presupposition.

Up to now experimental science has provided the terrain on which a cultural unity of this kind has reached its furthest extension. This has been the element of knowledge that has contributed most to unifying the "spirit" and making it more universal. It is the most objectivised and concretely universalised subjectivity.

The idea of "objective" in metaphysical materialism would appear to mean an objectivity that exists even apart from man; but when one affirms that a reality would exist even if man did not, one is either speaking metaphorically or one is falling into a form of mysticism. We know reality only in relation to man, and since man is historical becoming, knowledge and reality are also a becoming and so is objectivity, etc.

Engels' phrase that "the materiality of the world is demonstrated by the long and laborious development of philosophy and natural science" should be analysed and made more precise. Does science mean theoretical activity or the practical-experimental activity of scientists, or a synthesis of the two? One might say that the typical unitary process of reality is found here in the experimental activity of the scientist, which is the first model of dialectical mediation between man and nature, and the elementary historical cell through which man puts himself into relation with nature by means of technology, knows her and dominates her. There can be no doubt that the rise of the experimental method separates two historical worlds, two epochs, and initiates the process of dissolution of theology and metaphysics and the process of development of modern thought whose consummation is in the philosophy of praxis. Scientific experiment is the first cell of the new method of production, of the new form of active union of man and nature. The scientist-experimenter is also a worker, not a pure thinker, and his thought is continually controlled by practice and vice versa, until there is formed the perfect unity of theory and practice.

The neo-scholastic Casotti writes:*

"The researches of naturalists and biologists presuppose life and real organisms already in existence", an expression which relates to that of Engels in *Anti-Dühring*.

Agreement of Catholicism and Aristotelianism on the question of the objectivity of the real.

* Mario Casotti, *Maestro e solitario* [Milan, 1930], p. 49.

To understand exactly what might be meant by the problem of the reality of the external world it might be worth taking up the example of the notions of "East" and "West" which do not cease to be "objectively real" even though analysis shows them to be no more than a conventional, that is "historico-cultural" construction. (The terms "artificial" and "conventional" often indicate "historical" facts which are products of the development of civilisation and not just rationally arbitrary or individually contrived constructions.) One can also recall the example contained in a little book by Bertrand Russell.⁹³ Russell says approximately this: "We cannot, without the existence of man on the earth, think of the existence of London or Edinburgh, but we can think of the existence of two points in space, one to the North and one to the South, where London and Edinburgh now are." It could be objected that without the existence of man one cannot think of "thinking", one cannot think at all of any fact or relationship which exists only in so far as man exists. What would North-South or East-West mean without man? They are real relationships and yet they would not exist without man and without the development of civilisation. Obviously East and West are arbitrary and conventional, that is historical, constructions, since outside of real history every point on the earth is East and West at the same time. This can be seen more clearly from the fact that these terms have crystallised not from the point of view of a hypothetical melancholic man in general but from the point of view of the European cultured classes who, as a result of their world-wide hegemony, have caused them to be accepted everywhere. Japan is the Far East not only for Europe but also perhaps for the American from California and even for the Japanese himself, who, through English political culture, may then call Egypt the Near East. So because of the historical content that has become attached to the geographical terms, the expressions East and West have finished up indicating specific relations between different cultural complexes. Thus Italians often, when speaking of Morocco, call it an "Eastern" country, to refer to its Moslem and Arab civilisation. And yet these references are real; they correspond to real facts, they allow one to travel by land and by sea, to arrive where one has decided to arrive, to "forsee"

⁹³ Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 1912. "The part of the earth's surface where Edinburgh stands would be North of the part where London stands even if there were no human beings to know about North and South and even if there were no minds at all in the universe." (1967 edition, p. 56.)

the future, to objectivise reality, to understand the objectivity of the external world. Rational and real become one.

Without having understood this relationship it seems that one cannot understand the philosophy of praxis, its position in comparison with idealism and with mechanical materialism, the importance and significance of the doctrine of superstructures. It is not exact, as Croce maintains, to say that in the philosophy of praxis the Hegelian "idea" has been replaced by the "concept" of structure. The Hegelian "idea" has been resolved both in the structure and in the superstructures and the whole way of conceiving philosophy has been "historicised", that is to say a new way of philosophising which is more concrete and historical than what went before it has begun to come into existence.

Note. One must study the position of Professor Lukács towards the philosophy of praxis. It would appear that Lukács maintains that one can speak of the dialectic only for the history of men and not for nature. He might be right and he might be wrong. If his assertion presupposes a dualism between nature and man he is wrong because he is falling into a conception of nature proper to religion and to Graeco-Christian philosophy and also to idealism which does not in reality succeed in unifying and relating man and nature to each other except verbally. But if human history should be conceived also as the history of nature (also by means of the history of science) how can the dialectic be separated from nature? Perhaps Lukács, in reaction to the baroque theories of the *Popular Manual*, has fallen into the opposite error, into a form of idealism.⁹⁴

Judgment on Past Philosophies

The superficial critique of subjectivism in the *Popular Manual* is part of a more general question, which is that of the attitude taken up

⁹⁴ It is not entirely clear on the basis of what evidence Gramsci makes this admittedly very tentative criticism. In his own essay on Bukharin's *Manual* (see introduction to this section) Lukács observes "... [the realm of the dialectic] is that of the historical process as a whole, whose individual, concrete, unrepeatable moments reveal its dialectical essence precisely in the qualitative difference between them and in the continuous transformation of their objective structure". Even in his supposedly most "idealist" work, *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács does not appear to maintain a dualism between natural and human history. Nor does the reference in OC (p. 153n) to the essay *Mein Weg zu Marx* (1933) bear out Gramsci's observation, which is probably based on reports of the criticisms of Lukács made by Debortin and others about that time.

PART IV: HOW REVOLUTIONARIES ARE MADE

Questions:

1. What determines the extent to which an individual can influence society? What is the influence of "accidents" on history? Are Plekhanov's positions on these questions right? What about Engels' [see the letters in Part I] ?
2. Why cannot human nature account for the course of history? Or can it?
3. What accounts for the stagnation of Marxism described by Rosa Luxemburg?
4. Luxemburg says that the third volume of *Capital* far exceeded the theoretical needs of the proletariat of her time. Is she right?
5. Why are people of great talent often the contemporaries of others with similar talents?
6. What is the limit of individual power? In what sense can a person "make history"?
7. Does Lerone Bennett mean the same thing as Hegel by "free"? Is freedom, to Hegel, "just another word for nothin' left to lose"? Does Frantz Fanon agree with Hegel's definition?
8. Compare Shields Green and Huck Finn. Do the same for John Brown and Jim.
9. What does George Rawick mean that "one can never remove culture, although one can transform it" [page 8]? What represents the negation of the negation in Black culture today?
10. What insight is shared by Hegel, Bennett, Twain, Rawick and Ignatin? How is it missing from Elkins and Genovese (based on the Rawick reading)?
11. What does it mean to "construct acts to the end"?
12. How do characters like Shields Green, John Brown, Huck Finn, and Jim affect everyone else? What is it that "few American white men" can resist?
13. Is George Rawick a racist? Is Mark Twain? Is Stanley Elkins? Is Eugene Genovese?
14. What is self-activity? How is it relevant to revolution? Who is a revolutionary?

Plekhanov, from *The Role of the Individual in History*.

It follows, then, that by virtue of particular traits of their character, individuals can influence the fate of society. Sometimes this influence is very considerable; but the possibility of exercising this influence, and its extent, are determined by the form of organisation of society, by the relation of forces within it. The character of an individual is a "factor" in social development only where, when, and to the extent that social relations permit it to be such.

We may be told that the extent of personal influence may also be determined by the talents of the individual. We agree. But the individual can display his talents only when he occupies the position in society necessary for this. Why was the fate of France in the hands of a man who totally lacked the ability and desire to serve society? Because such was the form of organisation of that society. It is the form of organisation that in any given period determines the role and, consequently, the social significance that may fall to the lot of talented or incompetent individuals.

But if the role of individuals is determined by the form of organisation of society, how can their social influence, which is determined by the role they play, contradict the conception of social development as a process expressing laws? It does not contradict it; on the contrary, it serves as one of its most vivid illustrations.

But here we must observe the following. The possibility – determined by the form of organisation of society – that individuals may exercise social influence, opens the door to the influence of so-called *accident* upon the historical destiny of nations. Louis XV's lasciviousness was an inevitable consequence of the state of his physical constitution, but in relation to the general course of France's development the state of his constitution was *accidental*. Nevertheless, as we have said, it did influence the fate of France and served as one of the causes which determined this fate. The death of Mirabeau, of course, was due to pathological processes which obeyed definite laws. The inevitability of these processes, however, did not arise out of the general course of France's development, but out of certain particular features of the celebrated orator's constitution, and out of the physical

conditions under which he had contracted his disease. In relation to the general course of France's development these features and conditions were *accidental*. And yet, Mirabeau's death influenced the further course of the revolution and served as one of the causes which determined it.

Still more astonishing was the effect of accidental causes in the above-mentioned example of Frederick II, who succeeded in extricating himself from an extremely difficult situation only because of Buturlin's irresolution. Even in relation to the general cause of Russia's development Buturlin's appointment may have been accidental, in the sense that we have defined that term, and, of course, it had no relation whatever to the general course of Prussia's development. Yet it is not improbable that Buturlin's irresolution saved Frederick from a desperate situation. Had Suvorov been in Buturlin's place, the history of Prussia might have taken a different course. It follows, then, that sometimes the fate of nations depends on accidents, which may be called *accidents of the second degree*. "*In allem Endlichen ist ein Element des Zufälligen*," said Hegel (In everything finite there are accidental elements). In science we deal only with the "finite"; hence we can say that all the processes studied by science contain some accidental elements. Does not this preclude the scientific cognition of phenomena? No. *Accident is something relative*. It appears only at the point of intersection of *inevitable* processes. For the inhabitants of Mexico and Peru, the appearance of Europeans in America was *accidental* in the sense that it did not follow from the social development of these countries. But the passion for navigation which possessed West Europeans at the end of the Middle Ages was not accidental; nor was the fact that the European forces easily overcame the resistance of the natives. The consequences of the conquest of Mexico and Peru by Europeans were also not accidental; in the last analysis, these consequences were determined by the resultant of two forces: the economic position of the conquered countries on the one hand, and the economic position of the conquerors on the other. And these forces, like their resultant, can fully serve as objects of scientific investigation.

The accidents of the Seven Years' War exercised considerable influence upon the subsequent history of Prussia. But their influence would have been entirely different at a different stage of Prussia's development. Here, too, the accidental consequences were determined by the resultant of two forces: the social-political conditions of Prussia on the one hand, and the social-political condition of the European countries that influenced her, on the other. Hence, here, too, accidents do not in the least hinder the scientific investigation of phenomena.

We know now that individuals often exercise considerable influence upon the fate of society, but this influence is determined by the internal structure of that society and by its relation to other societies. But this is not all that has to be said about the role of the individual in history. We must approach this question from still another side.

Sainte-Beuve thought that had there been a sufficient number of petty and dark causes of the kind that he had mentioned, the outcome of the French Revolution would have been the *opposite* of what we know it to have been. This is a great mistake. No matter how intricately the petty, psychological and physiological causes may have been interwoven, they would not under any circumstances have eliminated the great social needs that gave rise to the French Revolution; and as long as these needs remained unsatisfied the revolutionary movement in France would have continued. To make the outcome of this movement the opposite of what it was, the needs that gave rise to it would have had to be the opposite of what they were; and this, of course, no combination of petty causes would ever be able to bring about.

The causes of the French Revolution lay in the character of the *social relations*; and the petty causes assumed by Sainte-Beuve could lie only in the *personal qualities of individuals*. The final cause of social relationships lies in the state of the productive forces. This depends on the qualities of individuals only in the sense, perhaps, that these individuals possess more or less talent for making technical improvements, discoveries and inventions. Sainte-Beuve did not have these qualities in mind. No other qualities, however, enable individuals directly to influence the state of productive forces, and hence, the social relations which they determine, i.e. *economic relations*. No matter what the qualities of the given individual may be, they cannot eliminate the given economic relations if the latter conform to the given state of productive forces. But the personal qualities of individuals make them more or less fit to satisfy those social needs which arise out of the given economic relations, or to counteract such satisfaction. The urgent social need of France at the end of the eighteenth century was the substitution for the obsolete political institutions of new institutions that would conform more to her

economic system. The most prominent and useful public men of that time were those who were more capable than others of helping to satisfy this most urgent need. We will assume that Mirabeau, Robespierre and Napoleon were men of that type. What would have happened had premature death not removed Mirabeau from the political stage? The constitutional monarchist party would have retained its considerable power for a longer period; its resistance to the republicans would, therefore, have been more energetic. But that is all. No Mirabeau could, at that time, have averted the triumph of the republicans. Mirabeau's power rested entirely on the sympathy and confidence of the people; but the people wanted a republic, as the Court irritated them by its obstinate defence of the old order. As soon as the people had become convinced that Mirabeau did not sympathise with their republican strivings they would have ceased to sympathise with him; and then the great orator would have lost nearly all influence, and in all probability would have fallen a victim to the very movement that he would vainly have tried to check. Approximately the same thing may be said about Robespierre. Let us assume that he was an absolutely indispensable force in his party; but even so, he was not the only force. If the accidental fall of a brick had killed him, say, in January, 1793 [12*], his place would, of course, have been taken by somebody else, and although this person might have been inferior to him in every respect, nevertheless, events would have taken *the same course* as they did when Robespierre was alive. For example, even under these circumstances the Gironde [13*] would probably not have escaped defeat; but it is possible that Robespierre's party would have lost power somewhat earlier and we would now be speaking, not of the Thermidor reaction, but of the Floréal, Prairial or Messidor reaction. [14*] Perhaps some will say that with his inexorable Terror, Robespierre did not delay but hastened the downfall of his party. We will not stop to examine this supposition here; we will accept it as if it were quite sound. In that case we must assume that Robespierre's party would have fallen not in Thermidor, but in Fructidor, Vendémiaire or Brumaire. In short, it may have fallen sooner or perhaps later, but it certainly would have fallen, because the section of the people which supported Robespierre's party was totally unprepared to hold power for a prolonged period. At all events, results "opposite" to those which arose from Robespierre's energetic action are out of the question.

Nor could they have arisen even if Bonaparte had been struck down by a bullet, let us say, at the Battle of Arcole. [15*] What he did in the Italian and other campaigns other generals would have done. Probably they would not have displayed the same talent as he did, and would not have achieved such brilliant victories; nevertheless the French Republic would have emerged victorious from the wars it waged at that time, because its soldiers were incomparably the best in Europe. As for the 18th of Brumaire [16*] and its influence on the internal life of France, here, too, *in essence*, the general course and outcome of events would probably have been the same as they were under Napoleon. The Republic, mortally wounded by the events of the 9th of Thermidor, was slowly dying. The Directoire [17*] was unable to restore order which the bourgeoisie, having rid itself of the rule of the aristocracy, now desired most of all. To restore order a "good sword," as Siéyès expressed it, was needed. At first it was thought that general Jourdan would serve in this virtuous role, but when he was killed at Novi, the names of Moreau, MacDonald and Bernadotte were mentioned. [21] Bonaparte was only mentioned later: and had he been killed, like Jourdan, he would not have been mentioned at all, and some other "sword" would have been put forward. It goes without saying that the man whom events had elevated to the position of dictator must have been tirelessly aspiring to power himself, energetically pushing aside and ruthlessly crushing all who stood in his way. Bonaparte was a man of iron energy and was remorseless in the pursuit of his goal. But there were not a few energetic, talented and ambitious egoists in those days besides him. The place Bonaparte succeeded in occupying would, probably, not have remained vacant. Let us assume that the other general who had secured this place would have been more peaceful than Napoleon, that he would not have roused the whole of Europe against himself, and therefore, would have died in the Tuileries and not on the island of St. Helena. In that case, the Bourbons would not have returned to France at all; for them, such a result would certainly have been the "opposite" of what it was. In its relation to the internal life of France as a whole, however, this result would have differed little from the actual result. After the "good sword" had restored order and had consolidated the power of the bourgeoisie, the latter would have tired soon of its barrack-room habits and despotism. A liberal movement would have arisen, similar to the one that arose after the Restoration; the fight would have gradually flared up, and as "good swords" are not distinguished for their yielding nature, the virtuous Louis-Philippe would, perhaps,

have ascended the throne of his dearly beloved kinsmen, not in 1830, but in 1820, or in 1825. All such changes in the course of events might, to some extent, have influenced the subsequent political, and through it, the economic life of Europe. Nevertheless, under no circumstances would the final outcome of the revolutionary movement have been the “opposite” of what it was. Owing to the specific qualities of their minds and characters, influential individuals can change the *individual features of events and some of their particular consequences*, but they cannot change their general *trend*, which is determined by other forces.

VII

Furthermore, we must also note the following. In discussing the role great men play in history, we nearly always fall victims to a sort of optical illusion, to which it will be useful to draw the reader’s attention. In coming out in the role of the “good sword” to save public order, Napoleon prevented all the other generals from playing this role, and some of them might have performed it in the same way, or almost the same way, as he did. Once the public need for an energetic military ruler was satisfied, the social organisation barred the road to the position of military ruler for all other talented soldiers. Its power became a power that was unfavourable to the appearance of other talents of a similar kind. This is the cause of the optical illusion, which we have mentioned. Napoleon’s personal power presents itself to us in an extremely magnified form, for we place to his account the social power which had brought him to the front and supported him. Napoleon’s power appears to us to be something quite exceptional because the other powers similar to it did not pass from the potential to the real. And when we are asked, “What would have happened if there had been no Napoleon?” our *imagination* becomes confused and it seems to us that without him the social movement upon which his power and influence were based could not have taken place.

In the history of the development of human intellect, the success of some individual hinders the success of another individual very much more rarely. But even here we are not free from the above-mentioned optical illusion. When a given state of society sets certain problems before its intellectual representatives, the attention of prominent minds is concentrated upon them until these problems are solved. As soon as they have succeeded in solving them, their attention is transferred to another object. By solving a problem a given talent A diverts the attention of talent B from the problem already solved to another problem. And when we are asked: What would have happened if A had died before he had solved problem X? – we imagine that the thread of development of the human intellect would have been broken. We forget that had A died B, or C, or D might have tackled the problem, and the thread of intellectual development would have remained intact in spite of A’s premature demise.

In order that a man who possesses a particular kind of talent may, by means of it, greatly influence the course of events, two conditions are needed. First, this talent must make him more conformable to the social needs of the given epoch than anyone else: if Napoleon had possessed the musical gifts of Beethoven instead of his own military genius he would not, of course, have become an emperor. Second, the existing social order must not bar the road to the person possessing the talent which is needed and useful precisely at the given time. This very *Napoleon* would have died as the barely known General, or Colonel, *Bonaparte* had the old order in France existed another seventy-five years. [22] In 1789, Davout, Desaix, Marmont and MacDonald were subalterns; Bernadotte was a *sergeant-major*; Hoche, Marceau, Lefebvre, Pichegru, Ney, Masséna, Murat and Soult were *non-commissioned officers*; Augereau was a *fencing master*; Lannes was a *dyer*, Gouvion Saint-Cyr was an *actor*; Jourdan was a *peddler*; Bessières was a *barber*; Brune was a *compositor*; Joubert and Junot were *law students*; Kléber was an *architect*; Marrier did not see any military service until the revolution. [23] Had the old order continued to exist up to our days it would never have occurred to any of us that in France, at the end of the last century, certain actors, composers, barbers, dyers, lawyers, peddlers and fencing masters had been potential military geniuses. [24]

Stendhal observed that a man who was born at the same time as Titian, i.e. in 1477, could have lived forty years with Raphael, who died in 1520, and with Leonardo da Vinci, who died in 1519; that he could have spent many years with Corregio, who died in 1534, and with Michelangelo, who lived until 1563; that he would have been no more than thirty-four years of age when Giorgione died; that he could have been acquainted with Tintoretto, Bassano, Veronese, Julian Romano and Andrea del Sarto; that, in short, he would have been the contemporary of all the great painters, with the exception of those who belonged to the Bologna School, which

arose a full century later. [25] Similarly, it may be said that a man who was born in the same year as Wouwermann could have been personally acquainted with nearly all the great Dutch painters [26]; and a man of the same age as Shakespeare would have been the contemporary of a number of remarkable playwrights. [27]

It has long been observed that great talents appear everywhere, whenever the social conditions favourable to their development exist. This means that every man of talent who *actually appears*, i.e. every man of talent who becomes a *social force*, is the product of *social relations*. Since this is the case, it is clear why talented people can, as we have said, change only individual features of events, but not their general trend; *they are themselves the product of this trend; were it not for that trend they would never have crossed the threshold that divides the potential from the real.*

It goes without saying that there is talent and talent. “When a fresh step in the development of civilisation calls into being a new form of art,” rightly says Taine, “scores of talents who only half express social thought appear around one or two geniuses who express it perfectly.” [28] If, owing to certain mechanical or physiological causes unconnected with the general course of the social-political and intellectual development of Italy, Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci had died in their infancy, Italian art would have been less perfect, but the general trend of its development in the period of the Renaissance would have remained the same. Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo did not create this trend; they were merely its best representatives. True, usually a whole school springs up around a man of genius, and his pupils try to copy his methods to the minutest details; that is why the gap that would have been left in Italian art in the period of the Renaissance by the early death of Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci would have strongly influenced many of the secondary features of its subsequent history. But in essence, there would have been no change in this history, provided there were no important change in the general course of the intellectual development of Italy due to general causes.

It is well known, however, that quantitative differences ultimately pass into qualitative differences. This is true everywhere, and is therefore true in history. A given trend in art may remain without any remarkable expression if an unfavourable combination of circumstances carries away, one after the other, several talented people who might have given it expression. But the premature death of such talented people can prevent the artistic expression of this trend only if it is too shallow to produce new talent. As, however, the depth of any given trend in literature and art is determined by its importance for the class, or stratum, whose tastes it expresses, and by the social role played by that class or stratum, here, too, in the last analysis, everything depends upon the course of social development and on the relation of social forces.

VIII

Thus, the personal qualities of leading people determine the individual features of historical events; and the accidental element, in the sense that we have indicated, always plays some role in the course of these events, the trend of which is determined in the last analysis by so-called general causes, i.e. actually by the development of productive forces and the mutual relations between men in the social-economic process of production. Casual phenomena and the personal qualities of celebrated people are ever so much more noticeable than deep-lying general causes. The eighteenth century pondered but little over these general causes, and claimed that history was explained by the conscious actions and “passions” of historical personages. The philosophers of that century asserted that history might have taken an entirely different course as a result of the most insignificant causes; for example, if some “atom” had started playing pranks in some ruler’s head (an idea expressed more than once in *Système de la Nature*).

The adherents of the new trend in the science of history began to argue that history could not have taken any other course than the one it has taken, notwithstanding all “atoms.” Striving to emphasise the effect of general causes as much as possible, they ignored the personal qualities of historical personages. According to their argument, historical events would not have been affected in the least by the substitution of some persons for others, more or less capable. [29] But if we make such an assumption then we must admit that the *personal element is of no significance whatever in history*, and that everything can be reduced to the operation of general causes, to the general laws of historical progress. This would be going to an extreme which leaves no room for the particle of truth contained in the opposite opinion. It is precisely for this reason that the opposite opinion retained some right to existence. The collision between these two opinions assumed the form of an antinomy, the first part

of which was general laws, and the second part was the activities of individuals. From the point of view of the second part of the antinomy, history was simply a chain of accidents; from the point of view of the first part it seemed that even the individual features of historical events were determined by the operation of general causes. But if the individual features of events are determined by the influence of general causes and do not depend upon the personal qualities of historical personages, it follows that these features are *determined by general causes* and cannot be changed, no matter how much these personages may change. Thus, the theory assumes a *fatalistic* character.

This did not escape the attention of its opponents. Sainte-Beuve compared Mignet's conception of history with that of Bossuet. Bossuet thought that the force which causes historical events to take place comes from above, that events serve to express the divine will. Mignet sought for this force in the human passions, which are displayed in historical events as inexorably and immutably as the forces of Nature. But both regarded history as a chain of phenomena which could not have been different, no matter under what circumstances; both were fatalists; in this respect, the philosopher was not far removed from the priest (*le philosophe se rapproche du prêtre*).

This reproach was justified as long as the doctrine, that social phenomena conformed to certain laws, reduced the influence of the personal qualities of prominent historical individuals to a cipher. And the impression made by this reproach was all the more strong for the reason that the historians of the new school, like the historians and philosophers of the eighteenth century, regarded *human nature* as a higher instance, from which all the *general causes* of historical movement sprang, and to which they were subordinated. As the French Revolution had shown that historical events are not determined by the *conscious* actions of men alone, Mignet and Guizot, and the other historians of the same trend, put in the forefront the effect of the *passions*, which often rebelled against all control of the mind. But if the passions are the final and most general cause of historical events, then why is Sainte-Beuve wrong in asserting that the outcome of the French Revolution might have been the opposite of what we know it was if there had been individuals capable of imbuing the French people with passions opposite to those which had excited them? Mignet would have said: Because other passions could not have excited the French people at that time owing to the very qualities of human nature. In a certain sense this would have been true. But this truth would have had a strongly fatalistic tinge, for it would have been on a par with the thesis that the history of mankind, in all its details, is predetermined by the *general* qualities of human nature. Fatalism would have appeared here as the result of the disappearance of the *individual in the general*. Incidentally, it is always the result of such a disappearance. It is said: "If all social phenomena are inevitable, then our activities cannot have any significance." This is a correct idea wrongly formulated. We ought to say: if everything occurs as a result of the *general*, then the *individual*, including my efforts, is of no significance. *This* deduction is correct; but it is incorrectly employed. It is senseless when applied to the modern materialist conception of history, in which there is room also for the *individual*. But it was justified when applied to the views of the French historians in the period of the Restoration.

At the present time, human nature can no longer be regarded as the final and most general cause of historical progress: if it is constant, then it cannot explain the extremely changeable course of history; if it is changeable, then obviously its changes are themselves determined by historical progress. At the present time we must regard the development of productive forces as the final and most general cause of the historical progress of mankind, and it is these productive forces that determine the consecutive changes in the social relations of men. Parallel with this *general* cause there are *particular* causes, i.e. *the historical situation* in which the development of the productive forces of a given nation proceeds and which, in the last analysis, is itself created by the development of these forces among other nations, i.e. the same general cause.

Finally, the influence of the *particular* causes is supplemented by the operation of *individual* causes, i.e. the personal qualities of public men and other "accidents," thanks to which events finally assume their *individual features*. Individual causes cannot bring about fundamental changes in the operation of *general and particular* causes which, moreover, determine the trend and limits of the influence of individual causes. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that history would have had different features had the individual causes which had influenced it been replaced by other causes of the same order.

Monod and Lamprecht still adhere to the human nature point of view. Lamprecht has categorically, and more than once, declared that in his opinion social mentality is the fundamental cause of historical phenomena. This is a great mistake, and as a result of this mistake the desire, very laudable in itself, to take into account the sum total of social life may lead only to vapid eclecticism or, among the most consistent, to Kahlitz's arguments concerning the relative significance of the mind and the senses.

But let us return to our subject. A great man is great not because his personal qualities give individual features to great historical events, but because he possesses qualities which make him most capable of serving the great social needs of his time, needs which arose as a result of general and particular causes. Carlyle, in his well-known book on heroes and hero-worship, calls great men *beginners*. This is a very apt description. A great man is precisely a beginner because he sees *further* than others, and desires things *more strongly* than others. He solves the scientific problems brought up by the preceding process of intellectual development of society; he points to the new social needs created by the preceding development of social relationships; he takes the initiative in satisfying these needs. He is a hero. But he is not a hero in the sense that he can stop, or change, the natural course of things, but in the sense that his activities are the conscious and free expression of this inevitable and unconscious course. Herein lies all his significance; herein lies his whole power. But this significance is colossal, and the power is terrible.

Bismarck said that we cannot make history and must wait while it is being made. But who makes history? It is made by the *social man*, who is its *sole "factor."* The social man creates his own, i.e. social, relationships. But if in a given period he creates given relationships and not others, there must be some cause for it, of course; it is determined by the state of his productive forces. No great man can foist on society relations which *no longer* conform to the state of these forces, or which *do not yet* conform to them. In this sense, indeed, he cannot make history, and in this sense he would advance the hands of his clock in vain; he would not hasten the passage of time, nor turn it back. Here Lamprecht is quite right: even at the height of his power Bismarck could not cause Germany to revert to natural economy.

Social relationships have their inherent logic: as long as people live in given mutual relationships they will reel, think and act in a given way, and no other. Attempts on the part of public men to combat this logic would also be fruitless; the natural course of things (i.e. this logic of social relationships) would reduce all his efforts to naught. But if I know in what direction social relations are changing owing to given changes in the social-economic process of production, I also know in what direction social mentality is changing; consequently, I am able to influence it. Influencing social mentality means influencing historical events. Hence, in a certain sense, I *can make history*, and there is no need for me to wait while "it is being made."

Monod believes that really important events and individuals in history are important only as signs and symbols of the development of institutions and economic conditions. This is a correct although very inexactly expressed idea; but precisely because this idea is correct it is wrong to oppose the activities of great men to "the *slow progress*" of the conditions and institutions mentioned. The more or less slow changes in "economic conditions" periodically confront society with the necessity of more or less rapidly changing its institutions. This change never takes place "by itself"; it always needs the intervention of *men*, who are thus confronted with great social problems. And it is those men who do more than others to facilitate the solution of these problems who are called great men. But *solving a problem* does not mean being only a "symbol" and a "sign" of the fact that it has been solved.

We think that Monod opposed the one to the other mainly because he was carried away by the pleasant catchword, "*slow*." Many modern evolutionists are very fond of this catchword. *Psychologically*, this passion is comprehensible: it *inevitably* arises in the respectable milieu of moderation and punctiliousness ... But *logically* it does not bear examination, as Hegel proved.

And it is not only for "beginners," not only for "great" men that a broad field of activity is open. It is open for all those who have eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to love their neighbours. The concept *great* is a relative concept. In the ethical sense every man is great who, to use the Biblical phrase, "lays down his life for his friend."

Notes:

12*. King Louis XVI was guillotined on January 21, 1793.

13*. *The Gironde* – a party of the big bourgeoisie at the time of the French Revolution,

14*. *The Thermidor reaction* – the period of political and social reaction following the counter-revolutionary coup in France on July 27, 1794 (9 Thermidor), which put an end to the Jacobin dictatorship, its leader Robespierre being executed. *Thermidor, Floréal, Prairial, Messidor, Brumaire*, etc. – names of months in the Republican calendar introduced by the Convention in the autumn of 1793.

15*. *The Battle of Arcole*, fought between French and Austrian armies, took place on November 15-17, 1796.

16*. *The 18th Brumaire (November 9) 1799* – the day of the coup d'état carried out by Napoleon Bonaparte; the Directory (*Directoire*) was replaced by the Consulate, and subsequently led to the establishment of the Empire.

17*. *The Directoire* – the government established in France after the coup of 9 Thermidor (July 27). It lasted from October 1795 till November 1799.

21. **La vie en France sous le premier Empire** by de Broc, Paris 1895, pp.35-6 *et seq.*

22. Probably Napoleon would have gone to Russia, *where he had intended to go just a few years before the Revolution*. Here, no doubt, he would have distinguished himself in action against the Turks or the Caucasian highlanders, but nobody here would have thought that this poor, but capable, officer could, under favourable circumstances, have become the ruler of the world.

23. Cf. **Histoire de France**, V. Duruy, Paris 1893, t.II, pp.524-5.

24. In the reign of Louis XV, only one representative of the third estate, Chevert, could rise to the rank of lieutenant-general. In the reign of Louis XVI it was even more difficult for members of this estate to make a military career. Cf. Rambeaud, **Histoire de la civilisation française**, 6th edition, t.II, p.226.

25. **Histoire de la Peinture en Italie**, Paris 1889, pp.23-5.

26. Terburg, Brower and Rembrandt were born in 1608; Adrian Van-Ostade and Ferdinand Bol were born in 1610; Van der Holst and Gerard Dow were born in 1615; Wouwermann was born in 1620; Wemiks, Everdingen and Painaker were born in 1621; Bergham was born in 1624 and Paul Potter in 1629; Jan Steen was born in 1626; Ruisdal and Metsu were born in 1630; Van der Haiden was born in 1637; Hobbema was born in 1638 and Adrian Van der Velde was born in 1639.

27. "Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Jonson, Webster, Massinger, Ford, Middleton and Heywood, who appeared at the same time, or following each other, represented the new generation which, owing to its favourable position, flourished on the soil which had been prepared by the efforts of the preceding generation." Taine, **Histoire de la littérature anglaise**, Paris 1863, t.I, p.468.

28. Taine, **Histoire de la littérature anglaise**, Paris 1863, t.II, p.5

29. According to their argument, i.e. when they began to discuss the tendency of historical events to conform to laws. When, however, some of them simply described these phenomena, they sometimes ascribed even exaggerated significance to the personal element. What interests us now, however, are not their descriptions, but their arguments.

Rosa Luxemburg, *Stagnation and Progress of Marxism* (1903)

In his shallow but at time interesting causerie entitled **Die soziale Bewegung in Frankreich und Belgien** (**The Socialist Movement in France and Belgium**), Karl Grün remarks, aptly enough, that [Fourier](#)'s and [Saint-Simon](#)'s theories had very different effects upon their respective adherents. Saint-Simon was the spiritual ancestor of a whole generation of brilliant investigators and writers in various field of intellectual activity; but Fourier's followers were, with few exceptions, persons who blindly parroted their master's words, and were incapable of making any advance upon his teaching. Grün's explanation of this difference is that Fourier presented the world with a finished system, elaborated in all its details; whereas Saint-Simon merely tossed his disciples a loose bundle of great thoughts. Although it seems to me that Grün pays too little attention to the inner, the essential, difference between the theories of these two classical authorities in the domain of utopian socialism, I feel that on the whole his observation is sound. Beyond question, a system of ideas which is merely sketched in broad outline proves far more stimulating than a finished and symmetrical structure which leaves nothing to be added and offers no scope for the independent effort of an active mind.

Does this account for the stagnation in Marxism doctrine which has been noticeable for a good many years? The actual fact is that – apart for one or two independent contributions which mark a theoretician advance – since the publication of the last volume of **Capital** and of the last of Engels's writings there have appeared nothing more than a few excellent popularizations and expositions of Marxist theory. The substance of that theory remains just where the two founders of scientific socialism left it.

Is this because the Marxist system has imposed too rigid a framework upon the independent activities of the mind? It is undeniable that Marx has had a somewhat restrictive influence upon the free development of theory in the case of many of his pupils. Both Marx and Engels found it necessary to disclaim responsibility for the utterances of many who chose to call themselves Marxists! The scrupulous endeavor to keep “within the bounds of Marxism” may at times have been just as disastrous to the integrity of the thought process as has been the other extreme – the complete repudiation of the Marxist outlook, and the determination to manifest “independence of thought” at all hazards.

Still, it is only where economic matters are concerned that we are entitled to speak of a more or less completely elaborated body of doctrines bequeathed us by Marx. The most valuable of all his teachings, the materialist-dialectical conception of history, presents itself to us as nothing more than a method of investigation, as a few inspired leading thoughts, which offer us glimpses into the entirely new world, which open us to endless perspectives of independent activity, which wing our spirit for bold flights into unexplored regions.

Nevertheless, even in this domain, with few exceptions the Marxist heritage lies shallow. The splendid new weapon rusts unused; and the theory of historical materialism remains as unelaborated and sketchy as was when first formulated by its creators.

It cannot be said, then, that the rigidity and completeness of the Marxist edifice are the explanation of the failure of Marx's successors to go on with the building.

We are often told that our movement lacks the persons of talent who might be capable of further elaborating Marx's theories. Such a lack is, indeed, of long standing; but the lack itself demands an explanation, and cannot be put forward to answer the primary question. We must remember that each epoch forms its own human material; that if in any period there is a genuine need for theoretical exponents, the period will create the forces requisite for the satisfaction of that need.

But is there a genuine need, an effective demand, for the further development of Marxist theory?

In an article upon the controversy between the Marxist and the Jevonsian Schools in England, Bernard Shaw, the talented exponent of [Fabian](#) semi-socialism, derides Hyndman for having said that the first volume of **Capital** had given him a complete understanding of Marx, and that there were no gaps in Marxist theory – although Friedrich Engels, in the preface of the second volume of *Capital*, subsequently declared that the first volume with its theory of value, had left unsolved a fundamental economic problem, whose solution would not be furnished until the third volume was published. Shaw certainly succeeded here in making Hyndman's position

seem a trifle ridiculous, though Hyndman might well derive consolation from the fact that practically the whole socialist world was in the same boat!

The third volume of **Capital**, with its solution of the problem of the rate of profit (the basic problem of Marxist economics), did not appear till 1894. But in Germany, as in all other lands, agitation had been carried on with the aid of the unfinished material contained in the first volume; the Marxist doctrine had been popularized and had found acceptance upon the basis of this first volume alone; the success of the incomplete Marxist theory had been phenomenal; and no one had been aware that there was any gap in the teaching.

Furthermore, when the third volume finally saw the light, whilst to begin with it attracted some attention in the restricted circles of the experts, and aroused here a certain amount of comment – as far as the socialist movement as a whole was concerned, the new volume made practically no impression in the wide regions where the ideas expounded in the original book had become dominant. The theoretical conclusion of volume 3 have not hitherto evoked any attempt at popularization, nor have they secured wide diffusion. On the contrary, even among the social democrats we sometimes hear, nowadays, reechoes of the “disappointment” with the third volume of Capital which is so frequently voiced by bourgeois economists – and thus the social democrats merely show how fully they had accepted the “incomplete” exposition of the theory of value presented in the first volume.

How can we account for so remarkable a phenomenon?

Shaw, who (to quote his own expression) is fond of “sniggering” at others, may have good reasons here, for making fun of the whole socialist movement, insofar as it is grounded upon Marx! But if he were to do this, he would be “sniggering” at a very serious manifestation of our social life. The strange fate of the second and third volumes of Capital is conclusive evidence as to the general destiny of theoretical research in our movement.

From the scientific standpoint, the third volume of Capital must, no doubt, be primarily regarded as the completion of Marx’s critic of capitalism. Without this third volume, we cannot understand, either the actually dominant law of the rate of profit; or the splitting up of surplus value into profit, interest, and rent; or the working of the law of value within the field of competition. But, and this is the main point, all these problems, however important from the outlook of the pure theory, are comparatively unimportant from the practical outlook of the class war. As far as the class war is concerned, the fundamental theoretical problem is the origin of surplus value, that is, the scientific explanation of exploitation; together with the elucidation of the tendencies toward the socialization of the process of production, that is, the scientific explanation of the objective groundwork of the socialist revolution.

Both these problems are solved in the first volume of Capital, which deduces the “expropriation of the expropriators” as the inevitable and ultimate result of the production of surplus value and of the progressive concentration of capital. Therewith, as far as theory is concerned, the essential need of the labor movement is satisfied. The workers, being actively engaged in the class war, have no direct interest in the question how surplus value is distributed among the respective groups of exploiters; or in the question how, in the course of this distribution, competition brings about rearrangements of production.

That is why, for socialists in general, the third volume of Capital remain an unread book.

But, in our movement, what applies to Marx’s economic doctrines applies to theoretical research in general. It is pure illusion to suppose that the working class, in its upward striving, can of its own accord become immeasurably creative in the theoretical domain. True that, as Engels said, the working class alone has today preserved an understanding of and interest in theory. The workers’ craving for knowledge is one of the most noteworthy cultural manifestation of our day. Morally, too, the working-class struggle denotes the cultural renovation of society. But active participation of the workers in the march of science is subject to fulfillment of very definite social conditions.

In every class society, intellectual culture (science and art) is created by the ruling class; and the aim of this culture is in part to ensure the direct satisfaction of the needs of the social process, and in part to satisfy the mental needs of the members of the governing class.

In the history of earlier class struggles, aspiring classes (like the Third Estate in recent days) could anticipate political dominion by establishing an intellectual dominance, inasmuch as, while they were still subjugated classes, they could set up a new science and a new art against obsolete culture of the decadent period.

The proletariat is in a very different position. As a nonpossessing class, it cannot in the course of its struggle upwards spontaneously create a mental culture of its own while it remains in the framework of bourgeois society. Within that society, and so long as its economic foundations persist, there can be no other culture than a bourgeois culture. Although certain “socialist” professors may acclaim the wearing of neckties, the use of visiting cards, and the riding of bicycles by proletarians as notable instances of participation in cultural progress, the working class as such remains outside contemporary culture. Notwithstanding the fact that the workers create with their own hands the whole social substratum of this culture, they are only admitted to its enjoyment insofar as such admission is requisite to the satisfactory performance of their functions in the economic and social process of capitalist society.

The working class will not be in a position to create a science and an art of its own until it has been fully emancipated from its present class position.

The utmost it can do today is to safeguard bourgeois culture from the vandalism of the bourgeois reaction, and create the social conditions requisite for a free cultural development. Even along these lines, the workers, within the extant form of society, can only advance insofar as they can create for themselves the intellectual weapons needed in their struggle for liberation.

But this reservation imposes upon the working class (that is to say, upon the workers’ intellectual leaders) very narrow limits in the field of intellectual activities. The domain of their creative energy is confined to one specific department of science, namely social science. For, inasmuch as “thanks to the peculiar connection of the idea of the Fourth Estate with our historical epoch”, enlightenment concerning the laws of social development has become essential to the workers in the class struggle, this connection has borne good fruit in social science, and the monument of the proletarian culture of our days is – Marxist doctrine.

But Marx’s creation, which as a scientific achievement is a titanic whole, transcends the plain demands of the proletarian class struggle for whose purposes it was created. Both in his detailed and comprehensive analysis of capitalist economy, and in his method of historical research with its immeasurable field of application, Marx has offered much more than was directly essential for the practical conduct of the class war.

Only in proportion as our movement progresses, and demands the solution of new practical problems do we dip once more into the treasury of Marx’s thought, in order to extract therefrom and to utilize new fragments of his doctrine. But since our movement, like all the campaigns of practical life, inclines to go on working in old ruts of thought, and to cling to principles after they have ceased to be valid, the theoretical utilization of the Marxist system proceed very slowly.

If, then, today we detect a stagnation in our movement as far as these theoretical matters are concerned, this is not because the Marxist theory upon which we are nourished is incapable of development or has become out-of-date. On the contrary, it is because we have not yet learned how to make an adequate use of the most important mental weapons which we had taken out of the Marxist arsenal on account of our urgent need for them in the early stages of our struggle. It is not true that, as far as practical struggle is concerned, Marx is out-of-date, that we had superseded Marx. On the contrary, Marx, in his scientific creation, has outstripped us as a party of practical fighters. It is not true that Marx no longer suffices for our needs. On the contrary, our needs are not yet adequate for the utilization of Marx’s ideas.

Thus do the social conditions of proletarian existence in contemporary society, conditions first elucidated by Marxist theory, take vengeance by the fate they impose upon Marxist theory itself. Though that theory is an incomparable instrument of intellectual culture, it remains unused because, while it is inapplicable to bourgeois class culture, it greatly transcends the needs of the working class in the matter of weapons for the daily struggle. Not until the working class has been liberated from its present conditions of existence will the Marxist method of research be socialized in conjunction with the other means of production, so that it can be fully utilized for the benefit of humanity at large, and so that it can be developed to the full measure of its functional capacity.

Hook, Sidney from Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx

This is all the truer in those rare cases where the legal code expresses the harsh, unrelieved and naked fact of class rule." (From his Letter to Schmidt. Cf. Appendix.) "... one point . . . which Marx and I did not sufficiently stress and in relation to which we are equally to blame. We both placed and *had to place* the chief weight upon the *derivation* of political, legal and other ideological notions, as well as the actions they led up to, from fundamental economic facts. In consequence we neglected the formal side, *i.e.*, the way in which these ideas arose, for the sake of the content. . . . It's the old story. In the beginning the form is always neglected for the content." (From a Letter to Mehring. Cf. Appendix.)

In addition to the formal elements of culture, there are traditional elements. In stressing the preponderant influences of the mode of economic production upon the general character of social life, Marx never failed to indicate that in every particular case tradition played an important part in modifying the rate of change in the non-material aspects of culture. "The tradition of all dead generations," he writes in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, "weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living." Sooner or later family relationships, religion, art and philosophy will reflect the new social equilibrium produced by changes in the economic order. But at any given time an analysis of their nature will reveal a lag both in the way they function and in the structure of their organization. This is another way of saying that no culture is organic through and through. From the vantage point of a long-time perspective, the phe-

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nomena of cultural lag may not appear significant; but from the point of view of short-scale political operations, they are of great importance. To disregard, say, the peculiar character of local and sectional religious traditions in the United States may spell disaster even for such enterprises as organizing trade unions or successfully conducting a strike.

Tradition, of course, is never of itself a sufficient explanation for the existence or survival of any cultural trait, otherwise we could not explain why some traditional influences and practices have survived while others have not. It may even be granted that any cultural practice or belief which common usage uncritically refers to as traditional, *e.g.*, the wearing of marriage rings, or the prevalence of Platonic and Hegelian idealism, has some functional relation to the contemporary process of social life. Nonetheless all cultural traits have their traditional aspect. An adequate social analysis must reveal these features and show how what they are at any moment is the resultant of what they once were and of the changes produced by a changing social environment. For example, the revival of the Platonic and Hegelian philosophies in Western Europe and their contemporary vogue may be partially accounted for by the easy formulae they supply to cover up the great social problems generated by imperialist expansion and war. The perfect state as one in which all classes collaborate under the rule of the intellectually elite, the perfect society as a *Schickalsgemeinschaft* of capital,

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labor and state officials²—what could be more in consonance with the corporative ideology of Fascism by which finance capital denies the existence of a class struggle in order to make its own class rule more secure? Nonetheless, the fact that it was the Hegelian and Platonic philosophies which were revived and not others sufficiently similar in type to serve the same social functions, demands an explanation in the light of academic and religious traditions as well as of certain standing philosophical problems. That these traditions and problems in their original form in some way reflected their contemporary economic and political milieu, does not alter the hopeless logical confusion which results from regarding the *original* cause of a tradition to be also the cause of the survival of that tradition. This fallacy vitiates the work not only of men, like Eleutheropoulos, who have clung to a simplistic economic approach, but also of their Marxist critics, men like Kautsky and Plechanov. Plechanov, we may note in passing, did most to give currency to the phrase, "the monistic conception of history."

The source of the monistic fallacy in its refigured form is the attempt to explain all specific cultural phenomena in terms of factors which are admitted to be plural but among which one—the economic—is always assumed to be predominant. Let us take some illustrations from Plechanov's own writings:

² For an unwitting confession of the real secret of the Hegel Renaissance in Germany, especially the Hegelian philosophy of law, see Binder, J., *Archiv für Rechts-und-Wirtschaftsphilosophie*, Bd. XXII, 1920, p. 313.

"If we want to understand a dance performed by Australian Aborigines, it suffices that we should know what part is played by the women of the tribe in collecting the roots of wild plants. But a knowledge of the economic life of France in the eighteenth century will not explain to us the origin of the minuet. In the latter case we have to do with a dance which is an expression of the psychology of a non-productive class. . . . We must not forget, however, that the appearance of non-productive classes in a society is itself the outcome of the economic development of that society. This means that the economic factor remains *predominant*, even when its activity is overlaid by that of other factors." (*Fundamental Problems of Marxism*, p. 61, Eng. trans. Italics mine.)

"If you try to give a direct economic explanation of the appearance of the school of David in French painting at the close of the eighteenth century, you will certainly talk nonsense. But if, on the other hand, you regard this school as an ideological reflection of the class struggle which was going on in French society, on the eve of the great revolution, the problem will assume an entirely new aspect. Then certain qualities of David's art which might have seemed to have no connection with social economy, will become perfectly comprehensible." (*Ibid.*, p. 63.)

Now these highly selected illustrations are obviously quite favorable to the Marxian point of view which Plechanov is defending. In challenging Plechanov's explanation we are not calling Marx's method into question but Plechanov's application of it. How valid are his explanations?

Suppose we begin with the minuet. The minuet as well as the gavotte, generally associated with it, was

originally a peasant dance. It antedated not only the court of Louis XV but even of Louis XIV. As a rustic dance it was gay and lively; as a court dance it was stately and artificial. Consequently it is not its origin which can be explained in terms of the psychology of the non-productive class but at best its peculiar development. But now, what necessary connection exists between the psychology of a non-productive class and the mincing gravity of the minuet? The gavotte was a little more animated and was tacked right on to the minuet. Could not a debonair and tripping step convey the psychology of a non-productive class just as well as the minuet? Indeed, cannot one say that wild and licentious dances could just as readily have expressed the psychology of a non-productive class in the eighteenth century? And if these dances had been in vogue, the same formula could easily be invoked to explain their existence. No matter what dances had been performed, it would be easy to attribute their character to the fact that the dancers were not directly concerned with production. The class psychologies of non-productive classes are not all the same. Why was *this* particular dance associated with *this* particular non-productive class? And why could not the minuet have expressed the psychology of a productive class? As a matter of fact, there is evidence to show that the minuet was a national dance and not merely a court dance, and that its local variations were just as pronounced as the difference between its original rustic form and later court development. Further, how are we to explain, on Plechanov's theory, the rapid

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spread of the minuet through all of Western Europe among productive and non-productive classes alike? How are we to explain in terms of the psychology of a non-productive class the fact that Beethoven developed the minuet into the scherzo? But Plechanov's crowning error is to reason that because the minuet was the outcome of the psychology of a non-productive class, and because the appearance of a non-productive class was itself the result of economic development, therefore the minuet is the result of economic development. The logic would be similar to the argument that since Mr. X's suicide by shooting was made possible only by the existence of fire-arms, and since fire-arms depended upon the application of science to industry, therefore the real cause of Mr. X's death was science and capitalism. In any case, even if it be granted that the minuet had an origin in the economic life of the past, that economic life could by no known canon of logic or scientific method be regarded as a cause of the presence of the minuet in the economic life of a later day.

Similarly it can be argued that the style of David was not produced by the ideological struggles of eighteenth century France, but that during and after the Revolution it was *selected* by republican France because of the definite political import of its imitation of the rugged virtues of Roman and Greek antiquity. As a matter of fact, definite departures from the rococo style had already been made before David. Independently of the whole movement of neo-classicism in France, the German, Winkelmann, had proclaimed that "The sole

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means for us to become—if possible—inimitably great, is the imitation of the ancients." It must be remembered that David was a member of the Convention and that his studies of the assassinated Lepelletier and Marat were political commissions. His technique in those pictures was no different from the technique he later employed in his *Coronation* which glorified Napoleon. Nor was it appreciably different from the technique of his greatest pupil, Ingres, who used it to celebrate the voluptuous beauty of nudes in a Turkish Bath.

All this suggests an important distinction between the *origin* of any cultural fact and its *acceptance*. In art, for example, all sorts of stylistic variations or mutants appear in any period. The social and political environment acts as a *selective* agency upon them. The dominant style selected may in turn exercise a social and political influence. When we say that the style which is accepted "expresses" the social interests or political aspirations of a class, we may mean one of two things. We may mean either that the technical elements of a work have grown out of a new social experience or that technical elements already in existence have been fused in a new way or filled with a new content. This is not a hard and fast distinction, but all interpretation of culture demands that it be made. In literature this distinction is hardest to draw, in painting it is less hard and in music easiest of all. But even in literature it is clear that some formal elements, e.g., the sonnet form, reportage, the autobiographical novel, may be used indifferently to express disparate political and social interests.

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In painting, realistic technique may serve revolutionary or non-revolutionary purposes. In music, the same tunes are often the battle songs of Fascists in Germany and of Communists in Russia.

The tentative conclusion we have reached is that although each specific expression of a culture is socially conditioned, its pattern of development may depend upon certain relatively irreducible, technical factors, and that for some purposes, an explanation in terms of these technical factors may be valid. The extent to which the social environment enters as a constitutive element in this pattern is a subject of empirical investigation. Nothing significant can be inferred from the truism that without some form of social organization the cultural fact in question could not exist. Where the social environment influences a cultural phenomenon it may do so in two distinct ways which must be distinguished in analysis even though they may not be separated in fact. It may provide the technical materials out of which new forms develop. For example, the manufacture of inflated duralumin tubes may make possible new variations in architecture, the discovery of poison gas and aeroplane warfare may revolutionize the art of military science and strategy. The second way in which the social environment may influence a culture trait is by the use to which it is put. Inflated duralumin tubes may be used to construct more profitable skyscrapers or may be used to build more livable homes for the working population in intelligently planned cities. An army which is knit together by a revolutionary, democratic

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faith will develop new forms of warfare impossible to an army which is only discipline bound. The *use* to which materials and techniques are put is in the larger sense of the words, political and moral. It is bound up with the class struggle and with the different objectives and paths of action which flow from it. The class character of any art is unmistakably revealed not so much in its materials and techniques—save derivatively—but in its objectives.

If the foregoing analysis is sound, a genuine Marxian criticism of culture will never be guilty of the monistic reductions which have only too often masqueraded in its name.

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PROBLEMS OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

A PROPER test of the claims of historical materialism could be made only by applying its propositions to the rich detail of politics, law, religion, philosophy, science and art. This would require not a chapter but an encyclopedia. We must consequently restrict ourselves to a discussion of certain fundamental problems which arise in every field in which historical materialism is applied.

The upshot of the discussion will show that Marx's historical method is organically connected with his revolutionary purpose and activity, that it does not attempt to explain all aspects of present and past social life but only those that have bearing upon the conditions, direction and technique of action involved in social change, that the explanations he does offer were never projected as final, and that the concept of causation which underlies the theory of historical materialism is practical and not theoretical.

For purposes of convenience the points around which the discussion will center will be (1) the rôle of per-

sonality in history; (2) the larger question of objective chance and objective necessity which that particular problem suggests; (3) the importance of the admission of reciprocal influences between multiple factors; (4) the Marxian theory of the practical character of social causality which takes the place of a theory of measurement; and (5) the nature of historical intelligibility, *ie.*, what it means to understand human behavior in its historical aspect.

I. THE RÔLE OF PERSONALITY IN HISTORY

Because he opposed that ever-fashionable theory that all history is the biography of great men, Marx has been criticized for underestimating the significance of personality in history. His historical analyses, however, are full of brilliant characterizations of individuals, and in view of his constant emphasis upon the creative activity of man in history, it is a little hard to see why this notion should have arisen. Probably this is due to the all too common failure to distinguish between the contradictory of a proposition and its contrary, so that the two statements, "It is not the case that all history is the history of great men," and "No history is the history of great men," have been identified. But the chief reason for the misinterpretation, it seems to me, is that most of Marx's disciples have actually agreed with his critics—not perhaps in so many words—but as far as the objective intent of their interpretation goes.

In terms of Marx's philosophy of history it is easy to make short shrift of any conception such as Carlyle's

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which sees in the development of civilization nothing but the deeds of heroes and the thoughts of genius. We may begin with the crushing consideration that the very meaning of "greatness" in social and political matters is not something fixed but is historically conditioned. Each society not only has its own economic organization, its own law of population and its own art-styles; it has its own criterion of greatness. The saint of one age is the fool of another; the strong man of to-day may be the criminal of to-morrow. In politics and religion the "great man" is the man who can get himself *believed in*. To get people to believe in him, he must in some way gratify or fulfill their *need*. The need and the possibilities of fulfilling it are often so patently present that no special endowment is required to mount from obscurity to renown. In such cases—and this is the stuff of which it is most often made—greatness is thrust upon a man; it is not achieved. A Charlemagne, a Mahomet, a George Washington or a Frederick II boasted the possession of no qualities so unique that other men could not have easily been found to lead the movements whose titular heads they were. To-day the same can be said of Hitler or Gandhi. It is no exaggeration to maintain that if they had not been what they were, then, historically speaking, others would have been what they were. Now, if the stature of the great men of history were no higher than that of those enumerated, then we could hold that there would have been little appreciable difference in world history if they had never existed. Of all of them we could say as we can of

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Columbus: if he had not discovered America, someone else would have. "Every society," writes Marx, "needs its great men, and if it does not find them it creates them, as Helvetius said." (*Klassenkämpfe im Frankreich*, p. 69.) Such men owe their greatness not to pre-eminent capacity but to historical necessity.

The crucial question, however, is whether all the great men of history are of this dimension. Could we say of Pericles, Caesar, Cromwell, Napoleon, Marx and Lenin what we have said of Mahomet or George Washington? Before we answer this question, let us turn to other fields where the relationship between individual greatness and social needs is a little different—the fields of science and art.

Looking at the history of science as a systematic organization of knowledge (which, we are aware, is an abstraction but which we are justified in making for the purpose of analysis), can we say that if Archimedes, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Clerk Maxwell, and Einstein had not lived, the history of science would have been substantially the same? He would be a rash man who would unqualifiedly assert it. Take Newton from whom all the subsequent developments of science branch out. It is granted that he did not begin from the beginning, that many of his problems were common problems of his time, that neither his activity nor his results would have been possible without the existence of the permissive conditions of the society and politics of his day. But for that matter neither would his work have been possible without the permissive conditions of the

weather, his own birth, and the existence of the world in general. There is no theoretical limit to the number of necessary conditions which had to be fulfilled before Newton could have achieved what he did. Nonetheless all of these permissive or necessary conditions are irrelevant to the real problem at issue which is whether in the absence of Newton (supposing he had died of croup in childhood) his discoveries, which not only revolutionized theoretical science but profoundly influenced the development of industry and capitalism, would have been made by others. To retort that Leibnitz was the co-discoverer of the calculus and that no great scientific discovery has been made by one man is to reveal a pathetic inability to grasp the issue here. Any man who could have solved Newton's problems had to be of the same intellectual stature as Newton. Let us grant, contrary to fact, that every one of Newton's discoveries were independently made by other men. Let us assume that not only did Newton and Leibnitz discover the calculus independently of one another, but, for good measure, that two others did so too. The question at issue is whether if all of these *four* great men had not existed (a supposition not beyond the pale of probability), the calculus would have been invented anyhow. What possible evidence is available bearing upon this point? Only the fact that attempts had been made to solve certain problems of the circle and the cube from the time of Archimedes down, and that Galileo and Bernoulli puzzled over difficulties which involved functions. Loosely speaking, all we can say is that a scientific

problem existed. And we can even grant that this and other problems were set, not only by the immanent development of mathematics and science, but by certain practical problems of warfare, industry and commerce. But by what mystical assurance can one assert that all these problems, no matter how and why they arose, *must* find solutions? This is not to suggest that any problem is insoluble or unknowable. It simply asserts that there is no logical, scientific or social necessity that every problem find its solution.¹

If it is true that the presence of great men has had an irreducibly significant influence upon the development of science, how much truer is it for the development of art and literature. Here, too, the social environment has provided both the opportunity and the materials for creation. In contradistinction, however, to the political illustrations considered above, society has not been able to bestow greatness but only to select it. Lacking a Shakespeare or a Goethe, mankind "would have been shorter by a head." To object by saying that society "produced" Shakespeare in one case, and Newton in another, is to use very confusing language. Unless it could be shown that the actual biological birth of Shakespeare was involved in the literary development of England in the sixteenth century, and the birth of Newton in the scientific development of the seventeenth, we cannot in any sense claim that these men were produced by their

¹ If it be claimed that a problem clearly stated is a problem implicitly solved, then what the above means is that there is no constitutive or social necessity that the problem be explicitly solved.

environments. But to assume such an organic connection between the realm of biology and the realm of society is on the face of it absurd. What "social" or "literary" necessity guided the union of the sperm and egg out of which the child Shakespeare was born? If Shakespeare hadn't been born would someone else have been Shakespeare? Mystic connections of this sort can be asserted only by the philosophy of absolute idealism, not by dialectical materialism.

Men of art and science, it will be objected, no matter how great they may be, do not affect history. Very well, then, we return to the rôle of great personalities in social history and politics. Would the Russian Revolution have taken place in October, 1917, if Lenin had died an exile in Switzerland? And if the Russian Revolution had not taken place when it did, would subsequent events in Russia have taken the same course?² Would the history of Europe have been different if Napoleon had lost his life in the first Italian campaign? If Cromwell early in his career had carried out his threat to sell his estate and quit the country, would the Roundheads have been victorious anyhow? If Sulla in addition to depriving Julius Caesar of his property and priesthood in 82 B. C. had not listened to the intercession of the Vestal Virgins and had proceeded with Caesar's scheduled execution, would Rome have arisen to the heights of world empire? These questions cannot be answered

² Compare Trotsky's interesting discussion of this problem and his ambiguous answer, *History of the Russian Revolution*, Eng. trans., Vol. I, pp. 329-330.

dogmatically in the affirmative. They are ticklish problems and the historical evidence does not give determinate solutions. Instead of leaving those questions open to be decided by elaborate analysis of historical possibilities, most of the disciples of Marx have settled all the difficulties *in advance* by a rigid and mechanical application of historical materialism. We may begin with Engels:

"That a certain particular man, and no other, emerges at a definite time in a given country is naturally pure chance. But even if we eliminate him, there is always a need for a substitute, and the substitute it found *tant bien que mal*; in the long run he is sure to be found. That Napoleon—this particular Corsican—should have been the military dictator made necessary by the exhausting wars of the French Republic—that was a matter of chance. *But in default of a Napoleon, another would have filled his place; that is established by the fact that whenever a man was necessary he has always been found: Caesar, Augustus, Cromwell.*" (From his Letter to Block. Cf. Appendix. Italics mine.)

Karl Kautsky, who has been called the "old war-horse of Marxian orthodoxy," writes on the same theme:

"Had it not been Cromwell or Napoleon, it would have been someone else. Due to the revolutionary origin of the armies which raised Cromwell and Napoleon to power, all the fighting instincts and capacities among the revolutionary sections of the population had been aroused, and at the same time a path was cleared to the highest places for those among the whole nation who were gifted in military matters. Everyone remembers the saying: that every soldier of the revolutionary army carried a marshal's baton in his

knapsack. In this way there was built in the armies of the English and French republic a high minded and superior corps of officers who would have easily selected another military dictator if Cromwell or Napoleon had not succeeded in coming to the top." (*Die Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*, Vol. 2, p. 703.)

Plechanov,³ Cunow,⁴ and Bukharin,⁵ on this question, play the game of follow your master with amazing fidelity.

With all due respect, this position seems to me to be arrant nonsense. Its most intelligible expression would involve the abandonment of Marx's naturalistic materialism and a surrender to idealistic mysticism. To argue that if Napoleon had not lived someone else and not he would have been Napoleon (*i.e.*, would have performed Napoleon's work) and then to offer as evidence the fact that whenever a great man was necessary he has always been found, is logically infantile. For how do we know when a great man is needed by society? Surely *not after* he has arisen! The need for him must be antecedent to his appearance. But, then, did society need great men *only* at those periods when Caesar, Cromwell, Napoleon, and others came to the fore? That would be like saying society needed great thinkers only when Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant, etc., lived. Would it not be truer to say that society always needs great men? Why then are not great men always at hand? Where

³ Plechanov, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*, p. 68ff.

⁴ Cunow, *Die Marzche Geschichte-Gesellschafts- und Staats-Theorie*,

3d. 2, p. 220.

⁵ Bukharin, *Historical Materialism*, p. 97.

was the great man at the time when the Tartar hordes overran Russia and arrested its development? Why did not a great man arise to unify India against foreign imperialism in the nineteenth century, and China in the twentieth? Where was the great leader hiding when Italy was objectively ready for revolution in 1921 and Germany in 1933? Was he not needed then? And granted that there was a need for a Napoleon, a Marx, a Lenin when they arose. What is the source of the assurance that that need *had to be* fulfilled, if not by these men, then by others fully as great as they? The pious Christian can fall back upon the will of God. But the militant revolutionist who permits the automatic, economic development of society to perform the same logical function in his system as the will of God in the system of the believer, has committed intellectual suicide. When, under pressure of the argument, he throws overboard the notion of the automatic development of society, he is logically compelled to surrender the notion that whenever a great man is necessary he must be found. There are no muses in history; there are only conditional probabilities.

Marx's own view is more sober and Engels on other occasions was faithful to it. We shall discuss it in conjunction with the larger problem of the rôle of chance in history.

2. CHANGE IN HISTORY

In a previous chapter we have examined and rejected the theory of wholesale chance in history. But to go

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from the denial that "not all history is a chance affair" to the statement that "there are no chance elements in history" is an altogether different matter. That is precisely what some Marxist historians have done. Pokrovsky, for example, in his *History of Russia* (Vol. I) states that "to appeal to chance in history is to exhibit a certificate of poverty." In this simple way of disposing of the problem, he is at one with most bourgeois historians who have neglected the dialectical approach to the question of law and chance in history.

What is a chance event? This is both a metaphysical question and an historical question. Here we are only concerned with chance events in history. A chance event, first of all, is not merely an event of which we are ignorant. For a great many events of which we are ignorant may turn out to be historically determined. At one time we were ignorant of the causes of the First Crusade and translated that ignorance into the phrase *un fait écclesiastique*. That did not make the Crusades a chance event; an historian with proper knowledge of the social and economic history of Europe in the latter half of the eleventh century need not have invoked chance or the will of God in his account.

Nor is a chance event in history one that is uncaused. Whether all events, of whatever nature, have a cause, is a question outside of the province of the historian. His problem is whether all events which have *historical effects* have themselves *historical causes*. An earthquake is a natural event which has definite *geological causes*. It has, however, definite *historical effects*. An historian

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George Rawick, “The Historical Roots of Black Liberation” (July 1968)

The Black Revolution, particularly in its latest phase, has challenged all previous interpretations of the history of black people, not only in the United States but everywhere in the Western world and in Africa. No longer is it possible to write credibly the liberal, integrationist history which pictures only black contributions to American society and stresses the victimization of the slaves. History written under the slogan “Black and White, Unite and Fight” does not give us grounds on which to understand the contemporary black movement. Unless we find the real historical roots of Black Power we are faced with a situation unparalleled in world history: a massive revolutionary movement which comes from nowhere and is born fully grown. [1]

The central focus of the recent discussion of slavery in the United States has been a discussion of the slave personality. What did slavery do to the development of the human being? One group of social analysts has refurbished the Sambo image, translating it from “racial” to “psychological” terms. Using an amalgam of Freudian psychology and social-psychological role theory, Stanley Elkins has essentially argued that slavery “infantilized” the slave personality. Although Elkins allows himself escape mechanisms from the full implications of this theory, nevertheless his argument does amount to the claim that slaves generally did not become full adults. Others such as Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan have added another dimension with a complicated discussion of the so-called matri-focal family. They conclude that a lack of social circumstances necessary to produce mature adults has been reinforced from slavery to the present. Black people, in these conceptions, are inherently maladjusted to American society, implying that some figure or institution must shape them up. Thus the theory of the slave and his descendants as Victim.

On the other hand, there has been a continuation of more traditional liberal theory. If the slaves acted as if they accepted their subordinate status, it has been argued, they were only feigning such accommodation – only putting on “the Man.” Like the first theory, this does violence to the facts and carries clear ideological implications. While Elkins and his academic kin have attempted to produce a sophisticated conservative defense of existing social relations, the second school’s results suggest moderate reforms. Neither can be related to a revolutionary theory or practice.

Men do not make revolution for light and transient reasons, but rather only when they can no longer stand the contradictions in their personalities do they move in a sharp and decisive fashion. As Hegel, Marx, Camus and Fannon have well understood, the victim is the rebel, indeed all rebels are men and women resolving the classic contradiction laid out by Rousseau: “Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains.” As Hegel demonstrated in the famous dialogue of master and slave in **Phenomenology of the Mind**, the slave struggles against the master by struggling with his own internal dilemmas. The social struggle begins, in an immediate sense, as a struggle within the slave and only then becomes externalized and objectified. Therefore, unless the slave is simultaneously Sambo and revolutionary, Sambo and Nat Turner, he can be neither Sambo nor Nat Turner. He can only be a wooden man, a theoretical abstraction.

Genovese’s Work

From the perspective of the Movement, the only work that seriously approaches a sufficiently high level of discussion is that of Eugene Genovese, who unites a study of Marxism with a respect for and deep knowledge of the concrete experiences of the slaves themselves. Genovese’s studies reach far beyond those of others, but his work has not yet developed into a fully Marxist history. I hope to discuss first why I believe this is so, and then briefly indicate an alternative direction. [2]

Like C. Wright Mills before him, Genovese concentrates largely on the nature of the ruling class. To paraphrase some remarks he made at the Smith College Conference on Negro Slavery in February 1968, we must be primarily concerned with comparative studies of the ruling classes produced by Negro slave societies. This concentration seems to me undialectical, onesided, and needlessly schematic. My counter-thesis is that the most important problems inherent in the study of plantation production based on slave labor can be solved only by an analysis of the class struggle between masters and slaves; such analysis must begin with the self-activity of the slaves themselves. If one writes from such a perspective, then all history is indeed the history of the class struggle:

as E.P. Thompson, Georges Lefebvre, C.L.R. James and other Marxist historians have brilliantly demonstrated, the defeats are inevitable and necessary stages in the struggle that leads to their ultimate triumph.

This view is central to the above mentioned master/slave dialogue in Hegel, dialogue which forms the basis of the Marxist dialectic. While Genovese knows the importance of this discussion in Hegel (and has quoted it in **The Political Economy of Slavery**), he shies away from exploring its full implications. A social passivism combined with what seems to me a sectarian impatience with history flaws his work. For example, he sees the American Revolution in the South essentially as a reactionary slave-owners rebellion. But it is apparent that the Revolution also represented the success of small farmers, non-slave-owners. Similarly, one could maintain that it was not until the 1830's that the conflict between planter and non-planter whites was decisively won by the former. Moreover, as Genovese understands, the struggle continued into the 1840's and 1850's with Hinton Helper's **The Impending Crisis**, published in 1857; as the manifesto of the non-slave-owning whites. But precisely because Genovese's work is not a sterile academic enterprise but a personal attempt to intervene in the contemporary struggle, he allows his pessimism to interfere with his search for implications, presenting the South as a monolith.

Genovese handles the Sambo-rebel problem in a very brittle way, seeing it essentially as a problem of historical progression. Sambo could become the rebel in certain situations, and Genovese seeks to discover "the condition under which the personality pattern could become inverted and a seemingly docile slave could suddenly become fierce." He even suggests that had the French Jacobins taken power in 1790 rather than 1794, they would have abolished slavery in San Domingo and therefore liberated the slaves from the outside (rather than, as historical fact, they liberating themselves). If so, he comments, "we would ... today be reading a Haitian Elkins whose task would be to explain the extraordinary docility of the country's blacks." All previous indication of rebelliousness in San Domingo is relegated by Genovese to unimportance: "We find a Sambo stereotype and a weak tradition of rebellion ... when the island suddenly exploded in the greatest slave revolution in history, nothing lay behind it but Sambo and a few hints."

This conclusion is fundamentally absurd, the absurdity of sincere but pessimistic radical scholarship. Despite Genovese's stated respect for C.L.R. James, he seems to be turning the historian upside down. For the point James is making in **The Black Jacobins** – a point which cannot be missed by the careful reader – is that the oppressed continuously struggle in *forms of their own choosing* and surprise all mankind when they transform the day-to-day struggle into monumental revolutionary deeds. The pre-revolutionary activity was a necessary predecessor to the Haitian revolt; and without Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vessey and Nat Turner, there could have been no Fredrick Douglass, Rap Brown, Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver.

Sambo?

This is not to argue that the slave was in no sense Sambo. A man is Sambo precisely when he is at the very point of rebellion he is fearful of being the rebel. Rebel he must be, but self-confident he is not. The greatest of all abolitionist leaders, the ex-slave Fredrick Douglass, tells repeatedly in his autobiography that when in the very act of fleeing, he was not only afraid – he also felt he was doing something wrong. Everything seemed to tell him that he was incapable of being a freeman; but at the same time, everything told him he must be a freeman. Unless we understand the contradictory nature of the human personality in class societies, we can never portray reality. One never knows whether the victim or the rebel will manifest himself again, but then again one need never know. It does not matter. In real life, men engage and then they see. The man of courage is not afraid to act, not because he is certain he will not be the coward, but only because he knows that, if he does not act, he most certainly will be the coward.

The Sambo image is used often to give a facile explanation for the fact that there were very few slave revolts in North America. Because men were Sambo – and to be Sambo in this view, as we have shown, has meant that one could not be simultaneously the rebel – there were no successful slave revolts. This is an example of finding a very complicated, cumbersome solution when a more simple and direct explanation is at hand. Slaves from the Caribbean and Brazil, areas where the Sambo image and reality were as present as in Worth America, engaged in great and at times successful slave revolts. Wo talk of Sambo and infantilization need be brought into account for the failure of large-scale slave revolts in North America. The matter was really much simpler. Slaves

in North America were in every respect far outnumbered by the whites, who in any area could successfully hold off an attack until help came from elsewhere.

The slave revolt was not the usual method of direct action on the part of slaves in the United States because it was obvious that such a small, isolated minority could not successfully struggle this way. Rather the slaves usually chose other, more suitable tactics. While the slaves did not engage, particularly after the defeat of Nat Turner in 1831, in large revolts, they did struggle in a most conscious fashion and in a most successful manner through the Underground Railroad, strikes, and acts of individual withholding of or destruction of production. Most important, they fashioned their own independent community through which men and women and their children could find the cultural defenses against their oppressors.

The black community was the center of life for the slaves. It gave them, marked off from the rest of society, an independent base. The slave did not suffer from rootlessness – he belonged to the slave community and even if he were sold down the river, would usually be able to find himself in a new community much like his previous one, in which there would be people who shared a common destiny and would help him find a new life.

Slave Self-Activity

The slave labored from sunup to sundown and sometimes beyond. This labor, which dominated part of the slave's existence, has often been described but never in terms of its relationship to the slave community nor to what the slave did from sundown to sunup. Under slavery, as under any other social system, the lowest of the low were not totally dominated by the system and the master class. They found ways of alleviating the worst of the system and at times of dominating the masters. What slaves accomplished was the creation of a unified Negro community in which class differences within the community, while not totally eradicated, were much less significant than the ties of blackness in a white man's world.

While slaves were oppressed and exploited under slavery, they fought back in a day-by-day struggle which did not lead directly to liberation, but which in fact prevented that "infantilization" of personality that many historians insist took place. While there was, of course, an impact upon the slave personality of the institution, "infantilization" hardly describes it. In fact, what must be seen is the fact that the result was quite contradictory. On the one hand, submissiveness and a sense that one deserved to be a slave; but on the other, a great deal of anger and a great deal of competence to express this anger in ways that protected the personality and had objective results in the improvement of the slave's situation.

The metaphors of static psychology such as "infantilization" are most dangerous ones for they claim too much for conditioning. In any society based upon exploitation and social hierarchy, most people at all levels of the society display extreme ambivalence of personality. This "highest of the high and lowest of the low" syndrome produces social greatness as well as social incompetence. (Erik Erikson, for example, in **The Young Man Luther**, describes the religious revolutionary Martin Luther as a man who felt himself to be both a subservient worthless child and a man chosen by God the Father to do His work. Only in fighting his heavenly Father's enemies would the child become a man.) Those who have raised the issue of the "infantilization" of the slave personality do so in connection with the argument that the Africans in being taken to the New World were "deculturalized" and that the only culture put in its place was the white man's culture. On this basis, no African culture and no new culture could really matter; thus cultural dependency, wardship, infantilization. The Negro in the United States, they argue, had no culture of his own and was simply a very deprived member of the majority culture.

This school of slavery historiography is dependent upon the curious notion that "personality" and "culture" are like old clothes that can be discarded easily. However, one can never remove culture, although one can transform it. The ability of men to learn the simplest tasks is dependent upon the utilization of the existing cultural apparatus. New cultures emerge out of the older cultures gradually, never completely destroying the traces of the past. Revolutions, at their best, do not obliterate past society but liberate that which is alive from its domination by social classes no longer able to utilize the achievements of mankind for human purposes. In short, culture is a profoundly historical reality and not an ahistorical abstraction.

Afro-American Culture

The process whereby the African changed in order to meet the new environment was dependent upon his African culture. While slavery altered social patterns, it did not wholly obliterate African culture. The Br'er Rabbit stories of North America are not as Joel Chandler Harris in his racist wisdom imagined them to be. They are not childlike tales for toddlers. They contain the insight of a people and express a most sophisticated view of human life.

There are a variety of myths and folktales from Negro populations in Africa and the New World in which a relatively weak creature succeeds in at least surviving in his competition with the greater beasts. At times he even wins, but he never really loses. He is absurd, but he is filled with life and he keeps struggling with his destiny. In West Africa he is often called Legba and is portrayed as a spider or a rabbit or at times as a little black man. He survives by his wits and manages to live in competition with his more powerful neighbors. He appears in Brazil and as Papa Legba in Haitian voodoo. Elsewhere in the Caribbean we have Anansi, the spider trickster, who defeats Lion, Tiger, and Snake in great contests of wits.

Sometimes in the Caribbean he becomes Br'er Rabbit, the form in which he is known in North America. In all cases we have a creature whose life situation is very much like that of slaves. He survives, even occasionally triumphs, over the more powerful beasts; and whatever he does, he gains the sympathy of the non-powerful everywhere. In fact, he always seems to have a greater share of the classic human virtues than the Great Beasts. In myth and folklore the slave not only acted out his desires, He accomplished much more than that. In his laughter and pleasure at the exploits of Legba, Anansi, and Br'er Rabbit he created for himself, out of his own being, that necessary self-confidence denied to him by so much of his environment.

We get another example, a most crucial one, of the relationship of the slave community to the slave struggle in the slave religion. The religion of the slaves not only provided a link with the most modern of naturalistic and humanistic philosophy, but also with the concrete day-by-day struggles of the slaves themselves. Slave revolts themselves were often related to what has been called in several accounts the "African cult meeting". We have an overwhelming amount of evidence of regular late night or early morning "sings" and religious meetings held either in the slave quarters or in nearby swamps or river banks.

But, above all, for the period from the defeat of the rebellion of Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831 to the Civil War, the African cult and its related community provided the basis for social life of the slaves. In these thirty years the Negro slaves retrenched, struggled to maintain a coherent culture, infused human dignity and human possibility into the day-by-day life of the slave, and above all built the Underground Railroad. The real Uncle Tom of Harriet Beecher Stowe's book was the leader of the slaves on the plantation precisely because he was more courageous than all the other slaves as well as wise in the ways of protecting his people in their isolation. Also, Negro spirituals were the legitimate and necessary manifestations of this period. The slave personality was kept whole by the conscious and deep-seated realities of the Afro-American culture as expressed in the day-by-day and night-by-night life of the slave quarters. While the struggle was neither dramatic nor heroic in an epic way, it was real and successful.

Through the instrumentality of the African cult, a concrete expression of a philosophy most adequate to the task at hand, the Afro-American slave prepared the ground and built the community out of which could come the struggles of the abolitionist movement. Abolitionism was at all times dominated by Afro-Americans, not by whites. Every abolitionist newspaper depended upon the support of Negro freedmen for its continuation. And these black freedmen received their impetus from the struggles of their brothers and sisters in slavery. Rather than stemming from the New England Brahmin conscience, abolitionism grew from, and carried, the necessity of black liberation whatever the cost. And in liberating the black community abolitionism transformed American society; it took the lead in creating a new America.

Although it will seem outrageous for those who think of movements as primarily organizations, offices, finances, printing presses and newspapers, writers and petitions, the heart of abolitionism was the slave community itself. The Underground Railroad, the efforts of the slaves for their own liberation, and their struggles' impact on Northern Whites and slave blacks – these were the movement's indispensable core. In the South, it gave the slaves the hope that enabled them to engage in the daily struggles that won for them that amount of breathing space which made more than mere continued existence possible.

With the defeat of Nat Turner's rebellion the slaves turned more and more to building their day-by-day resistance: to the Underground Railroad, to individual acts of resistance, to slave strikes. There were countless strikes among the slaves, strikes that were often successful. A group of slaves would after some particular incident of brutality on the part of master or overseer take off for the swamps where they would hide out. After a period they would send in a representative to arrange for a conference at which there would be "collective bargaining". Sometimes they lost, of course, and to lose meant to be whipped and at times even more severely punished. But nevertheless the strikes went on.

Resistance of the slaves had its results. While the corruption of the master class and other whites in Southern society has often been commented upon, the linkage with the activities of the slaves has never been made. The slaves themselves created the conditions for the inner corruption of the Master Class. While the rulers portrayed the institution of slavery as beneficent, the constant rebellion of the slaves made them know they lied. And when there is no way in which men can believe in the fundamental morality of a social system, even one they profit by, that system begins to die because the masters lose their ability to defend it. The slaves, in the struggle to the death with the rulers, repudiate the latter's claim of moral justification, demonstrate to all the bad faith of the masters. (Seen from this vantage point, Twain's **Huckleberry Finn** depicts the superiority of the moral claims of the runaway slave, Jim, to those of the masters based on property rights.)

Black Civilization and White

The southern slave owner was denuded of civilization by the very system he fostered. Instead of the southern plantation owner and the classes close to him being made up of the knights in armor of racist folklore, slavery produced a society in the American South dominated by a class who lived in corruption and within an atmosphere worthy of the Marquis de Sade. The picture of the life of the master drawn by the master class during slavery and by the romanticizers after slavery clashes sharply with the portrait drawn by the slaves themselves. In the few ways in which some genuine civilization and humanistic culture came through in the lives of the masters, it was the result of the humanizing and civilizing influence of slaves. Slave women provided some degree of a full humanity for the masters of whom they were concubines; they provided some genuine love and training for the young masters and mistresses; the slave children helped and taught the slave owners' sons and daughters. In almost every other way the slave owner was a cruel man who whipped horses, slaves, and women, gambled and drank hard, and was quick with the Bowie knife and the gun against any real or fancied opponent. The white women were not the delicate ladies of the southern myth. The slaves almost universally reported that the women enjoyed whipping slaves more than did the men, that they often took out on their slaves their anger at their husbands, particularly when these men spent more time with their slave women than with their wives. The myth of the gracious South dies hard, but die it must. The slaves as they report their experiences turn upon its head the image of mint julep and magnolia.

Notes

1. It should be mentioned that the study upon which this article is based was begun before the slogan "Black Power" was born; it has a basis that precedes slogans and ideologies in the same sense that the concrete expression of Black Power in the independent black community preceded any internal ideological discussion. Nonetheless, the contemporary black struggle has clarified and illuminated many matters, rendering the discussion a very different one than the one begun nearly a decade ago.

2. The full defense of my point of view is developed in my forthcoming multi-volumed work, **The American Slave: From Sundown to Sunup** whose volumes will begin to appear in the spring of 1969 under the imprint of Greenwood Press. The full ten to fourteen volume work will contain a one-volume introduction by myself followed by many volumes of annotated and edited slave autobiographies and narratives in which thousands of slaves and former slaves tell their own stories, which have either never been published or have been out of print for over a century. It is a telling commentary about American racism that no attempt previously has been made to develop a substantive history of American slavery based upon the records and artifacts left by the former slaves; indeed, most historians concluded that the material for such work did not exist. It is hoped that this work will be a challenge to others to revise history, based on even more careful and detailed studies of men's self-activity.

Noel Ignatin, "Black Worker/White Worker," (1972)

In one department of a giant steel mill in northwest Indiana a foreman assigned a white worker to the job of operating a crane. The Black workers in the department felt that on the basis of seniority and job experience, one of them should have been given the job, which represented a promotion from the labor gang. They spent a few hours in the morning talking among themselves and agreed that they had a legitimate beef. Then they went and talked to the white workers in the department and got their support. After lunch the other crane operators mounted their cranes and proceeded to block in the crane of the newly promoted worker — one crane on each side of his — and run at the slowest possible speed, thus stopping work in the department. By the end of the day the foreman had gotten the message. He took the white worker off the crane and replaced him with a Black worker, and the cranes began to move again.

A few weeks after the above incident, several of the white workers who had joined the Black operators in the slowdown took part in meetings in Glen Park, a virtually all-white section of Gary, with the aim of seceding from the city in order to escape from the administration of the Black mayor, Richard Hatcher. While the secessionists demanded, in their words, "the power to make the decisions which affect their lives," it was clear that the effort was racially inspired.

At a large farm equipment manufacturing plant in Chicago, a Black worker was being tried out for a repair job on an assembly line. The foreman had been harassing the man, trying to disqualify him during his three-day trial period. After two days of this, the majority of the workers on the line, Black and white, walked off their jobs demanding that the man be accepted for the job. The company backed down and work resumed.

Later on, some of the same white workers took part in racist demonstrations at a Chicago high school. The demonstrations were called against "overcrowding" in an attempt to keep out several hundred Black students who had been transferred to the school as a result of redistricting.

CIVIL WAR

The foregoing anecdotes indicate some of the complexities and contradictions operating within the lives and within the minds of the white workers in this country: on the one hand, displays of democratic co-operation and fraternal relations with Black workers, and, on the other hand, examples of backwardness and selfishness which are unbecoming to members of a social class which hopes to reconstruct society in its image. What is taking place is a "civil war" in the mind of the white worker. In the community, on the job, in every sphere of life, he is being faced with a choice between two ways of looking at the world, two ways of leading his life. One way represents solidarity with the Black worker and the progressive forces of society. The other way represents alliance with the forces of exploitation and repression.

I'd like to speak a bit about this "civil war" and examine some of what it means for the development of revolutionary strategy.

In order to understand the contradictory, often bewildering behavior of people, especially white people, in this country, we must take up two questions. The first question is — on what does capitalist rule depend? There are groups, radical groups, which seem to operate on the premise that capitalist rule depends on the monopoly of guns and tanks held by the employing class and its ability to use them whenever it pleases against the exploited majority. This view explains why some groups put such great efforts into building alliances with all sorts of liberals to preserve constitutional forms of government. They hope, through these alliances, to limit the ability of the ruling class to use force against the people.

I do not share this view of the secret of capitalist rule. I do not agree that capitalist power rests, at present, primarily on guns and tanks. It rests on the support of the majority of people. This support is usually passive, sometimes active, but nevertheless effective.

COMPETITION AMONG THE WAGE EARNERS

I contend that the key element in the popular acceptance of capitalist rule is the ideology and institution of white supremacy, which provides the illusion of common interests between the exploited white masses and the white ruling class.

Karl Marx wrote that wage slavery rests exclusively on competition among the wage earners. He meant that the existence of competition among the working class is responsible for the continued rule of the employing class and the inability of the working people to overthrow it and establish their rule.

Why do people compete? They compete in order to get ahead. The fact must be admitted that, from a certain point of view, it is possible to "get ahead" in this society. Years and years of unquestioning loyalty and devotion to the company will, in a certain percentage of cases, result in advancement for the employee — advancement to a position of lead man, foreman, soft job, high bonus job, etc. Working people have various uncomplimentary terms to describe this sort of behavior. Yet large numbers of them live their lives in this way, and for a certain portion of these, it "pays off."

Because of the peculiar development of America and the nature of capitalist policy in this country, there is a special element added to the general competition which exists among all workers. That special element is color, which throws the competition on a special basis, that raises color to a special place in the competition among workers.

All workers compete; that is a law of capitalism. But Black and white workers compete with a special advantage on the side of the white. That is a result of the peculiar development of America, and is not inherent in the objective social laws of the capitalist system.

In the same way that some individual workers gain advancement on the job by currying favor with the employer, white workers as a group have won a favored position for themselves by siding with the employing class against the non-white people. This favored status takes various forms, including the monopoly of skilled jobs and higher education, better housing at lower cost than that available to nonwhites, less police harassment, a cushion against the most severe effects of unemployment, better health conditions, as well as certain social advantages.

We're trying to explain why people act as they do, and particularly why white workers act as they do. White working people aren't stupid. They don't act in a racist fashion simply out of blind prejudice. There are much more substantial causes — the system of white-skin privileges — which lead them to behave in a selfish, exclusionary manner.

A Black steel worker told me that once, when he was working as a helper on the unloading docks, he decided to bid on an operator's job that was open. All the operators were white. He had worked with them before in his capacity as helper. They had been friends, had eaten together and chatted about all the things that workers talk about. When he bid on the operator's job, it became the task of the other operators to break him in. He was assigned to the job, and sent to work with them on the equipment, and given thirty days to learn the job. It quickly became clear to him that the other workers had no intention of permitting him to get that job. They operated the equipment in such a way as to prevent him from learning how. Workers are very skilled at that sort of thing.

After two weeks, one of the white workers came to him and said, "Listen, I know what's going on here. You work with me on Monday and I'll break you in." The person who told me this story agreed — at least there was one decent white worker in the bunch. Friday afternoon came around, and the white worker approached him. With some embarrassment, he admitted that he had to back down from his offer. "It's bad enough when all the guys call me a n— lover, but when my own wife quits talking to me, well I just can't go through with it."

The man who told me that story never succeeded in getting that job.

What made those white workers act in the way they did? They were willing to be "friends" at the workplace, but only on the condition that the Black worker stay in "his place." They didn't want him to "presume" to a position of social equality if and when they met on "the outside." And they didn't want him to presume to share in the better jobs at the workplace. Those white workers understood that keeping themselves in "their place" in the company scheme of things depended upon helping to keep the Black worker in "his place."

They had observed that whenever the Black people force the ruling class, in whole or in part, to make concessions to racial equality, the ruling class strikes back to make it an equality on a worse level of conditions than those enjoyed by the whites before the concessions. The white workers are thus conditioned to believe that every step toward racial equality necessarily means a worsening of their own conditions. Their bonus is cut.

Production rates go up. Their insurance is harder to get and more expensive. Their garbage is collected less often. Their children's schools deteriorate.

This is how the white-skin privilege system works. If a small number of white workers do manage to see through the smoke screen and join in the fight together with the Black workers, the ruling class responds with bribes, cajolery, threats, violence and pressure multiplied a thousand fold to drive the thinking whites back into the "club" of white supremacists. And the purpose of all this is to prevent the white workers from learning the Black example, to prevent them from learning that if Blacks can force concessions from the boss through struggle, how much more could be accomplished if the white workers would get into the struggle against the boss instead of against the Black workers.

A common approach to the problem posed above is that of the white radical who goes into a shop which has a typical pattern of discrimination against Black workers. Instead of directly taking up that issue and attempting to build a struggle for equality, he looks for some issue, like speedup, which affects all workers to one degree or another. He aims to develop a struggle around this issue, to involve all the workers in the struggle. He hopes that in the course of the struggle the white workers, through contact with Blacks, will lose their attitudes of racial superiority. This is the approach to the problem of unifying the working class which prevails within the radical movement today.

I don't think it works. History shows it doesn't work. The result of this sort of false unity always leaves the Black worker still on the bottom. It always seems to be the demand for racial equality, the last one on the list, that is sacrificed in order to reach a settlement and celebrate the "great victory" of the struggle.

Present-day unions are, to a considerable extent, the end product of this sort of approach. It is Black and white together on the picket line, and after the strike is over the white workers return to the skilled trades, the machining departments and the cleaner assembly areas, and the Black workers return to the labor gang and the open hearth. Every "victory" of this kind feeds the poison of racism and pushes further off the real unity of the working class which must be established if significant progress is to be made.

There is no way to overcome the national and racial divisions within the working class except by directly confronting them. The problem of white supremacy must be fought out openly within the working class.

HUG THE CHAINS OF AN ACTUAL WRETCHEDNESS

Over eighty years ago, Tom Watson, the Georgia agrarian protest leader, wrote the following words, full of profound meaning:

You might beseech a Southern white tenant to listen to you upon questions of finance, taxation and transportation; you might demonstrate with mathematical precision that herein lay his way out of poverty into comfort; you might have him "almost persuaded" to the truth, but if the merchant who furnished his farm supplies (at tremendous usury) or the town politician (who never spoke to him except at election times) came along and cried "Negro rule," the entire fabric of reason and common sense which you had patiently constructed would fall, and the poor tenant would joyously hug the chains of an actual wretchedness rather than do any experimenting on a question of mere sentiment . . . the argument against the independent movement in the South may be boiled down into one word — nigger.

These words are as true today as when they were first written. They apply with equal force to workers as well as to farmers, and the truth of them is not limited to the South. Ted Allen has put it that white supremacy is the keystone of ruling class power, and the white-skin privilege is the mortar that holds it in place.

There are two points in what I have been saying so far that are distinctive and that I wish to emphasize.

The first point is that, for revolutionary strategists, the key problem is not the racism of the employing class, but the racism of the white worker. (After all, the boss's racism is natural to him because it serves his class interests.) It is the support by white workers for the employers' racial policies which represents the chief obstacle to all social progress in this country, including revolution.

The second point is that this support has its basis in real conditions of life. It is not simply a matter of ignorance and prejudice, to be overcome by exhortation and appeals to reason.

The second question I wish to take up is: where does socialism come from?

TO IMPOSE ORDER ON CHAOS

In their daily activities, working people express the drive to reorganize society so that they become the masters of production instead of the servants of production — the essential meaning of Socialism. I would like to cite a few examples of this striving of workers.

One of the characteristics of steel production is that it must be continuous: to stop the furnaces is a costly and time-consuming operation. (I heard a story that once in Colorado around 1912 the IWW pulled a strike at a steel mill and, instead of banking the furnaces, simply walked off the job. According to the story, that furnace stands today, over sixty years later, with a solid block of iron inside of it, unusable.)

Steel is a continuous operation and has to be maintained that way. What the steel companies do is operate a system of three shifts, and a system of relief on the job: a worker can't leave the job until his relief shows up. The workers take advantage of this in various ways. There is one mill I know of in which the workers have organized a rotation system among themselves, in which they take turns calling off, allowing the person they are scheduled to relieve eight hours overtime in their place. There are a couple of dozen people involved in this, they have it organized in turns and it would probably take a professional mathematician several weeks of studying attendance records to figure out their system. It allows each worker to get an extra day off every few weeks, and then receive, in his turn, an enlarged paycheck — without working a single hour more than normal. You see, the company posts its schedule of work, and then the workers proceed to violate it and impose their own.

Of course they don't have everything their own way. When the absenteeism gets too severe the company cracks down and threatens reprisals, and the workers are forced to slack off for a while. Then, when the heat is off, they go back to their own schedule.

Another example. One of the characteristics of the capitalist scheme of production is the division between maintenance and production workers. This is universal under capitalism. There is one category of workers who perform the same operation minute after minute for their entire lives, and another category of workers who go around fixing machines when they break down. In the United States this division has been adapted to serve the system of white-skin privileges. White workers are generally given preference for the jobs in maintenance, which are usually easier, cleaner, more interesting and higher paying than production jobs.

The workers respond to this division in ways that at first sight seem bewildering. When they get angry at the company, production workers will not perform the simplest and most routine maintenance task. They will stop an entire operation waiting for a maintenance worker to change a fuse.

A Black worker in maintenance, one of the few, told this story. He was called to repair a piece of equipment that had failed. Unable to locate the trouble, he called his foreman to help. The foreman was also unable to find the trouble, and so he called a higher-up. They stood around for a while scratching their heads and then decided to go back to the office and study the schematic drawings of the equipment to see if they would reveal the trouble. After the foremen had left, the Black maintenance worker asked the production worker, who was also Black, what was wrong with the machine. He replied that he had thrown the wrong switch by mistake and blown some obscure control device. He pointed it out, after swearing the maintenance worker to secrecy, and it was fixed in three minutes. His attitude was — no one had asked him what was wrong, and if they treated him like a dope he would act like a dope.

This is one side of the workers' response to the arbitrary maintenance-production split. On the other hand, they make efforts to overcome the barriers in their way, to master the entire process of production in order to express their full human capacities. Production workers do everything they can to learn about their equipment. On some occasions they go to great lengths to make repairs themselves without calling the maintenance department. Maintenance workers also show this striving to break down artificial barriers. Many times they voluntarily grab a shovel or perform other tasks which are outside of their job requirements. But if the foreman orders them to do it, they will curse him and refuse.

These efforts by both production and maintenance workers to break down the barriers erected between them represent the striving of working people to master the equipment which makes the things they need, to gain control over the work process so that labor itself becomes a source of satisfaction to them.

There are many other examples that indicate the efforts of workers to impose their order on the chaos of capitalist production. If we want to know what socialism in the United States will look like, we should carefully

study the activities of the working people today, because the ingredients of the socialist society appear right now in embryonic, subordinated ways.

THE ULTIMATE EXPLOITED

Now I must tie together the two lines of argument I have been pursuing so far, and pose the question — where does the Black struggle fit into all this? Please note: by Black struggle I mean the autonomous Black movement. I do not mean any particular organization, although a number of organizations are part of it. I am referring to the tendency on the part of large numbers of Black people, especially workers, to find ways of acting together independent of white control and white approval, and to decide their course of action based simply on what they feel is good for Black people, not what serves some so-called larger movement.

The elements of such an autonomous Black movement exist. They are repressed and subordinated, just as the autonomous efforts of workers generally are repressed. The conscious and determined efforts of the white ruling class to flood the Black community with drugs are one indication of the serious threat the Black movement poses to official society.

In spite of all the efforts of the ruling class to suppress it, the Black movement exists. How does it fit into the general movement of all the oppressed to revolutionize society? I wish to make three points.

First of all, the Black workers are the ultimate exploited in this country. They have no possibility of rising as a group to oppress anyone else. In spite of what many whites think about such subjects as welfare, Black people receive no favors as a group from the capitalist class.

In the second place, the daily activities of the Black people, especially the Black workers, are the best existing model for the aspirations of the workers generally as a distinct class of people. Other groups in society, when they act collectively on their own, usually represent partial and occasionally even reactionary interests. The activities of the Black workers are the most advanced outpost of the new society we seek to establish.

THE CHALLENGE TO WHITE WORKERS

In the third place, the autonomous movement of Black people poses a constant challenge to white workers to, in the words of C. L. R. James, "take the steps which will enable the working people to fulfill their historic destiny of building a society free of the domination of one class or one race over another."

The Black movement poses a challenge, not merely to white workers in general, but to those white intellectuals, workers or not, who regard themselves as in some sense radical or revolutionary. This is a challenge which, in the past, they have generally not lived up to. This challenge is not something limited to history either; it continually comes up, in new ways as well as old ones. Let me offer a few examples.

The system of seniority was originally fought for by the unions as a defense against individual favoritism and arbitrary discipline by the boss. Through a fairly involved process, seniority has been adapted to serve the needs of white supremacy. The boss decided whom to hire first, and the seniority system placed the union label on the practice of relegating Blacks to the status of "last hired, first fired." As Black workers press forward with their demands for full equality in all spheres of life, they increasingly come into conflict with the seniority system and other devices which uphold white supremacy, such as certain types of tests, and so forth. The white workers often react defensively. In many cases they insist that their resistance is not due to any prejudice against Black people, but is merely an objection to bypassing what has become the regular procedure for advancement. On more than one occasion, Black workers have forced the employer to open a new job area to them, only to run up against the rigid opposition of white workers.

White revolutionaries must understand, and help the masses of white workers to understand, that the interests of the entire working class can only be served by standing firmly with the Black workers in such cases. Or consider the dispute over jobs in the construction trades, which reached a peak several years ago in a number of cities, and is still going on in some places. In Chicago it took the form of, on one side, a community coalition led by Rev. C. T. Vivian, a number of elements around SCLC and Operation PUSH, and various diverse forces from among the Black community and youth, along with, apparently, some financial backing from the Ford Foundation and the Chicago Northwestern Railway. The aim of the struggle was to gain entrance for Blacks into the construction trades. The means used was to surround various ongoing construction sites with mass picketing in order to stop work on them until Black workers were admitted in proportion to their numbers in the city. On the

other side was a united front of the construction unions and contractors. Of course their defense was that they do not practice racial discrimination; that Black workers simply had not applied for or passed the tests for admittance.

What is the position of radicals to be in a case like this? There have been arguments that the Ford Foundation and other such forces are using the Black movement to weaken the construction unions and drive down the cost of labor. That argument is not without validity; it is difficult to believe that the Ford Foundation and the Chicago Northwestern Railway are unselfishly interested in the cause of Black workers.

Some radical groups, from a lofty position of supposed objectivity, took it upon themselves to advise the Black coalition that instead of directing their struggle against the admittedly unfair assignment of jobs, they should recognize the fact that there was a shortage of jobs in construction and should join with the unions to expand the number of jobs, which would benefit Black as well as white and avoid the danger of "dividing the working class" as the present struggle was allegedly doing. This, of course, was merely a radical-sounding version of the argument given by the construction unions and contractors themselves, who would welcome any support from any quarter which offered to expand the industry.

The response of the Black masses to this argument was to press forward the struggle to open those jobs up or shut them down. Their actions showed their confidence that it was they who were using the Ford Foundation and not the other way around, and that as for the problems of the construction industry, these could not be of concern to them until they became part of it.

Some listeners may sense the justice in what I have been arguing, and at the same time question its practicability. Wherein lies the basis for establishing solidarity among the working class? Is it possible to expect white workers to repudiate privileges which are real in the interests of something so abstract as justice?

POISON BAIT

The answer is that the system of white-skin privileges, while it is undeniably real, is not in the interests of white workers as part of a class which aims at transforming society to its roots. The acceptance of a favored status by white workers binds them to wage slavery, makes them subordinate to the capitalist class. The repudiation, that is, the active rejection, through struggle, of this favored status is the precondition for the participation by white workers in the struggle of workers as a distinct social class. A metaphor which has been used in the past, and which I still find appropriate, is that white-skin privileges are poison bait, a worm with a hook in it. To be willing to leap from the water to exert the most determined and violent efforts to throw off the hook and the worm is the only way to avoid landing on the dinner table.

Let me offer a historical parallel. Back in the 1930's when people were organizing the CIO, one of the problems they had to face was that many workers in the plants had worked out a means of survival which consisted of gaining advancement for themselves in return for favors for the boss. Old timers still talk about how, back in the days before the union, if you wanted a promotion or even wanted to keep your job in the event of a layoff, you had to mow the boss's lawn or wash his car or give him a bottle of whiskey at Christmas. In order to bring a union into those plants, that sort of activity had to be defeated. It was undeniably true that those who washed the foreman's car were the last workers laid off. On what basis was it possible to appeal to the workers to renounce this sort of behavior which they felt was necessary to their survival? The basis of the appeal was that it was precisely that sort of behavior which bound them and subordinated them to the company, and that the interests of solidarity of the entire work force demanded the repudiation of such individual arrangements.

The appeal fell on deaf ears until it began to seem that there was a real possibility of making some basic changes in those plants. Until the CIO was present as a real force, until the momentum built up, until people began to feel that there was another way to live besides mowing the boss's lawn, they were not willing to repudiate the old way.

Today, as a result of the CIO, in vast areas of American industry, any worker who was suspected of doing the sorts of favors for the foreman that were once taken for granted would be ostracized and treated with cold contempt by his fellow workers. (Some people may argue that the previous statement is an exaggeration, and that the spirit of togetherness and combativity has deteriorated over the years. To the extent that they are right, it

should be noted that this deterioration is in large part due to the habit of subservience encouraged by the general acceptance by white workers of racial privileges.)

The time will come when the masses of white workers in our country will regard with disdain those among them who seek or defend racial privileges, in the same way they now have only contempt for someone who would wash the foreman's car in return for preferential treatment.

A POWERFUL MAGNET

Today the Black movement represents an alternative to the dominant mode of life in our country, in the same way the CIO represented an alternative to the old way of life in the factory. The relations which Black people, especially Black workers, have established among themselves, and the culture which has arisen out of their struggle, represent a model for a new society. The Black movement exercises a powerful attraction on all those who come into contact with it.

Consider the matter of the position of women and relations between the sexes. Black women, as a result of their struggle for freedom as Black people, have achieved a great sense of their independence, not merely from one man but from men in general. This has forced Black men to accept a degree of independence for women that is rare in the rest of the population. Anyone who has observed the changes undergone by white, Latin or Asian women once they go to work and come into contact with Black women can see the extent to which the old way of women's unquestioned subservience to man has been undermined. The men may resent this process, but it is irreversible.

The rise in general working-class militancy, observed by everyone in the last few years, is directly traceable to the influence of Black workers, who are generally recognized by all, including white workers, as the most militant and combative group of workers when it comes to taking on the company. The Black workers are drawing on the experience they have gained in their struggle for national freedom, and are beginning to transmit the lessons of that struggle to the white workers with whom they come in contact.

The same thing is true also for the insurgent movement within the military, where the GI resistance, led by Black GIs, reached such proportions that it forced major changes in official government policy.

This is true also for the insurgent movement within the prisons, where the resistance and courage of Black prisoners has pulled whites into the struggle for decent conditions and human dignity.

For decades, politics, to white workers, has been a dirty word. It has meant nothing more than the right to choose every four years which gang of thieves is going to loot the public treasury for the next four. Beginning in 1955 with the Montgomery bus boycott, when an entire city organized its own system of transportation as well as of public discussion and decision-making through the direct participation of thousands of people, the Black movement has created a new concept of citizenship and community. Continuing through the sitins, freedom rides, mass marches and urban rebellions, the Black movement has given new meaning to politics, and helped the American people in general to rediscover their tradition of self-organization and revolt.

Many examples of this phenomenon could be cited from the only community in this country whose members greet each other as brother and sister. But the point is made: in spite of all the obstacles placed in its way, the Black movement, expressed in the patterns of life arising from struggle, represents a powerful magnetic pole to vast numbers of workers looking for a way out of the mess which is modern life.

Recall, if you will, the anecdote with which I opened this talk: the case of the white workers acting in solidarity with the Black crane operators. Consider the position of the white workers in that case. They are under conflicting pressures. On the one hand, they see a group of workers preparing to strike a blow at the company and, like all workers everywhere, they want to deal themselves in, to hit back at the enemy which is oppressing them. On the other hand, to join with the Black workers in such a situation means turning against habit, against tradition, against their own status as racially privileged workers.

They are faced with a choice, between their identity and interests as whites and their identity and interests as workers. What was it that made that particular group of workers in that situation decide, in the words of one activist, to be "more worker than white"?

Their actions can only be explained by the fact that, whether or not they express it in words, the Black movement represented for them an alternative way of life, a way that was better and more attractive than the usual

passive, subordinated life they were accustomed to. Anyone who has ever taken part in collective struggle knows that, regardless of how they may have acted afterwards, the experience left a lasting impression on them.

What about the tasks of revolutionaries, and in particular white revolutionaries, in regard to this vital task of unifying the working class around its class interests?

Things have changed in the last twenty years. It is no longer possible for any group which claims to be revolutionary to openly oppose the Black movement. Not if it hopes to have any following. There are one or two groups in the country that do, but nobody pays any attention to them. The point today is to define the relation between the Black movement and the general class struggle. And that is where the differences come out.

Everybody in the movement is opposed to racism, everybody chants the litany that racism is the greatest barrier to class unity. Every group puts out propaganda against racism and sincerely strives to win the workers to the struggle against it.

But what about those cases where the struggle of Black workers and Black people against racial discrimination appears to conflict with the desire to unify the largest possible number of workers behind what are called "general class demands"? For example, as sometimes happens, when the aggressiveness of Black workers in pursuing their fight for equality tends to alienate white workers who might be willing to join with them in common efforts to achieve some reform of immediate and direct benefit to both groups? Then the trouble begins. And we must admit that some left-wing groups, especially those dominated by whites, are all too willing to set aside the special demands of the Black struggle.

A BAD CHOICE

A recent example of this might serve to clarify the difference between the two approaches. At a large electrical appliance manufacturing plant in Chicago, one of the radical groups, the Revolutionary Union, sent a few people in. The radicals began putting out a plant newsletter which raised the issues of speedup, safety, low wages — all the various grievances of the workers — and also carried on a fairly aggressive campaign against racial discrimination, against the exclusion of Black workers from the better departments, etc.

The group managed to build up considerable support, most of it among Black workers, which wasn't surprising since Black workers made up almost half the work force and were most victimized by the oppressive conditions the group was agitating against.

After some time had passed, the strategists in the group who, it is safe to surmise, were the white radicals who had initiated it along with one or two newly radicalized workers from the plant, decided that, as a tactic, they ought to try and throw out the present union, the International Association of Machinists, which is one of the worst unions in the Chicago area, and bring in the United Electrical Workers union. That is the UE, the old left-led union expelled in 1949 from the CIO and still under what is called progressive leadership.

Anyhow, they took a group of workers down to the UE hall and met with the organizers there. The staff people were delighted that they were interested in bringing in the UE, but they observed that there weren't enough white workers in the committee. If they ever hoped to win the plant for the UE, they would have to involve more white workers in the organizing effort.

That was certainly a logical effort. And so, what did the group do? They went back into the plant and began campaigning for the UE, using the newsletter as their chief vehicle. But now there was a change. The main aim became to reach the white workers, and so the line of the newsletter now became: all workers unite, the boss makes no distinction between Black and white, do not let race feeling divide us, bringing in the UE will benefit us all, our interests are all the same, etc. As for the exposures of racial discrimination and the campaign to abolish it in the plant, which had occupied so much of the group's attention prior to the decision to bring in the UE, that was laid aside in the interests of appealing to the broadest number of workers who could be won to the immediate goal, getting a better union.

What is there to say about a story like this? What is there to do besides shake your head? Doesn't this represent, in capsule form, the whole history of labor movement in this country — the radicalization of the workers followed by the capitulation, on the part of the leadership, to the backward prejudices of the white workers? How many times does this experience have to be repeated? Apparently an infinite number until we learn the lesson.

By the way, the upshot of the organizing campaign was that the group didn't succeed in fooling any white workers; they still considered it a Black power group and kept it at arm's length. But it did succeed in cooling the enthusiasm of the Black workers who were its initial base.

Was there an alternative course that could have been followed in the particular situation? I think there was.

NOTHING LESS THAN A TOTAL CHANGE

The alternative would have been to encourage the group along its original lines, determined to fight consistently against white Supremacy regardless of what came up or came down — to develop the group as the core of a fighting movement in the plant that carried out struggles on the shop floor around all issues of concern to its members, including the issue of racial discrimination.

It's probably true that such a group could not have been a majority movement at the beginning, or perhaps even for a considerable length of time. Most likely, as the group pushed firmly against racial discrimination it would alienate some white workers who could have been won to it otherwise. That's a choice that has to be made. The group in the plant made the wrong choice.

I think that a group such as I describe, made up perhaps in the beginning almost entirely of Black workers, could have developed as a center of struggle in the plant, and a center of opposition to the company and the rotten union. As time went on, it could have attracted to itself white workers who were so fed up with their situation that they were looking for radical solutions — and would even identify with a "Black radical" outfit, so long as it seemed to offer a way out of the mess they were in. The very things which would make such a group repulsive to some workers would make it attractive to that increasing number of workers, Black as well as white, who are coming to sense that nothing less than a total change is worth fighting for.

The course I advocate offers great difficulties — no doubt about it. It is likely that the repression directed against a radical group that relentlessly fought racial discrimination would be greater than against a more moderate group. It is possible that a group such as I describe could never have gained admittance into the UE. I freely concede all the difficulties. But then, who ever said that making a revolution was easy?

As for the alternative, the course that was actually followed, we know all too well where that leads.

Mark Twain, excerpt from *Huckleberry Finn*, Chapter XXXI

"That's me, every time," says I. "But maybe his chance ain't worth no more than that, if he'll sell it so cheap. Maybe there's something ain't straight about it."

"But it IS, though -- straight as a string. I see the handbill myself. It tells all about him, to a dot -- paints him like a picture, and tells the plantation he's frum, below NewrLEANS. No-sirree-BOB, they ain't no trouble 'bout THAT speculation, you bet you. Say, gimme a chaw tobacker, won't ye?"

I didn't have none, so he left. I went to the raft, and set down in the wigwam to think. But I couldn't come to nothing. I thought till I wore my head sore, but I couldn't see no way out of the trouble. After all this long journey, and after all we'd done for them scoundrels, here it was all come to nothing, everything all busted up and ruined, because they could have the heart to serve Jim such a trick as that, and make him a slave again all his life, and amongst strangers, too, for forty dirty dollars.

Once I said to myself it would be a thousand times better for Jim to be a slave at home where his family was, as long as he'd GOT to be a slave, and so I'd better write a letter to Tom Sawyer and tell him to tell Miss Watson where he was. But I soon give up that notion for two things: she'd be mad and disgusted at his rascality and ungratefulness for leaving her, and so she'd sell him straight down the river again; and if she didn't, everybody naturally despises an ungrateful nigger, and they'd make Jim feel it all the time, and so he'd feel ornery and disgraced. And then think of ME! It would get all around that Huck Finn helped a nigger to get his freedom; and if I was ever to see anybody from that town again I'd be ready to get down and lick his boots for shame. That's just the way: a person does a low-down thing, and then he don't want to take no consequences of it. Thinks as long as he can hide, it ain't no disgrace. That was my fix exactly. The more I studied about this the more my conscience went to grinding me, and the more wicked and low-down and ornery I got to feeling. And at last, when it hit me all of a sudden that here was the plain hand of Providence slapping me in the face and letting me know my wickedness was being watched all the time from up there in heaven, whilst I was stealing a poor old woman's nigger that hadn't ever done me no harm, and now was showing me there's One that's always on the lookout, and ain't agoing to allow no such miserable doings to go only just so fur and no further, I most dropped in my tracks I was so scared. Well, I tried the best I could to kinder soften it up somehow for myself by saying I was brung up wicked, and so I warn't so much to blame; but something inside of me kept saying, "There was the Sunday-school, you could a gone to it; and if you'd a done it they'd a learnt you there that people that acts as I'd been acting about that nigger goes to everlasting fire."

It made me shiver. And I about made up my mind to pray, and see if I couldn't try to quit being the kind of a boy I was and be better. So I kneeled down. But the words wouldn't come. Why wouldn't they? It warn't no use to try and hide it from Him. Nor from ME, neither. I knowed very well why they wouldn't come. It was because my heart warn't right; it was because I warn't square; it was because I was playing double. I was letting ON to give up sin, but away inside of me I was holding on to the biggest one of all. I was trying to make my mouth SAY I would do the right thing and the clean thing, and go and write to that nigger's owner and tell where he was; but deep down in me I knowed it was a lie, and He knowed it. You can't pray a lie -- I found that out.

So I was full of trouble, full as I could be; and didn't know what to do. At last I had an idea; and I says, I'll go and write the letter -- and then see if I can pray. Why, it was astonishing, the way I felt as light as a feather right straight off, and my troubles all gone. So I got a piece of paper and a pencil, all glad and excited, and set down and wrote:

Miss Watson, your runaway nigger Jim is down here two mile below Pikesville, and Mr. Phelps has got him and he will give him up for the reward if you send.

HUCK FINN.

I felt good and all washed clean of sin for the first time I had ever felt so in my life, and I knowed I could pray now. But I didn't do it straight off, but laid the paper down and set there thinking -- thinking how good it was all this happened so, and how near I come to being lost and going to hell. And went on thinking. And got to thinking over our trip down the river; and I see Jim before me all the time: in the day and in the night-time, sometimes moonlight, sometimes storms, and we a-floating along, talking and singing and laughing. But somehow I couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against him, but only the other kind. I'd see him

standing my watch on top of his'n, 'stead of calling me, so I could go on sleeping; and see him how glad he was when I come back out of the fog; and when I come to him again in the swamp, up there where the feud was; and such-like times; and would always call me honey, and pet me and do everything he could think of for me, and how good he always was; and at last I struck the time I saved him by telling the men we had small-pox aboard, and he was so grateful, and said I was the best friend old Jim ever had in the world, and the ONLY one he's got now; and then I happened to look around and see that paper.

It was a close place. I took it up, and held it in my hand. I was a-trembling, because I'd got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knowed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself:

"All right, then, I'll GO to hell" -- and tore it up.

It was awful thoughts and awful words, but they was said. And I let them stay said; and never thought no more about reforming. I shoved the whole thing out of my head, and said I would take up wickedness again, which was in my line, being brung up to it, and the other warn't. And for a starter I would go to work and steal Jim out of slavery again; and if I could think up anything worse, I would do that, too; because as long as I was in, and in for good, I might as well go the whole hog.

The key to an understanding of the white liberal is that he is seeing a situation of horror and its self-enforcing sentence of death. He is from the Negro situation that he wants to be proved. He seeks out words and Negroes who will tell him that the situation does not exist. And since the Talented Tenth, with whom white liberals interact, are fleeing the same situation, liberals find what they seek. Since white liberals and the Talented Tenth say the situation does not exist, they cannot make a meaningful comment on it. Because they deny reality, they cannot shape reality. Fleeing truth, they lose the power to make the truth.

The basic, the indispensable, the crucial deceit of liberalism is that nobody has been hurt. A few scratches perhaps or a bruise or two, but nothing requiring radical surgery. If white liberals confronted the Negro-white situation in its totality of horror, they would perforce move forward into radical action or collapse in a moral spasm.

If white men who call themselves liberals do not recognize themselves in this assessment, then they are not liberals. They may be something less or, hopefully, something more.

Programmatically, pragmatically and spiritually, the white liberal is totally inadequate to the demands of the hour. In order to do now what must be done, the white liberal must become not liberal but relevant which is only to say that he must become radical.

At all times and in all climes, Negroes have worked best with radicals. It oftentimes happens that a white radical—a Garrison, for example—will prepare the ground for a white liberal or a moderate—a Lincoln, for example. But historically and spiritually, the white radical comes first. And who is a white radical? A man who confronts radical problems and articulates radical solutions, a man who transcends we-groups and out-groups, whose loyalties are to a group beyond groups, a man whose kingdom, so to speak, is not of this world—a man, in short, who is free.

Negroes usually find their most reliable allies among men who have broken in some way with the dominant myths of the age.

Rarely, if ever, are reliable allies found in the camp of the conventional.

Judged by past experiences, radicalism, the indigenous, non-communist radicalism of a Paine or a Darrow or a Phillips is the minimum hope of the Negro. Men who have become radicals, men who have, at least, repudiated liberalism, are often ideal advocates of the cause of the oppressed. Such men, because of their marginality and objectivity, are sometimes better friends of the oppressed than the oppressed.

Indigenous radicals speak to America from the much-maligned tradition of Thomas Paine, Wendell Phillips, John Brown, Frederick Douglass, Charney Darrow and Saul Alinsky. It is to this tradition that we must go for hope. And it is to this tradition that white men of good will must repair if hope is to become more than a palliative.

White radicals, whatever their personal limitations, construct acts to the end. They do not shrink from conflict or combat. Like Jesus, like Toussaint, like Paine, like every radical in the history of man, they take the vow of poverty, forsaking, if necessary, all others. Wendell Phillips, the Boston partisan, abandoned place and position for the slave. So enamored was he of Negro freedom that his family tried unsuccessfully to commit him to an insane asylum.

Flowing out of the radical tradition is a sense of real repentance and shame and a repudiation of the pride and pretensions of men with white skins. "I never rise to address a colored audience," William L. Garrison said, "without feeling ashamed of my color; ashamed of being identified with a race of men who have done you so much injustice and yet retain so large a portion of your brethren in servitude."

Empathy: it is this that divides radicals and liberals. Radicals suffer with the oppressed. They feel the blows, they weep, they hunger, they thirst. Because they project themselves into the situation of oppression, radicals are not tolerant of men who sustain situations of oppression. They focus their fire on good people. They try in words that are "half battles," to quote Wendell

Phillips, to force good people to recognize their complicity in systems of evil. Radicals stand with Burke who said that to speak of atrocious crimes in mild language is treason to virtue," with Jesus who found, that love and gentility apart, it was sometimes necessary to *name* evil, to speak of "fools," "hypocrites," "devourers of widows' houses," "serpents" and "generation of vipers."

The law of relevance and of radicalism finds focus in the lives of two men who symbolize, above all other Americans, the polar qualities of white liberals and white radicals. The first man, Abraham Lincoln, is, of course, the godfather of American liberalism. It is to him, or rather to his image, that white liberals go for sustenance and support. From a historical standpoint, the choice of Lincoln was unfortunate. Lincoln was neither a racial liberal nor a moderate; he was a conservative who, nonetheless, personified in his groping and his vacillations the limitations of the liberal mood. Although the Illinois of his day was a government of the white people, for the white people, and by the white people, Lincoln made no audible protest. In fact, at Charleston, Illinois, on September 18, 1858, during the Lincoln-Douglas debates, he said he preferred that way. "I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races; I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters of the free Negroes, or jurors, or qualifying them to hold office, or having them marry with white people. I will say in addition that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which, I suppose, will forever forbid the two races living together upon terms of social and political equality; and inasmuch as they cannot so live, that while they do remain together, there must be the position of the superiors and the inferiors; and that I, as much as any other man, am in favor of the superior being assigned to the white man."

Lincoln's verbal dexterity befuddled his opponent, Stephen Douglas. Lincoln was given to stating in the same speech that he believed in white supremacy and the *principle* of the Declaration of Independence. Douglas could never understand why the crowd applauded Lincoln at both points. His inability to grasp

the fact that white Americans believed and believe in both—white supremacy and the Declaration of Independence—probably cost him the Presidency.

Lincoln went his way, endorsing both white supremacy and the Declaration of Independence and refusing to take a stand on the issue of Negro rights in Illinois. His approach to the racial problem, he said once, was to bite his lips and keep silent. In that image is the whole history of white liberalism in America.

As President, Lincoln was scrupulously correct, stating the principle with great eloquence and avoiding rigid commitments to the practice. He was in favor of a gradual emancipation program extending to the year 1900 and the deportation, if possible, of Negro freedmen. It was his opinion that Negro and white Americans would be a great deal better off if they were separated, preferably with a very large body of water between them.

Lincoln grew during the war, but he did not grow much on the racial issue. On the eve of his death, he was ready to bless a Reconstruction program for Louisiana that was very charitable to ex-slaveholders and exceedingly cruel to freedmen and Negro soldiers who, he admitted, had helped to win the war. He barely suggested privately that it would perhaps be a good thing if the white men of Louisiana would give the vote to "very intelligent" Negroes and Negro veterans. "Barely suggested," "privately," "very intelligent Negroes," "perhaps"—thus speaks the liberal or the moderate in a direct confrontation of Negro rights and white interests.

To Lincoln, the Union was more dear than freedom. To the abolitionists, freedom was more dear than the Union. The white students and white adults who have taken up the real burden of the white man in the ranks of the Negro Freedom Movement are made in the image of the white abolitionists—Garrison, Phillips, Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens—who were largely responsible for forcing the issue of Negro freedom that Lincoln and other liberals and moderates were trying to evade. In the Civil War and the post-Civil War period, these men made a determined effort to flesh out the American creed and America has

never forgiven them. The continual vilification of the abolitionists indicates that America is still not ready to face the problems she has faced. The continual glorification of the conservative Lincoln indicates that America is still trying to evade the problem Lincoln tried to evade.

Not only white but Negro Americans, many of whom know better, sing the strange chorus of Lincoln and moderation. For when Negro and white, who dread the hard claims of responsibility and the duty of claiming their freedom and validating it day by day, Lincoln is an image of evasion. In Lincoln, white Americans see themselves giving freedom, and since freedom is given by a stroke of the pen, it is not necessary for anyone to do anything. Lincoln, disengaged from Garrison, Frederick Douglass, John Brown and the men, black and white, who died in the Civil War, is a figure of pure fantasy and irrelevancy. It is Hollywood eschewed in history and history sickled of all possible meaning and content. Freedom is not and cannot be given. There is no racial Santa Claus. There is no great white father in the sky who gives out freedom out of the goodness of his heart on January 1.

Because of his undoubted largeness of character, because, when pushed against the wall, he rose to the occasion, Lincoln is dear to Americans. But so, if life has any meaning, is truth, and it was to truth that Frederick Douglass addressed himself when he rose in 1876 to eulogize Lincoln before an audience that included President Grant, members of the Supreme Court and other dignitaries. "It must be admitted," Douglass said, "truth compels me to admit even here in the presence of the monument we have erected to his memory, Abraham Lincoln was not, in the fullest sense of the word, either our man or our model. In his interests, in his associations, in his habits of thought, and in his prejudices, he was a white man. He was pre-eminently the white man's President, entirely devoted to the welfare of white men."

Lincoln's interests were not John Brown's interests, and it is to John Brown that we must go, finally, if we want to understand the limitations and the possibilities of our situation. He was of no color, John Brown, of no race or age. He was pure passion, pure

transcendence. He was an elemental force like the wind, rain and fire. "A volcano beneath a mountain of snow," someone called him.

A great gaunt man with a noble head, the look of a hawk and the intensity of a saint, John Brown lived and breathed justice. As a New England businessman, he sacrificed business and profits, using his warehouse as a station on the Underground Railroad. In the fifties, he became a full-time friend of freedom, fighting the wars in Kansas and leading a group of Negro slaves out of Missouri. Always, everywhere, John Brown was preaching the primacy of the act. "Slavery is evil," he said, "kill it."

"But we must study the problem . . ."

"Slavery is evil—kill it!"

"We will hold a conference . . ."

"Slavery is evil—kill it!"

"But our allies . . ."

Slavery is evil—kill it!

John Brown was contemptuous of conferences and study groups and graphs. "Talk, talk, talk," he said. Women were suffering, children were dying—and grown men were talking. Slavery was not a word; it was a fact, a chain, a whip, an event; and it seemed axiomatic to John Brown that facts could only be contravened by facts, a life by a life.

There was in John Brown a complete identification with the oppressed. It was his child that a slaveowner was selling; his sister who was being whipped in the field; his wife who was being raped in the gin house. It was not happening to Negroes; it was happening to him. Thus it was said that he could not bear to hear the word slave spoken. At the sound of the word, his body vibrated like the strings of a sensitive violin. John Brown was a Negro, and it was in this aspect that he suffered.

More than Frederick Douglass, more than any other Negro leader, John Brown suffered with the slave. "His zeal in the cause of freedom," Frederick Douglass said, "was infinitely superior to mine. Mine was as the taper light; his was as the burning sun. Mine was bounded by time; his stretched away to the silent shores

of eternity. I could speak for the slave; John Brown could fight for the slave. I could live for the slave; John Brown could die for the slave."

In the end, John Brown made of himself an act of transcendence. The act he chose—the tools, the means, the instruments—does not concern us here. His act, as it happened, was violent and apocalyptic; but it could have been as gentle as rain in the spring, a word perhaps, yes, or a name or a life committed to a piece of paper. Acts to the end grow out of the lineaments of men's lives and it is up to each man to create and invent not only his act but also the occasion of his act.

John Brown made his occasion, attacking the arsenal at Harpers Ferry in the hope of creating a situation in which slaves all over the South would flock to him. He begged his old friend, Frederick Douglass, to accompany him; but Douglass insisted that the plan was premature. The old white man and the young Negro argued from eight one night to three the next morning. While they argued, a tough cynical fugitive slave named Shields Green watched and weighed. After the argument, Douglass rose and asked Shields and Green if he were ready to go. Green thought for a moment and then said: "I believe I go wid de old man." Shields Green was in the mountains and could have escaped when federal troops closed in on John Brown. A man suggested flight, but Shields Green said: "I believe I go down wid de old man." And he did—all the way to the gallows.

Why did Green deliberately sacrifice his life?

Not because he was irrevocably committed to John Brown's way but because he was irrevocably committed to John Brown, because, in a horribly bloody and horribly tangible way, a prayer had been answered; because he had at long last found a man, neither black nor white, who was willing to go all the way.

Who?

"I believe I go wid de old man."

Who?

"A man for all seasons," a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day.

Who?

A John Brown or a Wendell Phillips or a Paine. It may be that America can no longer produce such men. If so, all is lost. Cursed is the nation, cursed is the people, who can no longer breed indigenous radicals when it needs them.

There was an America once that was big enough for a Wendell Phillips; there was even an America big enough for a Brown. What happened to that America?

Who killed it?

We killed it, all of us, Negroes and whites, with our petty evasions and paternalistic doles, with our sycophantic simpering and our frantic flights from truth and risk and danger. We killed it, all of us, liberals and activists with the rest. Can the stone be rolled once again from the mouth of the cave? It is my faith—and all Negroes who do not have that faith are in or on their way to prisons, asylums or Paris—that buried somewhere deep beneath the detergents and lies is the dead body of the America that made Thomas Jefferson a lawbreaker and John Brown a martyr.

Can the stone be rolled away again?

Few American white men when sufficiently drunk can resist the temptations of toying with that mad idea. They come, martinis in hand, faces flushed, guilt waving, and they say: "There was this bright little old Negro boy in my class and I wonder what happened to him." Or, since speculations about the fate of bright black boys are dangerous, "There was this little old Negro girl." They say, oh, so many things and it doesn't matter for they are not saying what they are saying. What this man or that man is saying, really, is that, "I am ashamed of myself." He is saying, "There is something deep within me." He is saying, "I am better than I am."

He may be; but saying will not make it so.

"There was this little old Negro boy . . ."

Segregation is evil—kill it!

"We will hold a conference . . ."

Segregation is evil—kill it!

"But our allies . . ."

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Segregation is evil—kill it!

For the Jew in Germany, the African in Salisbury, the Negro in New York:

Who?

A man beyond good and evil, beyond tea and sympathy, beyond black and white.

Who?

"A man for all seasons," a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day.

Who?

"I believe I go down wid de old man."

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961)

Concerning Violence

National Liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon. At whatever level we study it—relationships between individuals, new names for sports clubs, the human admixture at cocktail parties, in the police, on the directing boards of national or private banks—decolonization is quite simply the replacing of a certain “species” of men by another “species” of men. Without any period of transition, there is a total, complete, and absolute substitution. It is true that we could equally well stress the rise of a new nation, the setting up of a new state, its diplomatic relations, and its economic and political trends. But we have precisely chosen to speak of that kind of *tabula rasa* which characterizes at the outset all decolonization. Its unusual importance is that it constitutes, from the very first day, the minimum demands of the colonized. To tell the truth, the proof of success lies in a whole social structure being changed from the bottom up. The extraordinary importance of this change is that it is willed, called for, demanded. The need for this change exists in its crude state, impetuous and compelling, in the consciousness and in the lives of the men and women who are colonized. But the possibility of this change is equally experienced in the form of a terrifying future in the consciousness of another “species” of men and women: the colonizers.

Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world is, obviously, a program of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, nor of a natural shock, nor of a friendly understanding. Decolonization, as we know, is a historical process: that is to say that it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content. Decolonization is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature, which in fact owe their originality to that sort of substantification with results from and is nourished by the situation in the colonies. Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together—that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler—was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons. The settler and the native are old acquaintances. In fact, the settler is right when he speaks of knowing “them” well. For it is the settler who has brought the native into existence and who perpetuates his existence. The settler owes the fact of his very existence, that is to say, his property, to the colonial system.

Decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it influenced individuals and modifies them fundamentally. It transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actor, with the grandiose glare of history’s floodlights upon them. It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men, and with it a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men. But this creation owes nothing of its legitimacy to any supernatural power; the “thing” which has been colonized becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself.

In decolonization, there is therefore the need of a complete calling in question of the colonial situation. If we wish to describe it precisely, we might find it in the well-known words: “The last shall be first and the first last.” Decolonization is the putting into practice of this sentence. That is why, if we try to describe it, all decolonization is successful.

The naked truth of decolonization evokes for us the searing bullets and bloodstained knives which emanate from it. For if the last shall be first, this will only come to pass after a murderous and decisive struggle between the two protagonists. That affirmed intention to place the last at the head of things, and to make them climb at a pace (too quickly, some say) the well-known steps which characterize an organized society, can only triumph if we use all means to turn the scale, including, of course, that of violence.

You do not turn any society, however primitive it may be, upside down with such a program if you have not decided from the very beginning, that is to say from the actual formulation of that program, to overcome all the obstacles that you will come across in so doing. That native who decides to put the program into practice, and

to become its moving force, is ready for violence at all times. From birth it is clear to him that this narrow world, strewn with prohibitions, can only be called in question by absolute violence.

The colonial world is a world divided into compartments. It is probably unnecessary to recall the existence of native quarters and European quarters, of schools for natives and schools for Europeans; in the same way we need not recall apartheid in South Africa. Yet, if we examine closely this system of compartments, we will at least be able to reveal the lines of force it implies. This approach to the colonial world, its ordering and its geographic layout will allow us to mark out the lines on which a decolonized society will be reorganized.

The colonial world is a world cut in two. The dividing line, the frontiers are shown by barracks and police stations. In the colonies it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression. In capitalist societies the educational system, whether lay or clerical, the structure of moral reflexes handed down from father to son, the exemplary honesty of workers who are given a medal after fifty years of good and loyal service, and the affection which springs from harmonious relations and good behavior—all these aesthetic expressions of respect for the established order serve to create around the exploited person an atmosphere of submission and of inhibition which lightens the task of policing considerably. In the capitalist countries a multitude of moral teachers, counselors and “bewilderers” separate the exploited from those in power. In the colonial countries, on the contrary, the policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; he shows them up and puts them into practice with the clear conscience of an upholder of the peace; yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native.

The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed, but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rules of pure Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principal of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible, for of the two terms, one is superfluous. The settlers’ town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly lit town; the streets are covered in asphalt, and the garbage cans swallow all the leavings, unseen, unknown and hardly thought about. The settler’s feet are never visible, except perhaps in the sea; but there you’re never close enough to see them. His feet are protected by strong shoes although the streets of his town are clean and even, with no holes or stones. The settler’s town is a well-fed town, an easygoing town; its belly is always full of good things. The settler’s town is a town of white people, of foreigners.

The town belonging to the colonized people, or at least the native town, the negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where, nor how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built one on top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire. It is a town of niggers and dirty Arabs. The look that the native turns on the settler’s town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses his dreams of possession—all manner of possession: to sit at the settler’s table, to sleep in the settler’s bed, with his wife if possible. The colonized man is an envious man. And this the settler knows very well; when their glances meet he ascertains bitterly, always on the defensive, “They want to take our place.” It is true, for there is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler’s place.

This world divided into compartments, this world cut in two is inhabited by two different species. The originality of the colonial context is that economic reality, inequality, and the immense difference of ways of life never come to mask the human realities. Then you examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not belonging to a given race, a given species. In the colonies the economic substructure is also a superstructure. The cause is the consequence, you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. This is why Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem.

Everything up to and including the very nature of pre-capitalist society, so well explained by Marx, must here be thought out again. The serf is in essence different from the knight, but a reference to divine right is necessary to legitimize this statutory difference. In the colonies, the foreigner coming from another country imposed his rule by means of guns and machines. In defiance of his successful transplantation, in spite of his appropriation, the settler still remains a foreigner. It is neither the act of owning factories, nor estates, nor a bank balance which distinguishes the governing classes. The governing race is first and foremost those who come from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants, “the others.”

The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters. To wreck the colonial world is henceforward a mental picture of action which is very clear, very easy to understand and which may be assumed by each one of the individuals which constitute the colonized people. To break up the colonial world does not mean that after the frontiers have been abolished lines of communication will be set up between the two zones. The destruction of the colonial world is no more and no less than the abolition of one zone, its burial in the depths of the earth or its expulsion from the country.

The natives’ challenge to the colonial world is not a rational confrontation of points of view. It is not a treatise on the universal, but the untidy affirmation of an original idea propounded as an absolute. The colonial world is a Manichean world. It is not enough for the settler to delimit physically, that is to say with the help of the army and the police force, the place of the native. As if to show the totalitarian character of colonial exploitation the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil. Native society is not simply described as a society lacking in values. It is not enough for the colonist to affirm that those values have disappeared from, or still better never existed in, the colonial world. The native is declared insensible to ethics; he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is, let us dare to admit, the enemy of values, and in this sense he is the absolute evil. He is the corrosive element, destroying all that comes near him; he is the deforming element, disfiguring all that has to do with beauty or morality; he is the depository of maleficent powers, the unconscious and irretrievable instrument of blind forces. Monsieur Meyer could thus state seriously in the French National Assembly that the Republic must not be prostituted by allowing the Algerian people to become part of it. All values, in fact, are irrevocably poisoned and diseased as soon as they are allowed in contact with the colonized race. The customs of the colonized people, their traditions, their myths—above all, their myths—are the very sign of that poverty of spirit and of their constitutional depravity. That is why we must put the DDT which destroys parasites, the bearers of disease, on the same level as the Christian religion which wages war on embryonic heresies and instincts, and on evil as yet unborn. The recession of yellow fever and the advance of evangelization form part of the same balance sheet. But the triumphant *communiqués* from the mission are in fact a source of information concerning the implantation of foreign influences in the core of the colonized people. I speak of the Christian religion, and no one need be astonished. The Church in the colonies is the white people’s Church, the foreigner’s Church. She does not call the native to God’s ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor. And as we know, in this matter many are called but few are chosen.

At times this Manicheism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly, it turns him into an animal. In fact, the terms the settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms. He speaks of the yellow man’s reptilian motions, of the stink of the native quarter, of breeding swarms, of foulness, of spawn, of gesticulations. When the settler seeks to describe the native fully in exact terms he constantly refers to the bestiary. The European rarely hits on a picturesque style; but the native, who knows what is in the mind of the settler, guesses at once what he is thinking of. Those hordes of vital statistics, those hysterical masses, those faces bereft of all humanity, those distended bodies which are like nothing on earth, that mob without beginning or end, those children who seem to belong to nobody, that laziness stretched out in the sun, that vegetative rhythm of life—all this forms part of the colonial vocabulary. General de Gaulle speaks of “the yellow multitudes” and François Mauriac of the black, brown, and yellow masses which soon will be unleashed. The native knows all this, and laughs to himself every time he spots an allusion to the animal world in the other’s words. For he knows

that he is not an animal; and it is precisely at the moment he realizes his humanity that he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure its victory.

As soon as the native begins to pull on his moorings, and to cause anxiety to the settler, he is handed over to well-meaning souls who in cultural congresses point out to him the specificity and wealth of Western values. But every time Western values are mentioned they produce in the native a sort of stiffening or muscular lockjaw. During the period of decolonization, the native's reason is appealed to. He is offered definite values, he is told frequently that decolonization need not mean regression, and that he must put his trust in qualities which are well-tried, solid, and highly esteemed. But it so happens that when the native hears a speech about Western culture he pulls out his knife—or at least he makes sure it is within reach. The violence with which the supremacy of white values is affirmed and the aggressiveness which has permeated the victory of these values over the ways of life and of thought of the native mean that, in revenge, the native laughs in mockery when Western values are mentioned in front of him. In the colonial context the settler only ends his work of breaking in the native when the latter admits loudly and intelligibly the supremacy of the white man's values. In the period of decolonization, the colonized masses mock at these very values, insult them, and vomit them up.

This phenomenon is ordinarily masked because, during the period of decolonization, certain colonized intellectuals have begun a dialogue with the bourgeoisie of the colonialist country. During this phase, the indigenous population is discerned only as an indistinct mass. The few native personalities whom the colonialist bourgeois have come to know here and there have not sufficient influence on that immediate discernment to give rise to nuances. On the other hand, during the period of liberation, the colonialist bourgeoisie looks feverishly for contacts with the elite and it is with these elite that the familiar dialogue concerning values is carried on. The colonialist bourgeoisie, when it realizes that it is impossible for it to maintain its domination over the colonial countries, decides to carry out a rearguard action with regard to culture, values, techniques, and so on. Now what we must never forget is that the immense majority of colonized peoples is oblivious to these problems. For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity. But this dignity has nothing to do with the dignity of the human individual: for that human individual has never heard tell of it. All that the native has seen in his country is that they can freely arrest him, beat him, starve him: and no professor of ethics, no priest has ever come to be beaten in his place, nor to share their bread with him. As far as the native is concerned, morality is very concrete; it is to silence the settler's defiance, to break his flaunting violence—in a word, to put him out of the picture. The well-known principle that all men are equal will be illustrated in the colonies from the moment that the native claims that he is the equal of the settler. One step more, and he is ready to fight to be more than the settler. In fact, he has already decided to eject him and to take his place; as we see it, it is a whole material and moral universe which is breaking up. The intellectual who for his part has followed the colonialist with regard to the universal abstract will fight in order that the settler and the native may live together in peace in a new world. But the thing he does not see, precisely because he is permeated by colonialism and all its way of thinking, is that the settler, from the moment that the colonial context disappears, has no longer any interest in remaining or in coexisting. It is not by chance that, even before any negotiation between the Algerian and French governments has taken place, the European minority which calls itself "liberal" has already made its position clear: it demands nothing more nor less than twofold citizenship. By setting themselves apart in an abstract manner, the liberals try to force the settler into taking a very concrete jump into the unknown. Let us admit it, the settler knows perfectly well that no phraseology can be a substitute for reality.

Thus the native discovers that his life, his breath, his beating heart are the same as those of the settler. He finds out that the settler's skin is not of any more value than a native's skin; and it must be said that this discovery shakes the world in a very necessary manner. All the new, revolutionary assurance of the native stems from it. For if, in fact, my life is worth as much as the settler's, his glance no longer shrivels me up nor freezes me, and his voice no longer turns me into stone. I am no longer on tenterhooks in his presence; in fact, I don't give a damn for him. Not only does his presence no longer trouble me, but I am already preparing such efficient ambushes for him that soon there will be no way out but that of flight.

We have said that the colonial context is characterized by the dichotomy which it imposes upon the whole people. Decolonization unifies that people by the radical decision to remove from it its heterogeneity, and by unifying it on a national, sometimes a racial, basis. We know the fierce words of the Senegalese patriots, referring to the maneuvers of their president, Senghor: “We have demanded that the higher posts should be given to Africans; and now Senghor is Africanizing the Europeans.” That is to say that the native can see clearly and immediately if the decolonization has come to pass or not, for his minimum demands are simply that the last shall be first.

But the native intellectual brings variants to this petition, and, in fact, he seems to have good reasons: higher civil servants, technicians, specialists—all seem to be needed. Now, the ordinary native interprets these unfair promotions as so many acts of sabotage, and he is often heard to declare: “It wasn’t worth while, then, our becoming independent...”

In the colonial countries where a real struggle for freedom has taken place, where the blood of the people has flowed and where the length of the period of armed warfare has favored the backward surge of intellectuals toward bases grounded in the people, we can observe a genuine eradication of the superstructure built by these intellectuals from the bourgeois colonialist environment. The colonialist bourgeoisie, in its narcissistic dialogue, expounded by the members of its universities, had in fact deeply implanted in the minds of the colonized intellectual that the essential qualities remain eternal in spite of all the blunders men may make: the essential qualities of the West of course. The native intellectual accepted the cogency of these ideas, and deep down in his brain you could always find a vigilant sentinel ready to defend the Greco-Latin pedestal. Now it so happens that during the struggle for liberation, at the moment that the native intellectual comes into touch again with his people, this artificial sentinel is turned into dust. All the Mediterranean values—the triumph of the human individual, of clarity, and of beauty—become lifeless, colorless knickknacks. All those speeches seem like collections of dead words; those values which seemed to uplift the soul are revealed as worthless, simply because they have nothing to do with the concrete conflict in which the people is engaged.

Individualism is the first to disappear. The native intellectual had learnt from his masters that the individual ought to express himself truly. The colonialist bourgeoisie had hammered into the native’s mind the idea of a society of individuals where each person shuts himself up in his own subjectivity, and whose only wealth is individual thought. Now the native who has the opportunity to return to the people during the struggle for freedom will discover the falseness of this theory. The very forms of organization of the struggle will suggest to him a different vocabulary. Brother, sister, friend—these are words outlawed by the colonialist bourgeoisie, because for them my brother is my purse, my friend is part of my scheme for getting on. The native intellectual takes part, in a sort of auto-da-fé, in the destruction of all his idols: egoism, recrimination that springs from pride, and the childish stupidity of those who always want to have the last word. Such a colonized intellectual, dusted over by colonial culture, will in the same way discover the substance of village assemblies, the cohesion of people’s committees, and the extraordinary fruitfulness of local meetings and groupments. Henceforward, the interests of one will be the interests of all, for in concrete fact everyone will be discovered by the troops, everyone will be massacred—or everyone will be saved. The motto “look out for yourself,” the atheist’s method of salvation, is in this context forbidden.

PART V: HOW REVOLUTIONS ARE MADE

Questions:

1. Who were the Jacobins? Was James justified in referring to the Saint Domingue revolutionaries as "Black Jacobins"?
2. Do you agree with DuBois' statement [page 358] that Reconstruction was an attempt at a dictatorship of labor?
3. Compare DuBois' remark [pages 319-20] about the attitude of white Americans with James' description of Parisian attitudes [pages 139-40]. How do you explain the transformations in the thinking of the white masses? How do you explain their later relapse?

38. *Report of Committee on Reconstruction*, Part III, pp. 65, 66 (Judge Humphreys).
39. Speech of March 19, 1867.
40. Winston, *Andrew Johnson*, p. 343.
41. Seward, *Works*, VII, p. 532.
42. McPherson, *History of U. S. During Reconstruction*, pp. 60, 61.
43. Cf. Oberholzer, *A History of the U. S. Since the Civil War*, I, p. 171.
44. Pierce, *Charles Sumner*, IV, p. 276.
45. *Congressional Globe*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, Part I, p. 183.
46. McPherson, *History of United States During Reconstruction*, pp. 51, 52.
47. This account of the Committee of Fifteen mainly follows Kendrick, *Journal of the Joint Committee of Fifteen on Reconstruction*, Part I, pp. 356-358.
48. *Congressional Globe*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, Part I, pp. 356-358.
49. Article 4, Section 2, of the Constitution.
50. *Congressional Globe*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, Part I, p. 536.
51. *New York Nation*, Jan. 11, 1866.
52. Blaine, *Twenty Years of Congress*, Vol. II, pp. 146-147.
53. Beale, *The Critical Year*, p. 229.
54. *Congressional Globe*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, Part I, p. 673.
55. *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, p. 442.
56. *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, p. 467.
57. McPherson, *History of United States During Reconstruction*, pp. 52-55.
58. *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, pp. 467-468.
59. *Congressional Globe*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, Part IV, p. 3148.
60. Kendrick, *Journal of the Joint Committee of Fifteen on Reconstruction*, p. 300.
61. Kendrick, *Journal of the Joint Committee of Fifteen on Reconstruction*, p. 302.
62. Fack, *Adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment* (Johns Hopkins University Studies, XXVI, p. 128).
63. *Congressional Globe*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, Part III, pp. 2459, 2544-2545.
64. *Congressional Globe*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, Part III, p. 2545.
65. *Congressional Globe*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, Part IV, p. 2987.
66. Ames, *Amendments to the Constitution*, p. 220.
67. Seward, *Works*, III, p. 24.
68. McPherson, *History of United States During Reconstruction*, pp. 88-93.
69. McCall, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 275-76.
70. Pierce, *Charles Sumner*, p. 359.
71. *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, p. 474.
72. McPherson, *History of United States During Reconstruction*, p. 222.
73. Warmoth, *War Politics and Reconstruction*, p. 50.
74. McPherson, *History of United States During Reconstruction*, pp. 129, 133, 137.
75. Oberholzer, *History of U. S. After the Civil War*, Vol. I, pp. 405, 406.
76. Morse, *Thaddeus Stevens*, pp. 282, 283.
77. *New York Nation*, Sept. 28, 1865; Cf. *New York Herald*, Sept. 20, 1865.
78. *North American Review*, Vol. 102, p. 520.

IX. THE PRICE OF DISASTER

The price of the disaster of slavery and civil war was the necessity of quickly assimilating into American democracy a mass of ignorant laborers in whose hands alone for the moment lay the power of preserving the ideals of popular government; of overthrowing a slave economy and establishing upon it an industry primarily for the profit of the workers. It was this price which in the end America refused to pay and today suffers for that refusal.

The year 1867 comes. The election of 1866 has sent to the 40th Congress a Republican majority of 42 against 11 in the Senate and 143 against 49 in the House. The decisive battle of Reconstruction looms. Abolition-democracy demands for Negroes physical freedom, civil rights, economic opportunity and education and the right to vote, as a matter of sheer human justice and right. Industry demands profits and is willing to use for this end Negro freedom or Negro slavery, votes for Negroes or Black Codes.

The South, beaten in war, and socially and economically disorganized, was knocking at the doors of Congress with increased political power and with a determination to restore land monopoly, and to reorganize its agrarian industry, and to attempt to restore its capital by reducing public taxation to the lowest point. Moreover, it had not given up the idea that the capital which it had lost through the legal abolition of slavery, should and might be reimbursed from the Federal Treasury. Especially it was determined to use for its own ends the increased political power based on voiceless Negroes. Finally, there was the West, beginning to fear the grip of land and transportation monopoly, rebelling against the power of Eastern industry, and staggering under the weight of public debt and public taxation.

In the midst of these elements stood Andrew Johnson, with the tremendous power which lay in his hands as commander-in-chief of the Army, with the large patronage which arose through the expansion of governmental functions during the war, and with a stubborn will and a resourceful and astute Secretary of State. Logically, Andrew Johnson as an early leader of land reform, and of democracy in industry for the peasant-farmer and the laboring class, was in position to lead the democracy of the West. But perversely, he had been induced by flattery, by his Southern birth, and his dislike of New Eng-

land puritanism, to place himself at the head of the Southerners. Between the program of the South and that of the West, then, there was absolutely no point of alliance. The South represented the extreme of reactionary capitalism based upon land and on the ownership of labor. It showed no sign of any more sympathetic with the labor movement in the North or the extension of democratic methods than it had before the war. There was not a single labor voice raised in the Southern post-war clamor. Yet Johnson could not see this. He continued to flirt with Western liberalism at the very time he was surrendering completely to Southern reaction and ultra-conservatism.

In his advice to the South, he no longer contemplated Negro suffrage in any form, and he said nothing of poor whites. In 1867, Negro votes were refused in the municipal elections in Virginia. Judge Moore asked President Johnson concerning the right of freedmen to participate in these elections, but Johnson gave no answer. On the other hand, in an interview with Charles Halpine, March 5, he sought again to make alliance with the Western unrest. He said: "To the people the national debt is a thing of debt to be paid; but to the aristocracy of bonds and national securities it is a property of more than \$2,500,000,000, from which a revenue of \$180,000,000 a year is to be received into their pockets. So we now find that an aristocracy of the South, based on \$3,000,000,000 in Negroes, who were a productive class, has disappeared, and their place in political control of the country is assumed by an aristocracy based on nearly \$3,000,000,000 of national debt—a thing which is not producing anything, but which goes on steadily every year, and must go on for all time until the debt is paid, absorbing and taxing at the rate of six or seven per cent a year for every \$100 bond that is represented in its aggregation.

"The war of finance is the next war we have to fight; and every blow struck against my efforts to uphold a strict construction of the laws and the Constitution is in reality a blow in favor of repudiating the national debt. The manufacturers and men of capital in the eastern States and the States along the Atlantic seaboard—a mere strip or fringe on the broad mantle of our country, if you will examine the map—these are in favor of high protective, and, in fact, prohibitory tariffs, and also favor a contraction of the currency. But against both measures the interests and votes of the great producing and non-manufacturing States of the West stand irrevocably arrayed, and a glance at the map and the census statistics of the last twenty years will tell every one who is open to conviction how that war must end."¹

This was a maladroit argument. It placed the national debt against the loss of slave property as equally sinister phenomena. It suggested partial repudiation and thus frightened and antagonized investors.

It rightly protested against the extravagance of war-time finance, but this protest came from a man who was now the acknowledged leader of property and reaction in the South. What basis of alliance could there be between those determined to control and exploit freed labor in the South and those who wished to fight exploitation and monopoly in the West?

Moreover, in his effort to conciliate and lead the West, Johnson attacked the most powerful enemy before him. That enemy was not abolition-democracy, as he falsely conceived. It was a tremendous, new, and rising power of organized wealth and capitalist industry in the North. Monopoly profits from investments were increasing, and destined to increase, and their increase depended upon a high protective tariff, the validity of the public debt, and the control of the national banks and currency. All of these things were threatened by the South and by Andrew Johnson as leader of the South. On the other hand, humanitarian radicalism, so far as the Negro was concerned, was not only completely harnessed to capital and property in the North, but its program for votes for Negroes more and more became manifestly the only protection upon which Northern industry could depend. The Abolitionists were not enemies of capital.

"The American Abolitionists were typical bourgeois-democratic revolutionists under specific American conditions. They felt their movement linked up with the great humanitarian causes of the day (the 'labor question,' the 'peace question,' the emancipation of women, temperance, philanthropy) and with the bourgeois revolutionary movement in Europe. He hailed the revolution (of 1848) in France; Moorfield Storey tells of Sumner, 'and similar outbreaks in other countries as parts of the great movement for freedom, of which the anti-slavery agitation in America was another part.'"²

But the former Abolitionists were gradually developing. Under the leadership of Stevens and Sumner, they were beginning to realize the economic foundation of the revolution necessary in the South. They saw that the Negro needed land and education and that his vote would only be valuable to him as it opened the doors to a firm economic foundation and real intelligence. If now they could get the industrial North, not simply to give the Negro the vote, but to give him land and give him schools, the battle would be won. Here, however, they were only partially successful. Stevens could not get them to listen to his plan of land distribution, and Sumner failed in his effort to provide for a national system of Negro schools. But they could and did get the aid of industry, commerce, and labor for Negro suffrage, and this vast step forward they gladly took. Public opinion followed philanthropy, but it was guided by Big Business.

In the meantime, the nation was in the midst of the transition period. Nothing could be settled until the fate of the Fourteenth Amendment was known, and during this time of waiting, from July 16, 1866, until July 20, 1868, the status of the South and its relation to the Union was unsettled. Slowly, the nation voted on the Fourteenth Amendment, destined to curb the political power of the South. Most of New England and two Western states ratified it in the summer and fall of 1866. Before January, seven Southern states rejected it almost unanimously, and in the first three months of 1867, the whole South and the Border States had pronounced against it. They said, in effect, no Negro citizens nor voters; no guaranty of civil rights to Negroes; and all political power based on the counting of the full Negro population. The North, by 1868, had ratified the Fourteenth Amendment unanimously, although New Jersey, Ohio and Oregon made attempts to reverse their decision, when Democrats gained power in those states.

There was not only the vast final problem of economics and government—there was an immediate transition problem. In the interval during which the nation was awaiting the fate of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, what was to be the status of the South? The South was in the midst of industrial, civil and political anarchy. Crime, force, and murder, disorganized and wandering laborers, unorganized industry, were widely in evidence. The United States as a sovereign nation could declare the Southern states, where rebellion had occurred, unorganized territory, and could rule them by civil government, backed by Federal police. By those who regarded the Constitution as a fetish, this might be pronounced sacrilegious, but to ordinary human beings it was by far the best and sanest thing that the nation could have done, and it would have saved the United States and the whole world untold injury, retrogression and world war.

This was the plan of both Stevens and Sumner, and constitutional lawyers have pronounced it reasonable. With some reluctance, the nation refused to do this while the South and its friends howled in opposition. It was, one would have thought, an unhallowed attempt to rock the foundations of the universe and overthrow the kingdom of Almighty God. The refusal of the nation was chiefly because the new industry, the money-making financiers and organizers of a vast economic empire, hesitated at a government guardianship of labor and control of industry on a scale that might embarrass future freedom of exploitation, and certainly would increase present taxation.

Many advocates of abolition-democracy were also doubtful. They were still under the "freedom" cry of the eighteenth century and

obsessed by the American Assumption of the nineteenth. They were still, on the whole, afraid of the full logic of democracy and the ability of the state to secure servants as honest and efficient as private industry. Only their most courageous leaders dared all.

The easiest way out, then, was to prolong the military rule already established as a necessity of the war. This was cheapest and easiest; but also it was of necessity temporary. It must be a step toward civil rule and it must inaugurate civil rule. The law of March 2, 1867, was enacted. It provided for Negro suffrage. What else could it have provided for? If it had confined the vote to whites, not only would the anti-Negro legislation be confirmed, but the gift of additional political power to the South to be used against Northern industry and against democracy would be outright and irrevocable. Johnson vetoed the bill, and when it was passed over his veto, had recourse to executive action which would nullify it. Eventually it was this that led to the attempt to impeach him.

Let us now, more in detail, study the facts of this development. The second session of the 39th Congress assembled in December, 1866, with a distinct mandate from the people. This mandate called for the re-organization of the Southern states on the basis of the Fourteenth Amendment, and for the definiteness of this mandate the South had only itself and Andrew Johnson to blame.

From 1864 to 1868, by a succession of elections, with wide publicity on both sides, and unusually full discussion, national public opinion had come to these decisions by a large majority.

1. The emancipated slave must be protected because he had helped save the Union which slavery had disrupted.

2. The first protection for the slave was a legal status of freedom. This the South opposed in the fifteen former slave states, including the Border States. Four flatly refused to accept the Thirteenth Amendment. Three others accepted but only on condition that freedom should not imply full civil and political rights. Eight states accepted the Thirteenth Amendment, but five of these and the three which accepted on condition, acted under pressure from Johnson, and their action expressed the opinion of a minority of the former voting population, and for this reason these states feared to refer their action to popular approval.

3. A legal status of freedom without actual civil rights would mean almost nothing. The answer of the South to a proposal of civil rights was the Black Codes, which established a new status of slavery with a modified slave trade.

4. The Freedmen's Bureau and the Civil Rights Bill represented an attempt at Federal intervention to enforce freedom by Federal law.

The South bitterly opposed these attempts on the part of the national government and declared with Johnson that such attempts were unconstitutional.

5. To set this point at rest, the Fourteenth Amendment was proposed which made Negroes citizens, guaranteed them civil rights by national law, and political rights, if they were counted as a basis of representation in Congress. The South promptly rejected this overture unanimously, except in Tennessee, and there the majority of white voters had to be disfranchised before the acceptance was carried through.

But behind all this, and explaining this interest in the Negro on the part of most Northerners, was a growing conviction that an arrogant South was returning to Congress with increased political power; that its leaders were essentially the same men who had disrupted the Union and precipitated a costly and bloody war; that there was no reason to suppose that these men had changed their convictions in the slightest or surrendered for a moment their determination to dominate the country, and fight monopoly in industry with monopoly in agriculture.

In the face of their fatal failure, Southerners were demanding increased political power, and that political power could and in all probability would be used for everything disadvantageous to the majority of the nation: it would be used against the spread of democratic ideals; it would be used for further increasing the political power of the South; it would be used against industry, property, and capital as buttressed by the tariff, the national banks, and the public debt.

It was in vain that before, during and since the war, the North had offered to compromise with this unyielding bloc. There was only one defense against the power of the South and while that was revolutionary and hitherto undreamed of, it was the only way, and it could not be stopped by the stubbornness of one narrow-minded man. That was Negro suffrage.

Senator Sherman of Ohio said March 11, 1867: "A year ago I was not in favor of extending enforced Negro suffrage upon the Southern states."³ But the rejection of the Fourteenth Amendment led him to give his support.

There was evidently an understanding among the Republican Senators and Representatives that if the legislatures of the Southern states organized under Johnson's scheme of Reconstruction accepted the Fourteenth Amendment and thus would say that either they would allow the Negro to vote or, in case they did not allow him, would forego representation based upon his numbers; then these states would be recognized and admitted to Congress. This was more than fair to

the South. Charles Sumner to be sure would not consent to it and Stevens did not like it; but the industrial North was willing to throw the Negro over on these terms.⁴

However, with the exception of Tennessee, the Southern states rejected the Fourteenth Amendment almost unanimously and insisted upon the Black Codes, and accompanied their demand by widespread violence.

Meantime in minor measures the sentiment for Negro suffrage was seen to be crystallizing. Colorado had sought admission in 1866 and had less than 100 Negroes. Sumner opposed the application because of the small population and chiefly because the suffrage was confined to white males. He spoke March 12 and 13, April 17, 19 and 24 on the subject. The bill passed the Senate despite Sumner. In the House, the attempt to strike out the word "white" as a qualification for voters was defeated. The President vetoed the bill on account of insufficient population.

Next session, Sumner's amendment prevailed, but the President again vetoed the bill. Sumner made at the close of the session an unsuccessful attempt to make the same condition in the bill to admit Nebraska but failed; the President did not sign that bill. At the next session, the bill with Negro suffrage was passed over the President's veto. Sumner opposed the admission of Tennessee because Negroes were denied the right to vote. He failed to influence public sentiment but made his opponents apologetic.⁵

Sumner wrote to F. W. Bird, January 10, 1867: "I think you will be satisfied with the result on Nebraska and Colorado. The declaration that there shall be no exclusion from the elective franchise on account of color is not in the form which I preferred; but you have the declaration, which to my mind is a great gain. Is it not? And thus ends a long contest, where at first I was alone. Mr. Stewart of Nevada, who is sitting near me, says that 'it cannot be said now that the Republican party is not committed to Negro suffrage.' You have (1) The District Bill; (2) The Nebraska Bill; (3) The Colorado Bill; and (4) The Territorial Bill passed today, declaring that in the territories there shall be no exclusion from the suffrage on account of color."

In February, 1867, from the Committee of Fifteen, Stevens presented the leading Reconstruction measure. This measure declared that life and property were not safe in the former Confederate states, and that good order had to be enforced until loyal governments could be legally established. It divided the Confederate states into five military divisions: one, Virginia; two, North and South Carolina; three, Georgia, Alabama and Florida; four, Mississippi and Arkansas; five,

Louisiana and Texas. A general with sufficient forces was to be assigned to each of these districts. These generals might use the United States civil courts to enforce the laws, but if these were not effective, they might govern through military commissions. The sentences of commissions must be approved by the commanding officers. United States courts should issue no writs of habeas corpus against the acts of these commissions.

This bill established martial law, after the President had declared the war was ended. It put the appointing of the district military masters in the hands of the General of the Army instead of the President, and suspended the writ of habeas corpus. Congress hesitated at these thorough-going terms. Blaine suggested an Amendment which would provide a way of escape from martial rule by promising admission when a state adopted the Fourteenth Amendment and provided for Negro suffrage. Stevens refused to accept this and the bill was passed February 13.

The Senate began to consider the bill February 15, and stayed in session until three o'clock in the morning. Resort was had to a party caucus, the Republican Senators meeting at 11 A.M., February 16. Sherman, Sumner, Fessenden and four others were put on a sub-committee to revise the House bill, and remained in session a greater part of the afternoon. The bill was changed so as to restore the appointment of heads of the military districts, and adopt the Blaine amendment. The House had already passed Eliot's bill admitting Louisiana with Negro suffrage and Sumner wished that taken as a model. Sumner asked for Negro suffrage but only one of his committee supported him. At 5 P.M. the caucus met and Sumner renewed his proposition, excluding discrimination as to race and color for the basis of suffrage. It was carried in the caucus, 15 to 13 or 14. This action committed the Republicans to the requirement of suffrage irrespective of race or color in the election of delegates to the Reconstruction conventions, and as the basis of suffrage for the constitutions of the rebel states. Senator Wilson of Massachusetts said that "then and there in that small room, in that caucus, was decided the greatest pending question of the North American continent."⁶ It was accepted by the caucus, although Fessenden was greatly displeased. He left the caucus and sought to defeat it by personal appeals. This led to an acrimonious debate in Congress, February 19, but the bill passed after a night's session at 6:22 Sunday morning, February 17.

Congress had a difficult time passing this Reconstruction bill. The House rejected the Senate bill and time was flying. Finally agreement was reached February 20 and Congress expired by limitation on March 4. The essential parts of the bill on Negro suffrage remained.

The President by taking the full time allowed by law in returning his veto would leave only two days for Congress to pass the bill over his veto. Johnson and Seward immediately saw this and the veto was held up to the last moment, reaching the House on the afternoon of March 2. The President said that the bill placed the people of ten states under the complete domination of military rulers; these states had made provisions for the preservation of order, yet it was proposed to put them under military law; "the Negroes have not asked for the privilege of voting, and the vast majority of them have no idea of what it means"; we carried on a four years' war to punish the "crime of defying a constitution; if we now ourselves defy the constitution we prove that they were in fact fighting for Negro liberty." Stevens demanded immediate consideration of the veto but allowed short statements from Democratic members who declared this bill a death knell of republican liberty.

One opponent declared that the bill should not pass unless he was "overpowered from physical exhaustion, or restrained by the rules of the House." Stevens, in closing the debate, said that he had listened to the gentlemen, because he appreciated "the melancholy feelings with which they are approaching this funeral of the nation," but as he desired the passage of the bill he asked Mr. Blaine to move a suspension of the rules. Mr. Blaine accordingly made the motion, and after an ineffectual attempt at filibustering, the bill was passed over the veto by a vote of 135 yeas to 48 nays. The Senate speedily took similar action, and the Reconstruction bill became a law.

As finally passed, the bill set up the five districts, declaring that no adequate protection for life and property existed there. The President instead of the General of the Army was to assign an army officer to each of these districts. These commanders might rule by martial law, but sentence of death had to be approved by the President. To escape from this regime, there must be universal suffrage without regard to race or color, and the framing of a state constitution with a convention composed of delegates not disqualified by participation in rebellion. The constitution so adopted must provide for universal suffrage, and this constitution must be ratified by a majority of the voters. The constitution must also be approved by Congress. The state could not be admitted until the Fourteenth Amendment had been approved by three-fourths of the states of the United States. Thus Congress avoided making the admission of the states conditional upon their individual acceptance of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Still Andrew Johnson was not beaten; as commander-in-chief of the army he could execute the Reconstruction legislation and he could throw its interpretation into the courts with a good chance of favor-

able decision; just as the faltering attempt of Congress to give the Negroes land was at last utterly nullified by Johnson's edicts of restoration, so there was equal chance to frustrate Congress in restoring states' functions.

Congress tried to tie Johnson's hands with the Tenure of Office Bill. It was introduced in December, 1866. The Constitution gave the President no express power to dismiss persons from office. But custom and logic had allowed it. The Republicans feared that by dismissal from office Johnson would gain control of the entire executive division of the government at a time of crisis. The bill proposed that all officers appointed with the consent of the Senate could be removed only with the consent of the Senate, except in the case of cabinet officers. The House insisted on including cabinet officers and finally the bill was passed providing that cabinet officers should hold their offices during the term of the President by whom they were appointed and one month thereafter; during that time they could be removed only with the consent of the Senate. This measure went to the President on the 20th of February, together with the Reconstruction bill, and was vetoed March 2. The veto argued, from statutes and uniform practice, that Congress had no power to force the President to retain in office against his judgment subordinates whom he had appointed.

Johnson said with curious logic: "Whenever administration fails, or seems to fail, in securing any of the great ends for which republican government is established, the proper course seems to be to renew the original spirit and forms of the Constitution itself." Who was to be the judge of the "original spirit"—Andrew Johnson or the Congress? Which was to yield? Congress must yield to one stubborn, narrow-minded man or it was forced by the necessity of controlling the Executive, to adopt this revolutionary measure.

Sumner said in December, 1866:

"It is possible that the President may be impeached. If we go forward and supersede the sham governments set up in the rebel states, we encounter the appointing power of the President, who would put in office men who sympathize with him. It is this consideration which makes ardent representatives say that he must be removed. Should this be attempted, a new question will be presented."

Through fear of Johnson's actions, the 40th Congress assembled in special session immediately after adjournment of the 39th, so that Congress was practically in continuous session and there was no interregnum during which Johnson could exercise his uncurbed power.

The new Congress immediately passed a supplementary Reconstruction bill to implement the main measure. This bill laid down a plan of registration for all male citizens, twenty-one years of age and over,

who could take the oath of loyalty, and made it the duty of the commanding generals to order elections and choose delegates for constitutional conventions. If the voters favored such conventions, constitutions were to be formed and if adopted transmitted to Congress. The whole machinery of election was placed in the hands of the commanding generals.

The veto of this supplemental bill came immediately. The President in effect declared that the rise of the masses of black labor to political power was "an untried experiment" which "threatened" the whites with "even worse wrongs" than disfranchisement for attempted rebellion, and made "their condition the most deplorable to which any people can be reduced." And this from the life-long man of the people and champion of the rights of the poor!

It was bad enough when Johnson confined himself to speeches, as at Antietam, but when he came to action, Congress was further aroused. First, June 20, he issued liberal instructions concerning the loyal oath and the duty of commanding generals. He decided on advice of his Attorney General, Stanbery, that those taking the oath of loyalty were judges of their own honesty and could not be questioned by the Board of Registration; that actual disfranchisement for rebellion could only be made valid by law or court decision. Disloyal sentiments alone did not involve disfranchisement.

Moreover, in appointing generals, Johnson evidently proposed to appoint, as far as possible, generals who were sympathetic with the South. In July he removed Sheridan from Louisiana and Texas and appointed first General Thomas, a Virginia Democrat, in his place, and finally General Hancock, a loyal follower of Johnson. The removal of Sheridan caused great excitement. The Loyal Legion held a great meeting asking for the immediate summoning of Congress and the deposition of the President. He replaced General Sickles in the Carolinas with General Canby. Sheridan and Sickles were given posts in the North.

These instructions were published June 20 and Congress replied by the Act of July 19, 1867. This act specifically included Virginia, North Carolina, Louisiana and Arkansas in the states to be reconstructed; it provided that all the so-called governments in the South should be subject to the orders of the District Commanders and the General of the army and not of the President. The bill made the Boards of Registration judges of fact in regard to persons seeking to take the oath of loyalty and it extended the time limit for registration of voters.

The bill passed the Houses July 13, and was vetoed July 19. Johnson protested against the attempt of the Federal Government to carry on state governments, and especially against the invasion of the con-

situational powers of the President. His words were bitter: "Whilst I hold the chief executive authority of the United States, whilst the obligation rests upon me to see that all the laws are faithfully executed, I can never willingly surrender that trust or the powers given for its execution. I can never give my assent to be made responsible for the faithful execution of laws, and at the same time surrender that trust and the powers which accompany it to any other executive officer, high or low, or to any number of executive officers." The bill was passed over the veto by both Houses by overwhelming majorities, and talk of impeachment started anew.

The discussion which has raged round the Reconstruction legislation is of the same metaphysical stripe characterizing all fetish-worship of the Constitution. If one means by "constitutional" something provided for in that instrument or foreseen by its authors or reasonably implicit in its words, then the Reconstruction Acts were undoubtedly unconstitutional; and so, for that matter, was the Civil War. In fact, the main measures of government during 1861-1870 were "unconstitutional." The only action possibly contemplated by the authors of the Constitution was secession; that action, the constitutional fathers feared and deprecated, but their instrument did not forbid it and distinctly implied the legality of a state withdrawing from the "more perfect union."

Certainly no one could argue that the founders contemplated civil war to preserve the Union or that the Constitution was a pro-slavery document. Yet, unconstitutionally, the South made it a pro-slavery document and unconstitutionally the North prevented the destruction of the Union on account of slavery; and after the war revolutionary measures rebuilt what revolution had disrupted, and formed a new United States on a basis broader than the old Constitution and different from its original conception.

And why not? No more idiotic program could be laid down than to require a people to follow a written rule of government 90 years old, if that rule had been definitely broken in order to preserve the unity of the government and to destroy an economic anachronism. In such a crisis legalists may insist that consistency with precedent is more important than firm and far-sighted rebuilding. But manifestly, it is not. Rule-following, legal precedence, and political consistency are not more important than right, justice and plain common-sense. Through the cobwebs of such political subtlety, Stevens crashed and said that military rule must continue in the South until order was restored, democracy established, and the political power built on slavery smashed. Further than this, both he and Sumner knew that land and education for black and white labor was necessary.

On the first day of the second session of the Thirty-Ninth Congress, Sumner was on hand with his bill for establishing universal suffrage in the District of Columbia. He had accepted a place on the Committee of the District of Columbia, in addition to his other duties, to secure Negro suffrage. The Committee reported a bill in December, 1866. Reading and writing as a qualification was moved as an amendment but was rejected by a vote of 15-19. Sumner voted "No." The bill did not reach a final vote but came up again December 10, 1867, when it passed after four days' debate by a vote of 32-13. The next day it passed the House, and went to the President.

Johnson and Seward, in the veto, kept hammering at the old thesis. Northern states will not allow Negro suffrage to be forced upon them against their will. The Negro population of the District has recently been greatly increased by migration. Their rights can be protected in the District without the right of suffrage, just as much as in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana, which refuse Negroes the right to vote. Because of slavery, the Negro is not as well fitted to vote as the intelligent foreigner. And yet five years' residence and a knowledge of our government are required of the latter.

The bill was re-passed over the President's veto, January 7, and after it came the first proposal to impeach the President. "A great step along the path to universal suffrage with out color distinctions has just been taken in the House of Representatives, in its session of the 18th. The bill giving the right to vote to the blacks in the District of Columbia passed with a majority of 114 to 54. An anxious crowd, of whites and blacks mixed, filled the galleries of the House and all the approaches to the Capitol, and the passage of the bill was hailed with a great outburst of frenzied applause."⁸

Three days after the 40th Congress opened, Sumner offered a series of resolutions to provide homes and schools for freedmen. This supplemented the Freedmen's Bureau law and provided a permanent policy of national aid to education and economic redress of the robbery of slavery. The resolutions did not come to a vote; Sumner then tried to amend the Reconstruction Acts of March 22 and July 19 by provisions for free schools in the South without discrimination as to race. A tie vote defeated this effort, although a majority of the Republicans stood by him. He tried again and failed July 11 and July 13. "His disappointment at his failure in 1867 to secure schools and homes for the freedmen was so keen that he left the Senate chamber, and when he reached his house, his grief found vent in tears."⁹

Charles Sumner, frustrated in these demands, continued to direct the line of attack which he had initiated during the Civil War. He had in mind relief for free Negroes in the North as well as freedmen

in the South, and he was determined that petty race prejudice in the North should not escape attention because of the fight against slavery and its aftermath in the South.

Early in the spring of 1867, March 11, Stevens introduced a set of resolutions for the enforcement of the Confiscation Act of July 17, 1862, with preamble as follows: "Whereas it is due to justice, as an example to future times, that some proper pain should be inflicted on the people who constituted the 'Confederate States of America,' both because they declared an unjust war against the United States for the purpose of destroying republican liberty and permanently establishing slavery, as well as for the cruel and barbarous manner in which they conducted said war, in violation of all rules of civilized warfare, and also to compel them to make compensation for the damage and expense caused by said war, therefore: Be it enacted that all public lands belonging to the ten states that formed the so-called 'Confederate States of America,' shall be forfeited by said states and become vested forthwith in the United States." The measure further provided as follows: "Section 2, that the President should proceed at once to condemn the property forfeited under the aforesaid Act of July 17, 1862; section 3, that a commission of appraisers be appointed to appraise said property; section 4, that the land so seized and condemned should be distributed among the slaves who had been made free by the war and constitutional amendments, and who were residing on said land on the 4th of March, 1861, or since: to each head of a family 40 acres; to each adult male whether head of a family or not, 40 acres; to each widow, head of a family, 40 acres; to be held by them in fee simple, but to be inalienable for ten years after they should become so seized thereof. Section 5 provided for the raising of the sum of fifty dollars for each homesteader, to be used for the erection of a building on his homestead; and that the further sum of five hundred million dollars be raised for the purpose of pensioning the veterans of the Union army." The bill contained several other sections dealing with the subject in connection with the main features as above set forth.

Stevens called up this measure for consideration by the House on March 19, when he made one of his characteristic speeches, brilliant and pungent; age seems never to have had any effect upon his mental vigor nor any tendency to modify his sharp invectives. Said he: "I am about to discuss the question of pain of belligerent traitors. . . . The pain of traitors has been wholly ignored by a treacherous executive and a sluggish Congress. . . . I wish to make an issue before the American people and see whether they will sanction the perfect impunity of a murderous belligerent and consent that loyal men of

this nation who have been despoiled of their property shall remain without remuneration, either by rebel property or the property of the nation. To this issue, I desire to devote the small remainder of my life. . . . No committee or party is responsible for this bill. Whatever merit it possesses is due to Andrew Johnson and myself."

Andrew Johnson did not falter and began to pin his faith on the fall elections of 1867. On September 7, 1867, Johnson extended full pardon to Confederates. His former proclamation, according to the *Tribune*, had "left about one hundred thousand citizens outside the amnesty; but this one leaves out one or two thousand."

Undoubtedly at this time Johnson was being urged toward stronger counter-revolutionary measures. He entertained the idea of ordering the military governors of the five Southern districts to enroll as voters the former Confederates whom he had included in his last Proclamation of Amnesty. Clemenceau said that when some of his Southern friends called on him, he admitted frankly that only the fear of being deposed prevented him from acting and he advised them to take the matter into court.

To court the South flew Johnson's provisional governor of Mississippi tried in the name of his state to enjoin the President from executing the Reconstruction laws. The Supreme Court found in April, 1867, that its interference would be improper. Thereupon Governor Jackson of Georgia sought to enjoin the Secretary of War, the General of the Army, and the District Commander in Georgia; but the court decided it had no jurisdiction. A second time Georgia went to the Supreme Court and failed. Finally, late in 1867, W. H. McCordle of Mississippi, arrested by military authority under the Reconstruction acts, appealed from the Circuit to the Supreme Court, but Congress over the President's veto repealed the statute which allowed such an appeal, and by this revolutionary procedure made good its supreme power in Reconstruction over court and President.

Radical newspapers published in October a statement that the President had told certain friends in Tennessee that he would resist by force if Congress attempted to impeach him. Johnson denied that he had said anything of the sort, but Republicans made much of the fact that Johnson had ordered cannon furnished to Swann, Governor of Maryland, who like Johnson had been elected by the Republicans and had gone over to the Democrats. Swann asked the government to furnish him with cannon. Johnson gave Stanton the order to deliver the weapons needed. Stanton flatly refused. When General Grant took his place as Secretary of War, the Governor of Maryland renewed his request, which was again granted by Johnson and again refused by Grant. Finally, Swann made up his mind to buy the

cannon. Most of the officers serving in Swann's militia were former Confederates.

During the fall campaign of 1867, there was fear of panic in the air on account of the vast circulation of greenbacks and bank notes to the extent of a billion dollars. With money fluctuating in value, trade became a lottery. Higher protection was put on steel and woolen goods. But curiously enough, the Democrats in general avoided the tariff issue. They did not follow Johnson's attack on finance because they saw its inconsistency with the reaction of property in the South. Leaving the economic argument, they embraced with avidity race prejudice and concentrated their campaign on this.

Clemenceau said, "The best point of attack for the Democrats is the Negroes. Any Democrat who did not manage to hint in his speech that the Negro is a degenerate gorilla, would be considered lacking in enthusiasm. The idea of giving political power to a lot of wild men, incapable of civilization, whose intelligence is no higher than that of the animal! That is the theme of all Democratic speeches." ¹⁰ With this, of course, went fetch worship of the Constitution.

Johnson looked forward with hope. October elections took place in Ohio and Pennsylvania and showed reaction toward the Democrats.

In Ohio, R. B. Hayes, afterward president, ran against Allan G. Thurman, and Negro suffrage played a large part. Hayes denied the assertion that the government was a white man's government. "It is not the Government of any class or sect or nationality or race. . . . It is not the Government of the native born or of the foreign born, of the rich man or of the poor man, of the white man or of the colored man—it is the Government of the freeman." The "monstrous inconsistency and injustice of excluding one-seventh of our population from all participation in a Government founded on the consent of the governed" was held to be impossible. There was no necessary antagonism between the two races which could not be broken down by justice and equality.¹¹

Hayes won by less than 3,000 votes, as compared with a Republican majority of 42,000 in 1866. Also, at the same time, the voters rejected the Negro suffrage amendment by 38,000 votes, and elected a Democratic legislature. There were, however, certain other elements. The Republicans had sought to disfranchise deserters from the army, and Ben Wade had aroused the bitter hostility of Southern elements in southern Ohio.

Ohio expressed itself against the high tariff "to fill the pockets of Eastern monopolists," and in favor of agricultural labor, showing the peculiar contradiction in the minds of the voters. Johnson telegraphed Ohio: "Ohio has done its duty and done it in time. God bless Ohio."

Pennsylvania lost nearly the whole of its Republican majority of thirty thousand. In New York cannon were kept firing for two days.

Most of the state elections came in November, and showed some reaction toward the Democrats but not so great as in October. The Republicans won in Massachusetts, Michigan, Wisconsin, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri and Illinois, but were completely defeated in New York, New Jersey and Maryland.

New Jersey refused to strike out the word "white" from the requirements for suffrage; in New York, the Republicans did not dare to submit to popular vote the proposal to drop the property discrimination against Negro voters. Maryland adopted a new registry law which gave the vote to whites only.

On the other hand, during 1867, Iowa and Dakota admitted Negroes to the ballot, and Minnesota in 1868. In this latter year Negroes were voting in all the New England states except Connecticut, in Iowa, Minnesota and Dakota—a total of 8 Northern states. The South and its friends had a right to charge that 8 other Northern states refused to enfranchise a class to which they were forcing the South to give the vote.

In the third annual message of Andrew Johnson, December 3, 1867, all masking of the Negro problem is removed. He is no longer evasive as to the relation of the black worker to the white worker and his whole economic argument is drowned in race hate. There is no suggestion that Negro soldiers or Negro property owners or Negroes who can read and write should have any political rights. He bases his whole argument flatly on the inferiority of the Negro race.

"It is the glory of white men," he proclaims magniloquently, "to know that they have had these qualities in sufficient measure to build upon this continent a great political fabric and to preserve its stability for more than ninety years, while in every other part of the world all similar experiments have failed. But if anything can be proved by known facts, if all reasoning upon evidence is not abandoned, it must be acknowledged that in the progress of nations, Negroes have shown less capacity for government than any other race of people. No independent government of any form has ever been successful in their hands. On the contrary, wherever they have been left to their own devices they have shown a constant tendency to relapse into barbarism. In the Southern States, however, Congress has undertaken to confer upon them the privilege of the ballot. Just released from slavery, it may be doubted whether as a class they know more than their ancestors how to organize and regulate civil society. Indeed, it is admitted that the blacks of the South are not only regardless of the rights of property, but so utterly ignorant of public affairs that their voting can

consist in nothing more than carrying a ballot to the place where they are directed to deposit it.

"The great difference between the two races in physical, mental and moral characteristics will prevent an amalgamation or fusion of them together in one homogeneous mass. If the inferior obtains the ascendancy over the other, it will govern with reference only to its own interests—for it will recognize no common interest—and create such a tyranny as this continent has never yet witnessed. Already the Negroes are influenced by promises of confiscation and plunder. They are taught to regard as an enemy every white man who has any respect for the rights of his own race. If this continues it must become worse and worse, until all order will be subverted, all industry cease, and the fertile fields of the South grow up into a wilderness. Of all the dangers which our nation has yet encountered, none are equal to those which must result from the success of the effort now making to Africanize the half of our country."

It is easy to believe now that the idea that Andrew Johnson and the South planned a coup d'état was fanciful. The point is that sane and thoughtful men at the time widely believed it. No matter how incredible it may seem to us, we must remember that this was a generation to which it had seemed incredible that the South should secede. They had seen the incredible happen at fearful cost. It might happen again. The Republicans, therefore, refused to be frightened by the elections of 1867. Carl Schurz said that "I think that I do not exaggerate that an overwhelming majority of the loyal Union men, North and South, saw in President Johnson a traitor bent upon turning over the national government to the rebels again; and ardently wishing to see him utterly stripped of power, not so much for what he had done, but for what, as they thought, he was capable of doing and likely to do."

Impeachment proceedings now hurried forward. They had begun in December, 1866. On February 28, 1867, the Committee on Judiciary had refused to recommend impeachment of the President but asked for further investigation. March 2, the Reconstruction Act passed, and March 7, impeachment was moved for the second time in the House. Johnson had notified the Senate of the suspension of Secretary Stanton in December, 1867. Early the next year, the Senate refused to concur. Grant gave up the office, and Stanton resumed his duties. Stanton was dismissed again in February, 1868, and the impeachment of Johnson was determined upon in March.

The beginning of the attempt to impeach President Johnson was a memorable scene. Thaddeus Stevens made his speech February 16, 1868. He was hopelessly broken in health, and a hushed and expectant

audience listened to every word. He spoke with force and solemnity. "I doubt," said Charles Sumner, "if words were ever delivered to more effect."¹² He was a dying man and this was his last word.

Who in 1867 represented the considered will of the people of the United States? Certainly not Andrew Johnson, backed by Northern copperheads and the supporters of a futile attempt at secession. Just as certainly two-thirds of the members of Congress, with the South excluded as it had been excluded for six terrible years, had a clear right to express the repeatedly registered popular will.

The problem was a difficult one. When can a ruler rule in the United States? The nation by overwhelming majority had declared for union, for emancipation to preserve the Union, for no increase in the political power of the white South, and for Negro suffrage to prevent this increased political power and reward Negro loyalty.

This clear will of the majority of the people, represented in Congress, was frustrated by a President who repeatedly refused to obey the plain mandate of the party which elected him. Johnson virtually declared Congress illegal because the South was unrepresented. Congress denied that a criminal could be his own judge. Who could settle this dispute? By the whole theory of party government, a President must be at least in general accord with his party. His utmost power should not go beyond a suspensory veto compelling a plebiscite. Yet no president in the history of the United States up to this time had used the veto power like Andrew Johnson to oppose the expressed will of the nation. In twenty-three cases, he opposed his will to the will of Congress, while Andrew Jackson, his closest competitor, made only eleven vetoes and pocket vetoes. Party responsibility in government was absolutely blocked at a time of crisis. Under any, even partial, theory of such responsibility, Johnson would have been compelled to resign; but the antiquated constitutional requirements of a system of laws built for another age and for entirely different circumstances were now being applied to unforeseen conditions.

The Constitution made the removal of the President contingent upon his committing "high crimes and misdemeanors." Here then came a plain question of definition: was it a crime, in the judgment of the people of the United States in 1867, for a President to block the overwhelming will of a successful majority of voters during a period of nearly three years? Stevens and those who followed him said that it was. They did not all pretend that Johnson was personally a criminal with treasonable designs, although some believed even that; on the other hand it was clear even to many of Johnson's friends that he was "an unfit person to be President of the United States."¹³ They

all did assert that he had broken the rules by which responsible government could be carried on.

The trial started March 30, 1868, and ended May 6. Over two-thirds of the members of the United States House of Representatives, 35 out of 54 Senators, and the great majority of the voters of the nation, outside the former slave states, agreed that Johnson should be removed from office. Whether they were right or wrong, the failure, legally to convict Johnson has remained to frustrate responsible government in the United States ever since. But no President since Johnson has attempted indefinitely to rule in defiance of Congress.

The leaders of abolition-democracy still pressed on. Sumner was especially active and destined for several more years of active work.

Thaddeus Stevens was near death, but to the very end he fought on. He wished to ask Congress to declare by law that no state had the right to forbid citizens of the United States from taking part in the national elections.

Thaddeus Stevens died August 11, 1868, three weeks after the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment was announced, and in his last breath and even after death, stood true to his principles. "Two colored clergymen called, and asked leave to see Stevens and pray with him. He ordered them to be admitted; and when they had come to his bedside, he turned and held out his hand to one of them. They sang a hymn and prayed. . . . It was then within ten minutes of midnight, and the end was to come before the beginning of the new day. He lay motionless for a few minutes, then opened his eyes, took one look, placidly closed them, and, without a struggle, the great commoner had ceased to breathe."¹⁴

Thaddeus Stevens was buried in a colored graveyard. Upon the monument there is the following inscription, prepared by himself: "I repose in this quiet and secluded spot, not from any natural preference for solitude, but finding other cemeteries limited as to race by charter rules, I have chosen this, that I might illustrate in my death the principles which I advocated through a long life, [the] Equality of Man before his Creator."

As Charles Sumner said: "Already he takes his place among illustrious names, which are the common property of mankind. I see him now, as I have so often seen him during life. His venerable form moves slowly and with uncertain steps; but the gathered strength of years is in his countenance and the light of victory on his path. Politician, calculator, time-server, stand aside! a hero statesman passes to his reward!"¹⁵

As a result of the legislation of the 39th and 40th Congresses, the United States in 1867 took a portentous forward step in democracy.

For the mass of the nation, it was a step taken under compulsion of fear, without deep forethought and with a rather didactic following out of certain conventional principles which made universal suffrage seem natural and inevitable. To the South, it was the price of that disaster of slavery and war which spelled its history from 1830 to 1865; and it was the only price adequate to that fatal mistake.

To those men who were guiding American industry toward a new and fateful path, the Southern experiment was simply a political move by which they silenced and held in check the tremendous political power built on slavery, which in many ways and for a generation had threatened the nation and checked its economic development.

To a few far-seeing leaders of democracy this experiment appeared in its truer light. It was a test of the whole theory of American government. It was a dictatorship backed by the military arm of the United States by which the governments of the Southern states were to be coerced into accepting a new form of administration, in which the freedmen and the poor whites were to hold the overwhelming balance of political power. As soon as political power was successfully delivered into the hands of these elements, the Federal government was to withdraw and full democracy ensue.

The difficulty with this theory was the failure to realize that such dictatorship must last long enough really to put the mass of workers in power; that this would be in fact a dictatorship of the proletariat which must endure until the proletariat or at least a leading united group, with clear objects and effective method, had education and experience and had taken firm control of the economic organization of the South. Unfortunately, the power set to begin this dictatorship was the military arm of a government which more and more was falling into the hands of organized wealth, and of wealth organized on a scale never before seen in modern civilization.

The new organization of Northern wealth was not comparable to the petty bourgeoisie which seized power after the overthrow of European feudalism. It was a new rule of associated and federated monarchs of industry and finance wielding a vaster and more despotic power than European kings and nobles ever held. It was destined to subdue not simply Southern agrarianism but even individual wealth and brains in the North which were creating a new petty bourgeoisie of small merchants and skilled artisans.

It was inconceivable, therefore, that the masters of Northern industry through their growing control of American government, were going to allow the laborers of the South any more real control of wealth and industry than was necessary to curb the political power of the planters and their successors. As soon as the Southern landholders

and merchants yielded to the Northern demands of a plutocracy, at that moment the military dictatorship should be withdrawn and a dictatorship of capital allowed unhampered sway.

We see this more clearly today than the nation of 1868, or any of its leaders, could possibly envisage it; but even then, Northern industry knew that universal suffrage in the South, in the hands of Negroes just freed from slavery, and of white people still enslaved by poverty, could not stand against organized industry. They promptly calculated that the same method of controlling the labor vote would come in vogue in the South as they were already using in the North, and that the industry which used these methods must in the meantime cooperate with Northern industry; that it could not move the foundation stones upon which Northern industry was consolidating its power; that is, the tariff, the money system, the debt, and national in place of state control of industry. This would seem to be what the masters of exploitation were counting upon and it certainly came true in the bargain of 1876.

Thus by singular coincidence and for a moment, for the few years of an eternal second in a cycle of a thousand years, the orbits of two widely and utterly dissimilar economic systems coincided and the result was a revolution so vast and portentous that few minds ever fully conceived it; for the systems were these: first, that of a democracy which should by universal suffrage establish a dictatorship of the proletariat ending in industrial democracy; and the other, a system by which a little knot of masterful men would so organize capitalism as to bring under their control the natural resources, wealth and industry of a vast and rich country and through that, of the world. For a second, for a pulse of time, these orbits crossed and coincided, but their central suns were a thousand light-years apart, even though the blind and ignorant fury of the South and the complacent Philistinism of the North saw them as one.

Reconstruction was an economic revolution on a mighty scale and with world-wide reverberation. Reconstruction was not simply a fight between the white and black races in the South or between master and ex-slave. It was much more subtle; it involved more than this. There have been repeated and continued attempts to paint this era as an interlude of petty politics or nightmare of race hate instead of viewing it slowly and broadly as a tremendous series of efforts to earn a living in new and untried ways, to achieve economic security and to restore fatal losses of capital and investment. It was a vast labor movement of ignorant, earnest, and bewildered black men whose faces had been ground in the mud by their three awful centuries of degradation and who now staggered forward blindly in blood and tears amid petty

division, hate and hurt, and surrounded by every disaster of war and industrial upheaval. Reconstruction was a vast labor movement of ignorant, muddled and bewildered white men who had been disinherited of land and labor and fought a long battle with sheer subsistence, hanging on the edge of poverty, eating clay and chasing slaves and now lurching up to manhood. Reconstruction was the turn of white Northern migration southward to new and sudden economic opportunity which followed the disaster and dislocation of war, and an attempt to organize capital and labor on a new pattern and build a new economy. Finally Reconstruction was a desperate effort of a dislodged, maimed, impoverished and ruined oligarchy and monopoly to restore an anachronism in economic organization by force, fraud and slander, in defiance of law and order, and in the face of a great labor movement of white and black, and in bitter strife with a new capitalism and a new political framework.

All these contending and antagonistic groups spoke different and unknown tongues; to the Negro "Freedom" was God; to the poor white "Freedom" was nothing—he had more than he had use for; to the planter "Freedom" for the poor was laziness and for the rich, control of the poor worker; for the Northern business man "Freedom" was opportunity to get rich.

Yet, with interpretation, agreement was possible here; North and South agreed that laborers must produce profit; the poor white and the Negro wanted to get the profit arising from the laborer's toil and not to divide it with the employers and landowners. When Northern and Southern employers agreed that profit was most important and the method of getting it second, the path to understanding was clear. When white laborers were convinced that the degradation of Negro labor was more fundamental than the uplift of white labor, the end was in sight.

Not only did all those factors becloud this extraordinary series of movements so that the truth of the matter in itself was baffling to observers and interpreters—but over all has spread, to this day, a cloud of lying and slander which leaves historians and philosophers aghast and has resulted in a current theory of interpretation which pictures all participants as scoundrels, idiots and heroes—a combination humanly improbable and demonstrably untrue.

One cannot study Reconstruction without first frankly facing the facts of universal lying; of deliberate and unbounded attempts to prove a case and win a dispute and preserve economic mastery and political domination by besmirching the character, motives, and commonsense, of every single person who dared disagree with the dominant philosophy of the white South.

The campaign of slander against "carpetbaggers" rose to a climax which included every Northern person who defended the Negro, and every Northern person in the South who was connected with the army or Freedmen's Bureau or with the institutions of learning, or who admitted the right of the Negro to vote or defended him in any way. It was the general, almost universal, belief that practically without exception these people were liars, jailbirds, criminals and thieves, and the hatred of them rose to a crescendo of curses and filth. Later, this universal attack upon the carpetbaggers was modified considerably, and it was admitted that there were among them some decent and high-minded men, although most of them still were regarded as selfish stealers of public funds.

On the other hand, so far as the Negro was concerned, almost no exceptions were admitted. It was easier to traduce him because everyone was ready to believe the worst and no reply was, for the moment, listened to. There was not a single great black leader of Reconstruction against whom almost unprintable allegations were not repeatedly and definitely made without any attempt to investigate the reliability of sources of information.

For the first time in national history interstate migration became a crime. Hundreds of thousands of Southerners had gone North and West and had been welcomed and integrated into the various states despite their divergent ideas and alien heredity. But when there came a comparatively small number of Northerners into the South, they were reviled unless they conformed absolutely in thought and action with a dead past.

The Northern whites were of many classes: former soldiers and officers, lingering in the South in connection with the army or the Freedmen's Bureau, or as investors and farmers. They were reinforced by an army of men who came South with small capital and in many cases succeeded in making their fortune. Most of these had no special love for the Negroes. They had come into a white man's war, and now that the Negro was free, they were perfectly free to use him and to organize his industrial and political power for their own advantage.

Many of these were agents for capital and went down from the North with something of the psychology of modern investment in conquered or colonial territory: that is, they brought the capital; they invested it; they remained in charge to oversee the profits; and they acquired political power in order to protect these profits.

On the other hand, there were teachers who came down from the North, army chaplains, social workers and others, who whole-heartedly went into the new democracy to the limit. Extraordinary persons stood forth in this rôle, like General Fisk and Erastus Cravath at Nashville,

Edmund Ware at Atlanta, General Armstrong at Hampton, and dozens of others. They were crusaders in a great cause and meticulously honest. Naturally, their numbers were comparatively small. They reached primarily students, teachers and preachers among the Negroes and only incidentally the class of field hands.

It was a battle between oligarchy whose wealth and power had been based on land and slaves on the one hand; and on the other, oligarchy built on machines and hired labor. The newly organized industry of the North was not only triumphant in the North but began pressing in upon the South; its advance guard was represented by those small Northern capitalists and officeholders who sought to make quick money in raising cotton and taking advantage of the low-priced labor and high cotton prices due to the war famine.

The labor on the market, instead of being owned like the slaves or excluded from competition like the poor whites, suddenly found itself bid for and offered not only money wages, but political power and social status. The bidders had no realization at first how high their labor bids were in Southern custom; they were offering something below the current price of labor in all civilized lands; the Northern United States, England, France, most of Germany and parts of Italy were giving labor some voice in governing and a money wage contract.

To the plantation planters such a wage contract was economic heresy and social revolution. It was blasphemy and eternal damnation to them, and they fought by every conceivable weapon—political power, social influence, murder, assassination and systematic lying.

The mass of poor whites were in an anomalous position. Those of them who were intelligent or had during slavery accumulated any capital or achieved any position, had always attached themselves in sympathy and interest to the planter class. This meant that the mass of ignorant poor white labor had practically no intelligent leadership. Only here and there were there men, like Hinton Helper, who were actual leaders of the poor whites against the planters. The poor white was in a quandary with regard to emancipation. He had viewed slavery as the cause of his own degradation, but he now viewed the free Negro as a threat to his very existence. Suppose that freedom for the Negro meant that Negroes might rise to be landholders, planters and employers? The poor whites thus might lose the last shred of respectability. They had been used to seeing certain classes of the black slaves above them in economic prosperity and social power. But after all, they were still Negroes and slaves. Now that freedom had come, poor whites were faced by the dilemma of recognizing the Negroes as

equals or of bending every effort to still keep them beneath the white mass in income and social power.

Here and there certain leaders appeared among the planters, among the more intelligent of the poor whites, and even among the masses, who looked toward political combination and economic alliance with the Negro. Such persons, the Southerners called "scalwags," but they were in fact that part of the white South who saw a vision of democracy across racial lines, and who were willing to build up a labor party in opposition to capitalists and landholders. They were, therefore, especially to be feared and were endlessly reviled. They were forced into certain extreme positions as compared with the carpenter and the planter. Men like Hunnicutt of Virginia asked not only political rights, but full social equality for the Negroes, and taunted planters and the carpenters when they did not dare advocate this.

When Andrew Johnson said in his veto of the Reconstruction bill, March 2, 1867: "The Negroes have not asked for the privilege of voting; the vast majority of them have no idea what it means," he was exaggerating. Negroes had certainly voted, not only in the North but in South Carolina in the eighteenth century and in North Carolina, Louisiana and Tennessee in the nineteenth. They had asked to vote in the South repeatedly since Emancipation. The difference that now came was that an indefinitely larger number of Negroes than ever before was enfranchised suddenly, and 99% of them belonged to the laboring class, whereas by law the Negroes who voted in the early history of the country were for the most part property holders, and prospective if not actual constituents of a petty bourgeoisie.

When freedom came, this mass of Negro labor was not without intelligent leadership, and a leadership which because of former race prejudice and the present Color Line, could not be divorced from the laboring mass, as had been the case with the poor whites. The group of intelligent, free Negroes in Washington, Richmond, Charleston and especially New Orleans, had accumulated some wealth and some knowledge of group cooperation and initiative. Almost without exception, they accepted the new responsibility of leading the emancipated slaves, unselfishly and effectively. Free Negroes from the North, most of whom had been born in the South and knew conditions, came back in considerable numbers during Reconstruction, and took their place as leaders. The result was that the Negroes were not, as they are sometimes painted, simply a mass of densely ignorant toilers. The rank and file of black labor had a notable leadership of intelligence during Reconstruction times.

It was, however, a leadership which was not at all clear in its economic thought. On the whole, it believed in the accumulation of

wealth and the exploitation of labor as the normal method of economic development. But it also believed in the right to vote as the basis and defense of economic life, and gradually but surely it was forced by the demand of the mass of Negro laborers to face the problem of land. Thus the Negro leaders gradually but certainly turned toward emphasis on economic emancipation. They wanted the Negro to have the right to work at a decent rate of wages, and they expected that the right to vote would come when he had sufficient education and perhaps a certain minimum of property to deserve it. It was this among other things that was the cause of the tremendous push toward education which the Negroes exhibited.

On the other hand, their desire for economic enfranchisement, for real abolition of slavery, had been affronted by the Black Codes. They were scared and hampered in the very beginning of their freedom by these enactments and by the way in which these and other laws were executed.

The government replied before the death of Abraham Lincoln with government guardianship in the shape of the Freedmen's Bureau. This bureau never had a real chance to organize and function properly. It was hastily organized. It had to use the persons at hand and on the ground largely for its personnel. It had at first no government appropriations and in the end only limited appropriations and it was always faced by the probability of quick dissolution. It was surrounded from the beginning by the spirit which enacted the Black Codes. Southerners were desperately opposed to it because it stood between them and the exploitation of labor toward which they were impelled by their losses and the high price of cotton. If they had been allowed to exploit and drive black labor after the war, many Southerners despite their losses could have partially recouped their fortunes. But here came an organization which demanded money wages of employers who had no money, and demanded the modern treatment of labor from former slave drivers.

Beside the Freedmen's Bureau and before it, there was the chance for the Negroes to seek the advice of their former masters and in many cases this was willingly and wisely given, particularly in the case of masters ready to assist a new economic régime; but it was hindered by several considerations. First, any new union between former masters and Negroes was rekindling the old enmity and jealousy of the poor whites against any combination of the white employer and the black laborer which would again exclude the poor white. The planter, therefore, had to be careful of any open sympathy or cooperation with the black laborer. Already his ranks had been decimated by war and his social status threatened by poverty. Then,

too, insofar as the black laborer was guided by the Freedmen's Bureau, by Northern philanthropy and by Northern capital, he brought upon himself the bitter enmity of the former master; so that on the whole, while there was considerable advice and help from the former master, in the long run it did not and could not amount to much.

Then, too, we must remember that these former slaveholders did not believe that Negroes could advance in freedom. They knew, of course, that some could, but even if these could, how could white men and masters cooperate with them? The whole trend of teaching had been that this was utterly impossible. If Negroes succeeded and insofar as they did, it would lead straight to social equality and amalgamation; and if they did not succeed it would lead to deterioration in culture and civilization.

The real economic battle, then, lay finally in a series of attempted compromises between planters, carpentbaggers, scalawags, poor white laborers and Negroes. First, the planters moved toward the political control of Negroes to fix their economic control. This the poor whites had of course feared and their fears were voiced repeatedly by Andrew Johnson. Many people in the North looked upon this as a possible and threatening answer to the enfranchisement of the blacks. The combination was frustrated because the carpentbaggers offered the Negroes better terms; offered them the right to vote and to hold office and some economic freedom. When this economic freedom looked toward landholding and higher wages, it could be accomplished only at the expense of the employing class, and so far as Negro labor accepted, as it had to accept the offer of the carpentbaggers and scalawags, it alienated the planters, and not only that, but it frightened the poor whites.

Here again, as in the case of slavery, there was a combination in which the poor whites seemed excluded, unless they made common cause with the blacks. This union of black and white labor never got a real start. First, because black leadership still tended toward the ideals of the petty bourgeois, and white leadership tended distinctly toward strengthening capitalism. The final move which rearranged all these combinations and led to the catastrophe of 1876, was a combination of planters and poor whites in defiance of their economic interests; and with the use of lawless murder and open intimidation. It was a combination that could only have been stopped by government force; and the army which was the agent of the Federal Government was sustained in the South by the organized capital of the North. All that was necessary, then, was to satisfy Northern industry that the new combination in the South was essentially a combination which aimed at capitalistic exploitation on conventional terms. The result was the withdrawal of military support and the revolutionary suppression not

only of Negro suffrage but of the economic development of Negro and white labor.

It was not until after the period which this book treats that white labor in the South began to realize that they had lost a great opportunity, that when they united to disfranchise the black laborer they had cut the voting power of the laboring class in two. White labor in the Populist movement of the eighties tried to realign the economic warfare in the South and bring workers of all colors into united opposition to the employer. But they found that the power which they had put in the hands of the employers in 1876 so dominated political life that free and honest expression of public will at the ballot-box was impossible in the South, even for white men. They realized that it was not simply the Negro who had been disfranchised in 1876, it was the white laborer as well. The South had since become one of the greatest centers for exploitation of labor in the world, and labor suffered not only in the South but throughout the country and the world over.

Curious and contradictory has been the criticism and comment accompanying this great controversy and revolution of 1866-1876. Floods of tears and sentiment have been expended on the suffering and disillusionment of the slave baron, while the equally great losses of Northern and Southern labor have been forgotten. And above all, the plight of the most helpless victims of the situation, the black freedmen, has been treated with callous and hardened judgments, cemented with hate. The Northern business man has justly been accused of being motivated, during this period, chiefly by greed and profit. But the profit and greed of the slaveholder which caused the whole catastrophe, and of the planter who forced an unjust and still dangerous solution, has been sicklied o'er with sentiment.

In all this, one sees the old snobbery of class judgment in new form—tears and sentiment for Marie Antoinette on the scaffold, but no sign of grief for the gutters of Paris and the fields of France, where the victims of exploitation and ignorance lay rotting in piles.

The South, after the war, presented the greatest opportunity for a real national labor movement which the nation ever saw or is likely to see for many decades. Yet the labor movement, with but few exceptions, never realized the situation. It never had the intelligence or knowledge, as a whole, to see in black slavery and Reconstruction, the kernel and meaning of the labor movement in the United States.

After Lincoln's assassination, the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association, under Karl Marx, sent an address to Andrew Johnson:

"After a gigantic Civil War, which if we consider its colossal ex-

tension and its vast scenes of action, seems in comparison with the Hundred Years' War and the Thirty Years' War and the Twenty-three Years' War of the Old World scarcely to have lasted ninety days, the task, Sir, devolves upon you to uproot by law what the sword has felled, and to preside over the more difficult work of political reconstruction and social regeneration. The profound consciousness of your great mission will preserve you from all weakness in the execution of your stern duties. You will never forget that the American people at the inauguration of the new era of the emancipation of labor placed the burden of leadership on the shoulders of two men of labor—Abraham Lincoln, the one, and the other, Andrew Johnson."¹⁸

In 1865, September, another address over the signature of Marx declared boldly: "Injustice against a fraction of your people having been followed by such dire consequences, put an end to it. Declare your fellow citizens from this day forth free and equal, without any reserve. If you refuse them citizens' rights while you exact from them citizens' duties, you will sooner or later face a new struggle which will once more drench your country in blood."

The National Labor Union of workers was organized at Baltimore, Maryland, August 20, 1866. There were sixty delegates and on their banner was inscribed "Welcome to the sons of toil from the North, East, South and West." An address was issued on cooperation, trade unions, apprenticeship, strikes, labor of women, public land and political action. As to the Negroes, the union admitted that it was unable to express an opinion which would satisfy all, but the question must not be allowed to pass unnoticed. The Negro worker had been neglected. Cooperation of the African race in systematic organization must be secured. Otherwise, Negroes must act as scabs, as in the case of the colored caulkers, imported from Virginia to Boston, during the strike on the 8-hour question. There should be no distinction of race or nationality, but only separation into two great classes: laborers and those who live by others' labor. Negroes were soon to be admitted to citizenship and the ballot. Their ballot strength would be of great value to union labor. If labor did not accept them, capital would use the Negro to split white and black labor, just as the Austrian government had used race dissension. Such a lamentable situation should not be allowed to develop in America. Trade unions, eight-hour leagues, and other groups should be organized among Negroes.

Here was a first halting note. Negroes were welcomed to the labor movement, not because they were laborers but because they might be competitors in the market, and the logical conclusion was either to organize them or guard against their actual competition by other

methods. It was to this latter alternative that white American labor almost unanimously turned.

This was manifest at the second annual meeting in Chicago in 1867, where the Negro problem was debated more frankly and less successfully. The President called attention to Negroes whose emancipation had given them a new position in the labor world. They would now come in competition with white labor. He suggested that the best way to meet this situation was to form trade unions among Negroes. A committee of three on Negro labor was selected. The Committee on Negro Labor reported that having had the subject under consideration, and after having heard the suggestions and opinions of several members of this convention—pro and con—they had arrived at the following conclusions:

"That, while we feel the importance of the subject, and realize the danger in the future of competition in mechanical Negro labor, yet we find the subject involved in so much mystery, and upon it so wide diversity of opinion amongst our members, we believe that it is inexpedient to take action on the subject in this National Labor Congress.

"Resolved, that the subject of Negro labor be laid over till the next session of the National Labor Congress. . . ."

The report of this committee brought a whirlwind of discussion which lasted throughout the whole day:

"The Negro will bear to be taught his duty, and has already stood his ground nobly when a member of a trades' union. . . .

"Did not like to confess to the world that there was a subject with which they were afraid to cope. . . .

"This very question was at the root of the rebellion, which was the war of the poor white men of the South, who were forced by the slaveholders into the war. . . .

"In New Haven, there were a number of respectable colored mechanics, but they had not been able to induce the trades' unions to admit them. . . . Was there any union in the states which would admit colored men?

"The colored man was industrious, and susceptible of improvement and advancement. . . .

"There was no need of entering on any discussion of the matter.

"There was no necessity for the foisting of the subject of colored labor, or the appointment of a committee to report thereon. . . . The blacks would combine together of themselves and by themselves, without the assistance of whites. God speed them; but let not the whites try to carry them on their shoulders. . . .

"Time enough to talk about admitting colored men to trades' unions and to the Congress when they applied for admission. . . ."

"Whites striking against the blacks, and creating an antagonism which will kill off the trades' unions, unless the two be consolidated. There is no concealing the fact that the time will come when the Negro 'will take possession of the shops if we have not taken possession of the Negro. If the workingmen of the white race do not conciliate the blacks, the black vote will be cast against them.'"

"The capitalists of New England now employ foreign boys and girls in their mills, to the almost entire exclusion of the native-born population. They would seek to supplant these by colored workers. . . ."

"Little danger of black men wanting to enter trades' unions any more than Germans would try to join the English societies in America. . . ."¹⁷

The whole question was finally dodged by taking refuge in the fact that the constitution invited "all labor."

Sylvia, President of the International Labor Movement, spoke out in 1868 on slavery:

"Whatever our opinions may be as to immediate causes of the war, we can all agree that human slavery (property in man) was the first great cause; and from the day that the first gun was fired, it was my earnest hope that the war might not end until slavery ended it. No man in America rejoiced more than I at the downfall of Negro slavery. But when the shackles fell from the limbs of those four millions of blacks, it did not make them *free* men; it simply transferred them from one condition of slavery to another; it placed them upon the platform of the white working men, and made all slaves together. I do not mean that freeing the Negro enslaved the white; I mean that we were slaves before; always have been, and that the abolition of the right of property in man added four millions of black slaves to the white slaves of the country. We are now all one family of slaves together, and the labor reform movement is a second emancipation proclamation."¹⁸

In the meeting of the National Labor Union in New York in 1868, there was no mention of Negroes, but in 1869 at Philadelphia among 142 representatives, there appeared nine Negroes representing various separate Negro unions and organizations. This pointed a way out which labor eagerly seized. Contrary to all labor philosophy, they would divide labor by racial and social lines and yet continue to talk of one labor movement. Through this separate union, Negro labor would be restrained from competition and yet kept out of the white race unions where power and discussion lay. A resolution was adopted saying that the National Labor Union would recognize neither color

nor sex in the question of the rise of all labor, and the colored laborers were urged to form their own organizations and send delegates to the next conference. The Negroes responded and declared that all Negroes wanted was a fair chance and no one would be the worse off for giving it. Isaac Myers, their leader, said: "The white laboring men of the country have nothing to fear from the colored laboring men. We desire to see labor elevated and made respectable; we desire to have the highest rate of wages that our labor is worth; we desire to have the hours of labor regulated as well to the interest of the laborer as to the capitalist. Mr. President, American citizenship for the black man is a complete failure if he is proscribed from the workshops of the country."¹⁹

In 1869, the General Council of the National Working-Men's Association sent a letter signed by Karl Marx to the President of the National Labor Union.

"The immediate tangible result of the Civil War was of course a deterioration of the condition of American Workingmen. Both in the United States and in Europe the colossal burden of a public debt was shifted from hand to hand in order to settle it upon the shoulders of the working class. The prices of necessities, remarks one of your statemen, have risen 78 per cent since 1860, while the wages of simple manual labor have risen 50 and those of skilled labor 60 per cent. 'Pauperism,' he complains, 'is increasing in America more rapidly than population.' Moreover the sufferings of the working class are in glaring contrast to the new-fangled luxury of financial aristocrats, shoddy aristocrats and other vermin bred by the war. Still the Civil War offered a compensation in the liberation of the slaves and the impulse which it thereby gave your own class movement. Another war, not sanctified by a sublime aim or a social necessity, but like the wars of the Old World, would forge chains for the free workingmen instead of sundering those of the slaves."²⁰

Sylvia, President of the International Labor Movement, acknowledged this letter but said nothing about slavery, confining himself to attacking the mounted aristocracy.

Thus American labor leaders tried to emphasize the fact that here was a new element; new not in the sense that it had not been there,—it had been there all the time—but new in the sense that the Negro worker must now be taken account of, both in his own interest and particularly in their interest. He was a competitor and a prospective under-bidder. Then difficulties appeared; the white worker did not want the Negro in his unions, did not believe in him as a man, dodged the question, and when he appeared at conventions, asked him to organize separately; that is, outside the real labor movement, in spite

of the fact that this was a contradiction of all sound labor policy.

As the Negro laborers organized separately, there came slowly to realization the fact that here was not only separate organization but a separation in leading ideas; because among Negroes, and particularly in the South, there was being put into force one of the most extraordinary experiments of Marxism that the world, before the Russian revolution, had seen. That is, backed by the military power of the United States, a dictatorship of labor was to be attempted and those who were leading the Negro race in this vast experiment were emphasizing the necessity of the political power and organization backed by protective military power.

On the other hand, the trade union movement of the white labor in the North was moving away from that idea and moving away from politics. They seemed to see a more purely economic solution in their demand for higher wages and shorter hours. Ira Stewart spoke for "men who labor excessively . . . robbed of all ambition to ask for anything more than will satisfy their bodily necessities, while those who labor moderately have time to cultivate tastes and create wants in addition to mere physical comforts."²¹ But Stewart was not thinking of Negroes and only once barely mentioned them:

"That we rejoice that the rebel aristocracy of the South has been crushed, that we rejoice that beneath the glorious shadow of our victorious flag men of every clime, lineage and color are recognized as free. But while we will bear with patient endurance the burden of the public debt, we yet want it to be known that the workingmen of America will in future claim a more equal share in the wealth their industry creates in peace and a more equal participation in the privileges and blessings of those free institutions, defended by their manhood on many a bloody field of battle. . . ."

Not a word was said of Negro suffrage and the need of the labor vote, black and white, if the demands of labor were to be realized. Indeed, at the very time that Southern labor was about to be enfranchised, Northern labor realized that the right to vote meant little under the growing dictatorship of wealth and corporate control. It made little difference what laws were made as long as their interpretation by the courts and administration was dictated by capital. Some proposed, therefore, to fight their battle out directly with the employer, on the one battle ground of economic bargaining, with strikes, violence and secret organization as the methods.

The National Labor Union veered from consumers' and producers' cooperation into a fight to control credits and capital and afterward through the Greenback party into an attempt to gain these ends by manipulating money. With falling prices and unemployment directly

after the war, and rising prices and normal employment in 1868-1873, labor leaders became increasingly petty bourgeois and turned their backs on black labor. Farmers organized the Grange but not for black farm tenants and laborers, not for the struggling peasant proprietors among the freedmen. The Knights of Labor did not turn their attention to Negroes until after 1876.

There was, too, no rapprochement between the liberal revolt against big industry and Northern labor. Horace Greeley, a pioneer of the labor leaders, drew little labor support. The labor leaders went into the labor war of 1877 having literally disarmed themselves of the power of universal suffrage. And thus in 1876, when Northern industry withdrew military support in the South and refused to support longer the dictatorship of labor, they did this without any opposition or any intelligent comprehension of what was happening on the part of the Northern white worker.

Labor and Negro history illustrate these paradoxes. For instance in 1869, there came up the celebrated case of Lewis H. Douglass, the son of Frederick Douglass, who worked in the government printing office and was not allowed to join the Printers' Union. Rather than face the question, the matter was postponed for three years and all sorts of excuses given. This and other cases led and practically compelled the Negroes to form not only separate local trade unions but to work toward a separate national organization. White labor was organizing to fight against the new industrial oligarchy, which was growing in the North; but it was this same oligarchy which in its own self-defense had forced the South to accept Negro suffrage, allying itself temporarily with the abolition-democratic movement in the North.

This placed the white and black labor movement in a singularly contradictory position. The alliance of the black labor movement with the Republican Party was simply the political side of an economic fact. The Republican Party had given the black man the right to vote. This right to vote he was going to use to better his economic and social position. To oppose the Republican Party, then, was to oppose his own economic enfranchisement.

On the other hand, the white Labor Party had allied themselves with the Democrats, chiefly because the Democratic Party had opposed the "Know-nothing Party." The anti-foreign immigration movement was now the only organized political opposition to the great industrial forces represented by the Republicans in the North. It represented in some degree and voiced the radical demands of the West for low tariff and cheap money; but it was at the same time violently opposed to the new enfranchisement of black labor in the South. These two sets of facts alone put white and black labor in direct opposition,

and because their leaders did not altogether understand the basis of this opposition, it made the attempt to achieve a common platform for white and black workers exceedingly difficult, especially when the anomalous position of the Northern Negro worker was taken into account.

Negro leaders, naturally, resented the attack made by white labor organizations on the Republican Party. Nor did they understand how far this new Southern labor government was dependent on Northern industrial reaction and capitalistic oligarchy. Northern labor was equally ignorant and did not dream that in the South the Republican Party was par excellence the party of labor.

This matter came to a crisis at the meeting of the National Labor Union in Cincinnati in 1870. A number of Negroes were present, including Isaac Myers, Josiah Weirs and Peter H. Clark. John M. Langston wanted to speak, but the labor leaders opposed him because he was a Republican politician. The motion to grant him the privilege to speak was lost by a vote of 29 to 23. There was excitement. Weirs remarked that a Democrat had been allowed to speak and that he regarded the Republican Party as a friend of the workingman. Myers lauded the Republicans amid cries of approval and disapproval. Senator Pinchback, colored leader of Louisiana, was also denied the privilege of the floor. Nevertheless, in the resolutions adopted after much debate, it was said, "The highest interest of our colored fellow-citizens is with the workingmen, who, like themselves, are the slaves of capital and politicians."

The Negroes, especially the Northern artisans, tried to keep in touch with the white labor movement. In September, 1870, Sella Martin, a colored man, went as delegate of the colored workers to the World Labor Congress in Paris. In 1871, the International Workingmen's Association, with its headquarters in London, and under the influence of Karl Marx, began to organize labor in the United States on a large scale, and in a parade held in New York in 1871, Negro organizations appeared.

The international movement, however, took no real root in America. Even the white National Labor Union began losing ground and ceased to be active after 1872. The main activity of the International was in the North; they seemed to have no dream that the place for its most successful rooting was in the new political power of the Southern worker.

Negroes, however, increased their attempts to organize and to think in groups. In 1865, an Equal Rights League met in Pennsylvania and tried to influence Negroes to secure real estate and give their sons business education.

In the District of Columbia, in 1867, a meeting of colored workers took place. They asked Congress to secure equal apportionment of employment to white and colored labor. Their petition was printed and a committee of fifteen was appointed to circulate it. In 1868 a similar petition was sent to Congress asking for equal share in work on public improvements authorized by law. There was a state colored convention in Indiana in 1865, another one in Pennsylvania in 1866, and in July, 1869, a Negro convention was held in Louisville, Kentucky, as a result of the agitation for immigrant workers. At this last convention there were 250 delegates who discussed political, economic and educational matters. They asked for the final abolition of slavery, equal education, rights in the courts, equality of taxation, the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment. They recommended the purchase of land and the learning of trades.

A national convention of Negroes met in Washington in January, 1869. This convention was more really national than most Negro conventions hitherto. It was not simply a convention of Southern Negroes as that at Louisville, nor of Northern Negroes like the various conventions at Philadelphia and New York. In 1869, Negroes, representing a number of trades, met in Baltimore in July to form a state organization. Later, colored representatives in the same city urged Negroes to enter the movement for the formation of labor unions. In the Washington convention, there were a number of colored delegates from the South, including Henry M. Turner, a black political leader of Georgia, and in all, 130 delegates, including many men of intelligence and ability, came together. Frederick Douglass was elected permanent President and resolutions were passed in favor of the Freedmen's Bureau, a national tax for Negro schools, universal suffrage, and the opening of public land especially in the South for Negroes. The reconstruction policy of Congress was commended and there was opposition to colonization.

This was not primarily a labor convention, but it illustrated the connection in the Negroes' minds between politics and labor. They were beginning, more and more clearly, to see that their vote must be used for their economic betterment, and that their right to work and their income depended upon their use of the ballot. They were consequently groping for leadership in industry and voting, both within and without the race. In their conception of the ballot as the means to industrial emancipation, they were ahead of the Northern labor movement. But in their knowledge of the lurking dangers of the power of capital, they were far behind. This January convention was followed the same year by a national Negro labor convention sponsored by the Baltimore meeting which assembled in Washington in

December. This had been called by Negro artisans of the North, and was again national in its membership. This national labor convention assembled in Union League Hall, Washington, December, 1869. There were 159 delegates present, and Isaac Myers called the meeting to order.

While the committees were at work, James H. Harris addressed the convention. He was an astute and courageous Reconstruction leader of North Carolina and saw politics and labor in clear alliance. He stated that several millions of colored men were looking to the convention with much interest, and that the South, having passed through a political reconstruction, needed another reconstruction in the affairs of the laboring classes. John M. Langston spoke of the treatment of Negroes in public places and at their work. He especially scored the Printers' Union for its action toward Lewis H. Douglass. Remarks were made also by Richard Trevellick, the President of the white National Labor Convention, and A. M. Powell, the editor of the *Anti-Slavery Standard*.

The convention was permanently organized with James M. Harris of North Carolina as President. Committees were appointed on education, finance, business, platform and address, female labor, home-steads, travel, temperance, cooperative labor, bank savings, and agriculture. The platform of the convention covered the following subjects:

1. The dignity of labor.
2. A plea that harmony should prevail between labor and capital.
3. The desirability of an interchange of views between employers and employees.
4. Temperance in liquor consumption.
5. Education, "for educated labor is more productive and commands higher wages."
6. Political liberty for all Americans.
7. The encouragement of industry.
8. The exclusion from the trades and workshops regarded as "an insult to God, injury to us."
9. Immigrant labor should be welcomed, but coolie labor was an injury to all working classes.
10. The establishment of cooperative workshops, building and loan associations.
11. Gratitude to the agencies interested in Negro education.
12. Protection of the law for all.
13. The organization of workmen's associations which should cooperate with the National Labor Union.
14. Capital must not be regarded as the natural enemy of labor.

At the third day's session, a special committee of five was appointed to draft a plan for the organization of mechanics and artisans, in order to secure recognition for them in the workshops of the country. Langston addressed the meeting concerning his observations in the South. There he had found skilled workers among the Negroes in gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, brick, mortar and the arts. He stated that all

these workmen were asking for themselves and their children was that the trades should be open to them and that no avenue of industry should be closed, whether in workshops, printing offices, factories, foundries, railroads, steamboats, warehouses or stores.

On the fifth day, a resolution was passed which urged the delegates to call and organize state labor associations so that they might work in full cooperation with a committee which was to conduct its work as a labor bureau. This bureau was planned to serve as a clearing house for all questions of Negro labor and it was to aid in opening new labor opportunities. Isaac Myers was selected permanent President of the organization, and in his acceptance he stated that he expected to rely upon the Labor Bureau in reaching the Negro workmen of the United States.

It is interesting to note that this convention was more representative of the large groups than the first general convention, and it deserves for this reason, as well as for its work, to be called the first organized national group of Negro laborers. Many political and religious leaders were not present at its sessions. These absentees included Douglass, Garnet, William Wells Brown, Purvis and Whipper. The definite results of this meeting included the organization of a permanent national Labor Union and a Bureau of Labor. Before the sessions were ended it was stated that there were 23 states represented and 203 accredited delegates in attendance during the period of five days.

The *American Workingman* of Boston called attention to the fact that this separate Negro organization had been formed and the writer said: "The convention of colored men at Washington last week was in some respects the most remarkable one we ever attended. We had always had full faith in the capacity of the Negro for self-improvement, but were not prepared to see, fresh from slavery, a body of two hundred men, so thoroughly conversant with public affairs, so independent in spirit, and so anxious apparently to improve their social condition, as the men who represented the South, in that convention."

There were some white fraternal delegates present and Langston attacked them as emissaries of the Democratic Party, but Sella Martin replied and told the convention plainly that they could not afford to repel the sympathy of white friends of the labor cause, and that the interests of the laboring classes, white and black, on this continent, were identical. Of the presiding officer, the writer in the *American Workingman* says:

"And here we feel impelled to say that in all our experience in numerous public assemblies, we have never seen a presiding officer show more executive ability than Mr. Harris, and certainly he does not owe it to white blood, as he is evidently a full-blooded Negro, so

far as color and features are any evidence of being so. His success was largely owing, we think, to the fact that he possessed the entire confidence of the convention, as well as superior ability for the position."

He is sorry that a separate union has been formed. "But we are convinced that for the present at least, they could not do better. It is useless to attempt to cover up the fact that there is still a wide gulf between the two races in this country, and for a time at least they must each in their own way work out a solution of this labor problem. At no very distant day they will become united, and work in harmony together; and we who have never felt the iron as they have must be slow to condemn them because they do not see as we do on this labor movement. For ourselves, we should have felt better satisfied had they decided to join the great national movement now in progress, but fresh as they are from slavery, looking as they naturally do on the Republican Party as their deliverers from bondage, it is not strange that they should hesitate joining any other movement. Although they did not distinctly recognize any party in their platform, yet the sentiment was clearly Republican, if their speeches were any indication. Still, strange as it may seem, parties were ignored in their platform, and this course was taken mainly through the influence and votes of the Southern delegates."

The resolutions of this body stressed education as one of the strongest safeguards of the republic; advocated industrious habits, and the learning of trades and professions, and declared:

"That the exclusion of colored men and apprentices from the right to labor in any department of industry or workshops, in any of the states and territories of the United States, by what is known as 'trades unions,' is an insult to God, injury to us, and disgrace to humanity; while we extend a free and welcome hand to the free immigration of labor of all nationalities, we emphatically deem imported, contract, coolie labor to be a positive injury to the working people of the United States—is but the system of slavery in a new form, and we appeal to the Congress of the United States to rigidly enforce the Act of 1862, prohibiting coolie importations, and to enact such laws as will best protect free American labor against this or any similar form of slavery."

They recommended the establishment of cooperative workshops, building and loan associations, the purchase of land "as a remedy against their exclusion from other workshops on account of color, as a means of furnishing employment, as well as a protection against the aggression of capital, and as the easiest and shortest method of enabling every man to procure a homestead for his family; and to accomplish this end we would particularly impress the greatest impor-

tance of the observance of diligence in business, and the practice of rigid economy in our social and domestic arrangements.

"Resolved, that we regard education as one of the greatest blessings that the human family enjoys, and that we earnestly appeal to our fellow citizens to allow no opportunity, no matter how limited and remote, to pass unimproved; that the thanks of the colored people of this country is due to the Congress of the United States for the establishment and maintenance of the Freedman's Bureau, and to Major General Howard, commissioner; Reverend J. W. Alvord, and John M. Langston, Esq., general inspectors, for their cooperative labors in the establishment and good government of hundreds of schools in the Southern States, whereby thousands of men, women and children, have been, and are now being taught the rudiments of an English education . . . and we appeal to the friends of progress and to our citizens of the several states to continue their efforts to the various legislatures until every state can boast of having a free school system, with no distinction in dissemination of knowledge to its inhabitants on account of race, color, sex, creed or previous condition."

The low wages of labor in the South were cited, and according to the *New York Tribune*, December 11, 1869, it was said:

"To remedy this, labor must be made more scarce, and the best way to do that was to make laborers handovers. Congress is to be asked, therefore, to subdivide the public lands in the South into twenty-acre farms, to make one year's residence entitle a settler to a patent, and also to place in the hands of a Commission a sum of money, not exceeding two million dollars, to aid their settlement, and also to purchase lands in states where no public lands are found, the money to be loaned for five years, without interest. Congress will also be asked not to restore to Southern railroads the lapsed land grants of 1856, and to require that Texas, prior to readmission to representation, shall put her public lands under the operations of provisions similar to the United States Homestead Law of 1866. . . ."

" . . . Mr. Downing from the Committee on Capital and Labor, submitted the following: . . . Your committee would simply refer to the unkind, estranging policy of the labor organizations of white men, who, while they make loud proclamations as to the injustice (as they allege) to which they are subjected, justify injustice, so far as giving an example to do so may, by excluding from their benches and their workshops worthy craftsmen and apprentices only because of their color, for no just cause. We say to such, so long as you persist therein, we cannot fellowship with you in your struggle, and look for failure and mortification on your part; not even the sacred name of Wendell Phillips can save you, however much we revere him and cherish to-

ward him not only profound respect, but confidence and gratitude. . . ."

In February, 1870, the Bureau of Labor issued an address to the colored people which stressed the need of organizing Negro labor, and said that the lack of organization was the cause of low wages. It stated the following purposes of the Colored National Labor Union and the Bureau of Labor:

- "1. To encourage and superintend the organization of labor.
- "2. To bring about legislation which would secure equality before the law for all and enforce the contracts for labor.
- "3. To secure funds from bankers and capitalists for aid in establishing cooperative associations.
- "4. To overcome the opposition of white mechanics who excluded workers from their unions and shops.
- "5. To organize state labor conventions.
- "6. To organize, where there were seven or more mechanics, artisans and laborers of any particular branch of industry, separate labor associations and to advertise their labor in the daily papers.
- "7. To encourage independent effort in creating capital, buying tools, building houses, forging iron, making brick.
- "8. To own a homestead.

"The address was signed by Isaac Myers, President, and G. T. Downing, Vice-President. . . ." ²²

Local organizations were formed, meetings held, and a weekly paper, *The New Era*, was made the national organ. On February 21, a plan was adopted to send an agent South to organize Negro labor. Isaac Myers, President of the Union, was selected. He held a meeting in Norfolk, Virginia, urging the union of white and colored workmen in the same trade. Other labor meetings took place in 1870 in New York and the District of Columbia.

The second annual meeting of the National Labor Union took place January 9, 1871, with delegates from North and South, including Alabama, Virginia, Texas and North Carolina. Congress was petitioned for a national system of education with technical training. The convention desired to see industries and factories because the South was confined to a few staples, which created ignorance and poverty among both white and colored laborers and among the owning classes fear that industry would help elevate the status of the laborer.

The next annual meeting of the National Labor Union was called at Columbia, South Carolina, coincidental with the Southern convention which was a political gathering. Here there began to appear rivalry between the economic and political objects of the Negro. *The New Era*, national organ of the National Labor Union, inquired into

the real objects of this meeting. It wanted to know if this union was another name for communism, or if it was a colored offshoot of the International, which intended eventually to impose a mobocracy on America?

The convention at Columbia was presided over by H. M. Turner of Georgia. Committees were appointed on education and labor, on printing, finance, civil rights, organization, immigration, and on Southern outrages. The committee on the address made a report which called for political rights, justice, protection of the courts, and advancement in the industrial arts.

In 1872, in April, a Southern states' convention assembled at New Orleans with Frederick Douglass presiding. Evidently, the National Labor Union was steadily becoming political in its influences and leadership. Efforts were made to show that Negro labor could only achieve its end by political organization. Frederick Douglass wrote an editorial to this effect, and concluded with the words: "The Republican Party is the true workingmen's party of the country." This sounded strange for the North but it was at the time true of the South. The National Labor Union issued an address to its state unions, saying that while it was not a political organization, it regarded it as the duty of every colored man to be interested in the Republican Party and stand by it. "By its success, we stand; by its defeat, we fall. To that party we are indebted for the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the homestead law, the eight-hour law and an improved educational system." The presidents of the state labor unions were directed to read this address before their organizations.

As the Negroes moved from unionism toward political action, white labor in the North not only moved in the opposite direction from political action to union organization, but also evolved the American Blindspot for the Negro and his problems. It lost interest and vital touch with Southern labor and acted as though the millions of laborers in the South did not exist.

Thus labor went into the great war of 1877 against Northern capitalists unsupported by the black man, and the black man went his way in the South to strengthen and consolidate his power, unsupported by Northern labor. Suppose for a moment that Northern labor had stopped the bargain of 1876 and maintained the power of the labor vote in the South; and suppose that the Negro with new and dawning consciousness of the demands of labor as differentiated from the demands of capitalists, had used his vote more specifically for the benefit of white labor, South and North?

If the basic problem of Reconstruction in the South was economic, then the kernel of the economic situation was the land. This was clear

to the sophisticated leadership of Stevens and to the philanthropy of Sumner and Oliver Howard; but it was equally clear to the ignorant and inexperienced of the freed slaves.

The Northern labor leaders and the mass of the North were slow in realizing that the center of the South's labor problem was the land, and not as yet industry. Here in the South, after the war, was a chance to keep the economic balance between farm and factory. And if it had been done, the result would have been fateful for the nation and for the world.

The Negro unerringly and insistently led the way. The main question to which the Negroes returned again and again was the problem of owning land. It was ridiculed as unreasonable and unjust to the impoverished landholders of the South, and as a part of the desire for revenge which the North had. But in essence it was nothing of the sort.

Again and again, crudely but logically, the Negroes expressed their right to the land and the deep importance of this right. And as usual here the government played fast and loose because it had two irreconcilable ideas in mind. Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner were perfectly clear; the Negroes must have land furnished them either for a nominal sum or as a gift, and this land should be furnished by the government and paid for either out of taxation, or as Stevens repeatedly insisted, as an indemnity placed on the South for civil war. Moreover, for 250 years the Negroes had worked on this land, and by every analogy in history, when they were emancipated the land ought to have belonged in large part to the workers.

On the other hand, to the organized industry of the North, capital in machines or land was sacred; they did not wish to appear to punish the South by taking any more of its already partly confiscated capital. They did not want to set an example of confiscation before a nation victimized by monopoly; and they were bitterly opposed to giving capital to workers or redistributing wealth by public taxation. The result was that the nation moved backward and forward according as to one or the other idea gained the upper hand. Sir George Campbell said:

"All that is now wanted to make the Negro a fixed and conservative element in American society is to give him encouragement to, and facilities for, making himself, by his own exertions, a small landowner; to do, in fact, for him what we have sought to do for the Irish farmer. Land in America is so much cheaper and more abundant, that it would be infinitely easier to effect the same object there. I would by no means seek to withdraw the whole population from hired labor; on the contrary, the Negro in many respects is so much at his best in

that function, that I should look to a large class of laborers remaining; but I am at the same time confident that it would be a very great benefit and stability to the country if a large number should acquire thrift and independent position as landowning American citizens."²³

Most writers and speakers thought of the land problem so far as the Negro was concerned as an incidental thing; it was something that "would come." On the other hand, the former slave holders knew that land was the key to the situation and they tried desperately to center thought on labor rather than on land ownership. "One universal opinion is that they shall not be allowed to acquire or hold land. I have heard that expressed from the first. They say that unless Negroes work for them they shall not work at all."²⁴

The freed slaves were desperately poor; the poor whites had always been poor except insofar as they were pensioners of the planters. How could industry be set going again and what was the relation of free Negro labor to this industry? Of course, the full realization of freedom could not be accomplished in a minute. Unless crops were raised and the wheels of industry started, emancipation would have been an experiment so costly that no nation could have supported it. And we must remember that in the end and as a logical matter of dollars and cents, emancipation paid. This is so much a matter of common knowledge today that we forget how bitterly and with what absolute certainty the South and even many in the North declared that free Negro labor was economically impossible.

What they insisted on during Reconstruction was labor, continuous, steady labor to continue production of high-priced crops. What they slurred over or refused to discuss was the object of this labor and the distribution of its product. Of labor for the economic benefit of the laborer except to the extent of the lowest possible wage that would sustain him they had no conception; and to any transfer of capital in land to the laborer as a basis of his right to demand a fairer share of the products, they were bitterly opposed.

The white South believed that it was being deliberately insulted in a petty spirit of vengeance by the North. But this was a childish way of attributing human emotions to an economic situation. The North as a whole harbored no thoughts of vengeance. Sumner wrecked his career on a deed of forgiveness; and Stevens punished the slave system and its promoters only insofar as they still interfered with freedom, or kept the ill-gotten capital accumulated by exploiting slaves.

The party of Northern industry watched the beginnings of democratic government in the South with distrust. They did not expect Negro suffrage to succeed, but they did expect that it would soon com-

pel the Southern oligarchy to capitulate to the dictatorship of industry. Their hopes were fulfilled in 1876.

The abolition-democracy faced the Southern conventions of 1867 with fear. It was the greatest test of democracy that the nation had known. Even after the great Reform Bill of 1832, England had less than one million voters. It was not until 1867 that a million or more skilled laborers in England got the vote.

Here, at the stroke of the pen, more than one million Negroes were given the right to vote, of whom probably three-fourths could not read or write; and at the same time more than one million whites were given the same right, and at least one-third of them were equally illiterate. This was a desperate venture forced by a slave-minded régime; it had refused to grant complete physical freedom to black workers; it refused them education and access to the land and insisted on dominant political power based on the number of these same serfs. Under these circumstances the experiment had to be made. For to surrender now was to have sacrificed blood and billions of dollars in vain.

But, it was the American Blindspot that made the experiment all the more difficult, and to the South incomprehensible. For several generations the South had been taught to look upon the Negro as a thing apart. He was different from other human beings. The system of slave labor, under which he was employed, was radically different from all other systems of labor. There could be no comparison between labor problems in the South and in the North; between the Negro and white laborer.

"It must be confessed that the representatives of the white oligarchy are having a hard time, being forced to consider their own former slaves no longer as Negroes, 'niggers,' that is to say, members of a category unrecognized in any natural history, somewhere between men and monkeys in the animal scale, but as men, who have, as Jefferson phrased it, equal rights with them in the free development of their talents and in the pursuit of happiness; or, in other words, as citizens on an equal footing with themselves."²⁵

"The Northern Democrats encouraged resistance on the part of the South, and yet some of them saw the situation clearly. The intrinsic difficulties of the situation are not to be denied. The ruling classes of the Southern people had attempted to disrupt the Union in order to establish their own independence. The overthrow of their armies had not changed their opinions nor their feelings. Necessity compelled their submission, but necessity could not make them love a union with the victorious North, nor make them cordially recognize and support the rights of the freedmen."²⁸

During the winter and spring of 1867-1868 in accordance with the

legislation of Congress, Southern conventions met and adopted new constitutions. These constitutions provided for equal civil rights, established universal suffrage and disfranchised disloyal whites. After the framing of these constitutions, they were voted on by the people. Also, state officers and members of the legislature were chosen at the same election and by the same voters. The army commanders did their best to bring out the vote and to counteract various devices for keeping Negroes away from the polls. The polls were kept open two and three days and in Georgia even five days.

Officials of the Freedmen's Bureau helped in the enforcement of the Reconstruction Acts. The act of March 23 provided that registration and elections should be conducted by boards of three loyal officers or persons appointed by the district commander. They were required to take the "Iron Clad Oath." Bureau officials were often appointed as members of these boards and Negroes were often used. The bureau officials advised Negroes about registration and voting and disabused their mind of fears of taxation or military service or reenslavement. They promised to protect them in case of a boycott of employers against those that voted.

Thus in 1867 there took place in the South a series of elections in which a new electorate registered and expressed its desire as to constitutional conventions to reconstruct the states. One million, three hundred and sixty-three thousand, six hundred and forty persons voted, of whom 660,181 were whites, and 703,459 were Negroes, as compared with a total vote of 721,191 whites voting in 1860.²⁷

	Registered		Vote on Holding		Total Vote 1860	
	White	Colored	For	Against		
Virginia	120,101	105,832	225,933	107,342	61,887	167,223
North Carolina	106,721	72,932	179,653	93,006	32,961	96,230
South Carolina	46,882	80,550	127,432	68,768	2,278	
Georgia	96,333	95,168	191,501	102,283	4,127	106,365
Alabama	61,295	104,518	165,813	90,283	5,583	90,357
Florida	11,914	16,089	28,003	14,300	203	14,347
*Mississippi	62,362	77,328	139,690	69,739	6,277	69,120
*Arkansas	49,722	17,109	66,831	27,576	13,558	64,053
Louisiana	45,218	84,436	129,654	75,083	4,006	50,510
Texas	59,633	49,497	109,130	44,689	11,440	62,986
Total	660,181	703,459	1,363,640			721,191

* Division by race estimated; total official.

At first, the planters thought to defeat Reconstruction by refusing to vote and thus making the whole experiment a failure at the very start. Many leading whites, small in total number but large in influence and in former wealth and power, were disfranchised, perhaps 200,000 in all.

On the other hand, the poor whites must have voted widely, especially when we note the large white vote in most of the states despite war, mortality, absentions and disabilities. It is probable that in 1868 not only did Negroes vote freely, but more poor whites than ever before exercised the franchise. Democracy for the first time in at least a century succeeded oligarchy in the South. The voting of nearly three-fourths of a million Negroes was especially significant and represented a very large proportion of, perhaps, a million eligible black voters.

The elections which reconstructed the South under the Congressional plan were fair and honest elections, and probably never before were such democratic elections held in the South and never since such fair elections. Indeed, as a special champion of the South says: "It would be hard to deny that, so far as the ordinary civil administration was concerned, the rule of the generals was as just and efficient as it was far-reaching. Criticism and denunciation of their acts were bitter and continuous; but no very profound research is necessary in order to discover that the animus of these attacks was chiefly political."²⁸

As a result of the elections, constitutional conventions were decided on in all the Southern states and the following number of members of the Conventions elected:

State	Delegates—1868			Per Cent Negro
	Black	White	Total	
South Carolina.....	76	48	124	61
Louisiana.....	49	49	98	50
Florida.....	18	27	45	40
Virginia.....	25	80	105	24
Georgia.....	33	137	170	19
Mississippi.....	17	83	100	17
Alabama.....	18	90	108	17
Arkansas.....	8	58	66	12
North Carolina.....	15	118	133	11
Texas.....	9	81	90	10

As these conventions were being voted on, the presidential election approached. The campaign began in May, 1868. The Republican national platform did not dare to stand squarely for Negro suffrage but evoked this illogical compromise: "The guaranty by Congress of equal suffrage to all loyal men at the South was demanded by every consid-

eration of public safety, of gratitude, and of justice, and must be maintained; while the question of suffrage in all the loyal states properly belongs to the people of these States."²⁹

Grant and Colfax were nominated. Colfax declared that peace had been prevented by "executive opposition, and by refusals to accept any plan of reconstruction proffered by Congress. Justice and public safety at last combined to teach us that only by an enlargement of suffrage in those States could the desired end be attained, and that it was even more safe to give the ballot to those who loved the Union than to those who had sought ineffectually to destroy it."

In 1865-1868, the Democratic Party controlled from 44 per cent to 50 per cent of the voters in the North, so that if the white people of the South had been included, undoubtedly the Democratic Party would have been in the majority. By the exclusion of the South, the Democratic Party had been beaten in 1866, and in 1867 had carried only Maryland and Kentucky, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and California; nevertheless, on the whole, the Democratic vote increased, as compared with the Republican.

The elections of 1867 made it clear that if the Democrats won in 1868, the entire system of Reconstruction would be changed. The business elements of the North, therefore, while not willing to follow abolition-democracy to the extreme, were even less willing to put Reconstruction entirely in the hands of Southerners. Congress, therefore, prepared to clench its political hold on the South, and reconstruct Southern states on a basis of Negro suffrage.

While, then, the conservative and commercial elements in the North went into the Republican Party, on the other hand, former Democrats began to return to the Democratic Party, where they were received with more or less suspicion. Meetings began to be held by Democratic leaders to determine candidates and procedure. On Jackson Day, January 8, 1868, a meeting was held in Washington, at which President Johnson spoke and many Democratic leaders. This meeting was dominated by the War Democrats, rather than by Copperheads, and emphasis was laid upon cooperation between the War Democrats and the Johnson administration, on the one hand, and the Democratic organization on the other. New measures and new men were sought. August Belmont, the banker, was chairman of the National Committee. New York was chosen as the seat of the convention, and a general invitation was issued to former Democrats.

The New York *Herald* enumerated the elements of the new democracy: merchants who opposed the protective tariff, the unemployed, the foreign born, the Catholics, the women opposed to Negro suffrage, the opponents of military control in the South. Many papers warned

the pro-Southern elements in the Democratic Party not to oppose the loyal sentiment in the nation. The Springfield *Republican*, July 1, mentioned "the mere stupid, causeless, aimless hatred of the Negro" in the Democratic Party.

The opposition of the Democrats to Negro suffrage was not clearly expressed. Evidently, the tide in favor of democracy had risen so high in the country that as a party the Democrats did not dare oppose it. The party, therefore, would not come out flatly in opposition to Negro suffrage but simply declared that suffrage was a question to be settled by the states. Twenty-two state Democratic conventions were held in 1868. Eleven of these opposed Negro suffrage anywhere. Only the convention of South Carolina in April approved it. Ten other conventions either were silent on the subject or announced their belief that this was a matter of state control.

The various state platforms illustrated local Northern thought. California Democrats declared that they "now and always confide in the intelligence, patriotism, and discriminating justice of the white people of the country to administer and control their Government, without the aid of either Negroes or Chinese."⁸⁰

The Democrats of Washington territory agreed with California in opposing the extension of the elective franchise to Negroes, Indians and Chinese.

The Ohio Democrats declared that the attempt to regulate suffrage in Ohio was "subversive of the federal Constitution." The Democrats of Pennsylvania were opposed to conferring upon the Negro the right to vote. Most of the Republican conventions approved the Fifteenth Amendment. A minority report of the Virginia Conservatives called for white control and said: "We call upon white men, whether native or adopted citizens, to vote down the Constitution, and thereby save themselves and their posterity from Negro suffrage, Negro office-holding, and its legitimate consequence—Negro social equality."

This was a time of changing of political allegiance. The Johnson movement collapsed. Conservative Republicans, like Fessenden and Trumbull, united with the Republicans. Seward, McCulloch, and Welles, former supporters of Lincoln, stood staunchly by President Johnson. Other Republicans, like the Blair, Doolittle, and Chase, drifted toward the Democrats. But the Democratic Party, by its action during the campaign, repelled many of the Conservatives on account of its attitude on money, and its radical attitude on Reconstruction. State and local elections in the spring of 1868 encouraged the Democrats. The Republican vote was reduced in New Hampshire; in Michigan Negro suffrage was defeated by a vote of 110,000 to 71,000, and the Democrats triumphed in Connecticut.

Before the war, Salmon P. Chase was a prominent Abolitionist, and after the war, a Radical Republican. He advocated Negro suffrage, and in May, 1865, made a trip to the South to investigate the position of the Negro. In Charleston, he spoke to the Negroes, and urged them to deserve the suffrage, even if they did not get it.

On the other hand, Chase did not like the military governments of the South, and favored state rights as against the increased power of the Federal Government. He said once: "While we freed the Negro, we enslaved ourselves." Becoming Chief Justice, he presided at Johnson's impeachment and favored Johnson possibly on account of his dislike of Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio. Wade would have become President if Johnson had been impeached. Chase's daughter Kate was said to have made some fiery declarations at "the idea of that horrid Ben Wade being put over my father." For his stand in this trial, he was practically read out of the Republican Party, and became a formidable candidate for the Democratic nomination.

The Chase supporters had headquarters in New York, and his daughter was there in person. It was suggested that Chase should declare Reconstruction acts unconstitutional "as the Supreme Court would probably decide." This statement, of course, Chase could not make, and he had to warn his daughter against too great activity. A small group of some twenty Negroes assisted the Chase movement, and argued that Chase would carry many Southern Negro votes. After a long deadlock, Seymour of New York, the former Copperhead Governor of Draft Riot fame, was nominated chiefly because he failed to swing his followers to Chase, as he had promised.

The platform of the convention recognized slavery and secession as closed questions. It demanded the immediate restoration of all states, amnesty for all political offenses, and the regulation of suffrage in the states by their citizens. It asked for the abolition of the Freedmen's Bureau and all agencies for Negro supremacy. It said that the Republicans, instead of restoring the Union, had dissolved it, subjecting ten states to military despotism and Negro supremacy; and that the corruption of the Radical Party had been unprecedented.

The New York *Herald* called Seymour "the embodiment of copperheadism." Greeley declared that Seymour had proposed resisting secession by force; had declared that if the Union could only be maintained by abolishing slavery, then the Union should be given up; had given grudging support to the government while war governor, and had opposed the draft. The New York *Sun* said that he represented fairly the average sentiment of his party. Seymour accepted the platform but did not discuss it in detail. He attacked Congressional Reconstruction, but pointed out that no violent change could take place since the

Republicans would continue to control the Senate. Frederick Douglass, writing in the *Independent*, August 20, 1868, said that Seymour's letter of acceptance "was smooth as oil and as fair-seeming as hypocrisy itself, containing every disposition to deceive but without the ability. It was cunning and cowardly." Seymour made no reference to finance or suffrage.

Blair, the Democratic candidate for Vice President, was a wild Missourian given to drink, who openly advocated that the new President "disperse the carpetbag governments" by force as soon as his party triumphed.

President Johnson was disgusted and chagrined at not receiving the nomination and said that Seymour had not lifted a finger to sustain his administration. In the campaign, he was finally induced to give some support to the Democratic ticket. Seymour, on the other hand, practically offered Johnson an appointment if he should be elected. Seward took little part in the campaign, although he spoke once for the Republican ticket, and included praise for President Johnson.

Thus the campaign started with contradictions inside the Democratic Party. Seymour opposed the greenback idea before the national convention, and then ran on a platform that advocated it. Blair advocated revolution; Hampton opposed Negro suffrage, and appealed to Negro voters. Chase asked universal suffrage, and remanded the question to the states. There were charges that the Democrats proposed to repudiate the national debt and pay for emancipated slaves and property lost during the war. Southern Democrats were prominent. Toombs, Cobb, and Forrest took part. The *New York Nation* said that "these Southerners were of more service to the Republicans than all of their orators and literature." Many of them were accused of incendiary speeches. Vance of North Carolina was accused of saying that Seymour and Blair would win what the Confederates fought for. Hill of Georgia declared that the South was going to regulate its own internal democratic affairs in its own way. Toombs declared that if the Democrats were victorious, the Reconstruction governor and legislators would be made to vacate at once. Howell Cobb said that those in control of the Southern states would be ousted, while Albert Pike of Arkansas wrote in the *Memphis Appeal*: "The day will come when the South will be independent."³¹

Violence and intimidation were widespread in the South during this election, and bribery and fraud were prevalent in the North. In Philadelphia, a Supreme Court justice issued over five thousand neutralization papers within two weeks.

The *Nation*, November 12, charged that Georgia and Louisiana were carried by "organized assassination, and New Jersey and New York

by fraud." The Democratic majority of 165 in Oregon was due, it was said, to voters brought in from neighboring states. Late in October, there was a movement to get Seymour to withdraw and substitute Chase or Johnson. The *New York World* led the movement, but nothing came of it. Grant was elected by 214 electoral votes to 80 for Seymour, and 3,012,833 to 2,703,249 popular votes. Thus Grant received 52.71%. Seymour carried Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Oregon. Virginia, Mississippi and Texas did not vote. During this campaign, Negro suffrage was defeated in Missouri by 74,053 to 55,236. In Minnesota, it was carried. In Nevada, it was carried by the Republican legislature.

At Christmas, 1868, President Johnson proclaimed general amnesty, pardoning every person engaged directly or indirectly in the rebellion. His last presidential message was an interesting and rather curious argument. He declared, in effect, that the dictatorship of labor, attempted in the South under the Reconstruction acts, had led to corruption and bloodshed and, therefore, prevented the rise of industry in the South, which was the real solution of the race problem. He believed that the bondholders had already received an amount larger than the principal which they owed and that, hereafter, the interest paid should be applied to the reduction of that principal.

Johnson thus illustrated again the way in which the color problem became the Blindspot of American political and social development and made logical argument almost impossible. The only power to curtail the rising empire of finance in the United States was industrial democracy—votes and intelligence in the hands of the laboring class, black and white, North and South.

The chief act of the third session of the 40th Congress was the Fifteenth Amendment. Early in 1867, two amendments on the suffrage were introduced: one which prohibited any color distinction, and the other requiring \$250 property qualification or an additional tax. The victory of the Republican Party in 1868 made the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment paramount.

In 1868, eleven amendments were introduced to extend the right of suffrage to the freedmen. Of these amendments, seven were presented in the House and four in the Senate. All except one were referred to the Committee on Judiciary in each House. The House Committee on the Judiciary reported June 11, 1869, a proposed Fifteenth Amendment. This caused long debate in the House and many proposed modifications. Among the propositions was that no educational attainment or possession of property should be made the test of any citizen's right to vote. The resolution proposed by the committee with

a minor change was passed by the House by a vote of 150-42, January 30, 1869.

Meantime, the Senate had been discussing a similar proposition and many modifications had been proposed. January 30, on reception of the House Amendment, the Senate discussed it. Eight other amendments were offered, and some fifteen substitute propositions. Finally, a substitute suggested by Wilson was adopted by a vote of 31-27. It read:

"No discrimination shall be made in any State among the citizens of the United States in the exercise of the elective franchise or in the right to hold office in any State, on account of race, color, nativity, property, education or religious creed."²²

This was amended so as to insure Congress power to direct the manner in which the election should be conducted, and thus the Senate agreed to the House proposition with amendments. The House refused to concur. The Senate declined to recede and the measure failed.

Thereupon, February 17, 1869, the Senate resumed consideration of its own resolution and eleven amendments were proposed and rejected. Finally, the Fifteenth Amendment was passed 35-11, in its present form, except that the words "to hold office" were added after "the right to vote."

February 20, the House considered this proposal and there were five attempts to amend it, of which one was successful and added "nativity, property and creed," to the other qualifications. It then passed the House 140-37. The Senate rejected the House amendment and asked for conference. Finally, the present Fifteenth Amendment was agreed upon, and it passed the House 145-44, and the Senate 39-13. It was thus recommended to the states February 26, 1869.

Some Americans think and say that the nation freed the black slave and gave him a vote and that, unable to use it intelligently, he lost it. That is not so. To win the war America freed the slave and armed him; and the threat to arm the mass of the black workers of the Confederacy stopped the war. Nor does this fact for a moment deny that some prophets and martyrs demanded first and last the abolition of slavery as the sole object of the war and at any cost of life and wealth. So, too, some Americans demanded not simply physical freedom but votes, land, and education for blacks, not only in order to compass the economic emancipation of labor, but also as the only fulfillment of American democratic ideals; but most Americans used the Negro to defend their own economic interests and, refusing him adequate land and real education and even common justice, deserted him shamelessly as soon as their selfish interests were safe. Nor does this

for a moment deny that unselfish and far-seeing Americans, poor as well as rich, by supplying public schools when the Negroes demanded them and establishing higher schools to train teachers, saved the Negro from being entirely reenslaved or exterminated in an unequal and cowardly renewal of war.

We are the hewers and delvers who toil for another's gain,—
The common clods and the rabble, stunted of brow and brain.
What do we want, the gleaners, of the harvest we have reaped?
What do we want, the neuters, of the honey we have heaped?

What matter if king or consul or president holds the rein,
If crime and poverty ever be links in the bondman's chain?
What careth the burden-bearer that Liberty packed his load,
If Hunger presseth behind him with a sharp and ready goad?

JAMES JEFFREY ROSCHE

1. McPherson, *History of United States During Reconstruction*, pp. 141, 142.
2. Herbert, *The Heritage of the Civil War*, p. 8.
3. *Congressional Globe*, 40th Congress, 1st Session, p. 55.
4. Pierce, *Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner*, Vol. IV, pp. 311, 312.
5. Pierce, *Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner*, Vol. IV, pp. 285-290.
6. Pierce, *Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner*, Vol. IV, pp. 313, 314.
7. Pierce, *Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner*, Vol. IV, p. 307.
8. Clemenceau, *American Reconstruction, 1865-1870*, p. 65.
9. Pierce, *Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner*, Vol. IV, p. 317.
10. Clemenceau, *American Reconstruction, 1865-1870*, pp. 104, 131.
11. Porter, *Ohio Politics*, p. 244.
12. McCall, *Thaddeus Stevens, American Statesmen*, p. 336.
13. Burgess, *Reconstruction*, p. 191.
14. McCall, *Thaddeus Stevens, American Statesmen*, pp. 352-353.
15. McCall, *Thaddeus Stevens, American Statesmen* (footnote), p. 336.
16. Schlieter, *Lincoln, Labor and Slavery*, pp. 196, 197, 200.
17. Commons and Andrews, *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, IX, pp. 185, 186, 187, 188.
18. Schlieter, *Lincoln, Labor and Slavery*, p. 235.
19. Wesley, *Negro Labor in the United States*, pp. 162, 163.
20. Schlieter, *Lincoln, Labor and Slavery*, pp. 231, 232.
21. Commons and Andrews, *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, Vol. IX, pp. 243, 256, 268, 285.
22. Wesley, *Negro Labor in the United States*, pp. 180, 187.
23. Campbell, *Black and White in the Southern States*, p. 160.
24. Hayes, in the *Reports of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction*, 1866, Part IV, p. 62.
25. Clemenceau, *American Reconstruction, 1865-1870*, pp. 291-292.
26. Cox, *Three Decades of Federal Legislation*, pp. 378, 379.
27. Dunning, *Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction*, p. 188. The registration figures by states are after the McPherson *History of United States During Reconstruction*, p. 374. Other sources give slightly different totals in some cases.

28. Dunning, *Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction*, p. 174.
 29. McPherson, *History of United States During Reconstruction*, pp. 364, 366.
 30. McPherson, *History of United States During Reconstruction*, pp. 479, 483, 486.
 31. Coleman, *Election of 1868*, pp. 311-312.
 32. Ames, *Amendments to the Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 233, 235.

X. THE BLACK PROLETARIAT* IN SOUTH CAROLINA

How in the years from 1868-1876, in a state where blacks outnumbered whites, the will of the mass of black labor, modified by their own and other leaders and dimmed by ignorance, inexperience and uncertainty, dictated the form and methods of government

A great political scientist in one of the oldest and largest of American universities wrote and taught thousands of youths and readers that "There is no question, now, that Congress did a monstrous thing, and committed a great political error, if not a sin, in the creation of this new electorate. It was a great wrong to civilization to put the white race of the South under the domination of the Negro race. The claim that there is nothing in the color of the skin from the point of view of political ethics is a great sophism. A black skin means membership in a race of men which has never of itself succeeded in subjecting passion to reason; has never, therefore, created any civilization of any kind."¹

Here is the crux of all national discussion and study of Reconstruction. The problem is inconceivably put beyond investigation and historic proof by the dictum of Judge Taney, Andrew Johnson, John Burgess and their conferees, that Negroes are not men and cannot be regarded and treated as such.

The student who would test this dictum by facts is faced by this set barrier. The whole history of Reconstruction has with few exceptions been written by passionate believers in the inferiority of the Negro. The whole body of facts concerning what the Negro actually said and did, how he worked, what he wanted, for whom he voted, is masked in such a cloud of charges, exaggeration and biased testimony, that most students have given up all attempt at new material or new evaluation of the old, and simply repeated perfunctorily all the current legends of black buffoons in legislature, golden spittoons

* The record of the Negro worker during Reconstruction presents an opportunity to study inductively the Marxian theory of the state. I first called this chapter "The Dictatorship of the Black Proletariat in South Carolina," but it has been brought to my attention that this would not be correct since universal suffrage does not lead to a real dictatorship until workers use their votes consciously to rid themselves of the dominion of private capital. There were signs of such an object among South Carolina Negroes, but it was always coupled with the idea of that day, that the only real escape for a laborer was himself to own capital.

fly on the Aubry Plantation . . . and in order that everybody should know about it had them fixed on pikes along the hedges of his plantation, palm-tree fashion." To such men the news of the May decree giving rights to 400 Mulattoes was a dangerous symptom and outrage unspeakable. They lynched Mulattoes, they stamped upon the French flag, they abjured France, they could not mention France or Frenchmen without oaths and curses. The new Assembly which was to replace the broken Assembly of St Marc met at Léogane in early August and passed a series of resolutions designed to ensure independence. In order to be nearer the centre of affairs the members decided to transfer to Le Cap where the Governor was. But some of the deputies never reached there, being killed on the way by the revolting Negroes of the North. These, luckily for themselves, had no deputies in Paris listening to parliamentary promises and weakening their will. Neglected and ignored by all the politicians of every brand and persuasion, they had organised on their own and struck for freedom at last.

IV

The San Domingo Masses Begin

Eh ! Eh ! Bomba ! Heu ! Heu !
 Canga, baño té !
 Canga, mouné de lé !
 Canga, do ki la !
 Canga, do ki la !
 Canga, li !

THE SLAVES worked on the land, and, like revolutionary peasants everywhere, they aimed at the extermination of their oppressors. But working and living together in gangs

of hundreds on the huge sugar-factories which covered the North Plain, they were closer to a modern proletariat than any group of workers in existence at the time, and the rising was, therefore, a thoroughly prepared and organised mass movement. By hard experience they had learnt that isolated efforts were doomed to failure, and in the early months of 1791 in and around Le Cap they were organising for revolution. Voodoo was the medium of the conspiracy. In spite of all prohibitions, the slaves travelled miles to sing and dance and practise the rites and talk; and now, since the revolution, to hear the political news and make their plans. Boukman, a Papaloi or High Priest, a gigantic Negro, was the leader. He was headman of a plantation and followed the political situation both among the whites and among the Mulattoes. By the end of July 1791 the blacks in and around Le Cap were ready and waiting. The plan was conceived on a massive scale and they aimed at exterminating the whites and taking the colony for themselves. There were perhaps 12,000 slaves in Le Cap, 6,000 of them men. One night the slaves in the suburbs and outskirts of Le Cap were to fire the plantations. At this signal the slaves in the town would massacre the whites and the slaves on the plain would complete the destruction. They had travelled a long, long way since the grandiose poisoning schemes of Mackandal.

The plan did not succeed in its entirety. But it very nearly did, and the scope and organisation of this revolt shows Boukman to be the first of that line of great leaders whom the slaves were to throw up in such profusion and rapidly during the years which followed. That so vast a conspiracy was not discovered until it had actually broken out is a testimony to their solidarity. In early August the slaves in Limbé, then and to the end of the revolution one of the storm-centres, rose prematurely and were crushed. This Limbé rising showed that it was dangerous to delay. Three days after, representatives from parishes all over the plain assembled to fix the day. Deputies on their way to Le Cap for the first session of the Colonial Assembly, to begin on August 25th, met throngs of slaves on the road who

abused and even attacked them. On August 21st some prisoners were taken and de Blanchelande, the Governor, examined them himself the next day. He did not get much from them, but he understood vaguely that there was to be some sort of rising. He took precautions to safeguard the city from the slaves within and he ordered patrols to cover the outskirts. But these whites despised the slaves too much to believe them capable of organising a mass movement on a grand scale. They could not get from the prisoners the names of the leaders, and what precautions could they take against the thousands of slaves on the hundreds of plantations? Some of the white rabble in Le Cap, always ready for loot and pillage, were revealed as being connected with a plot of some sort. De Blanchelande was more concerned about these than about the Negroes.

On the night of the 22nd a tropical storm raged, with lightning and gusts of wind and heavy showers of rain. Carrying torches to light their way, the leaders of the revolt met in an open space in the thick forests of the Morne Rouge, a mountain overlooking Le Cap. There Boukman gave the last instructions and, after Voodoo incantations and the sucking of the blood of a stuck pig, he stimulated his followers by a prayer spoken in creole, which, like so much spoken on such occasions, has remained. "The god who created the sun which gives us light, who rouses the waves and rules the storm, though hidden in the clouds, he watches us. He sees all that the white man does. The god of the white man inspires him with crime, but our god calls upon us to do good works. Our god who is good to us orders us to revenge our wrongs. He will direct our arms and aid us. Throw away the symbol of the god of the whites who has so often caused us to weep, and listen to the voice of liberty, which speaks in the hearts of us all."

The symbol of the god of the whites was the cross which, as Catholics, they wore round their necks.

That very night they began. The slaves on the Gallifet plantation were so well treated that "happy as the Negroes of Gallifet" was a slave proverb. Yet by a phenomenon noticed in all revolutions it was they who led the way.

Each slave-gang murdered its masters and burnt the plantation to the ground. The precautions that de Blanchelande had taken saved Le Cap, but the preparation otherwise had been thorough and complete, and in a few days one-half of the famous North Plain was a flaming ruin. From Le Cap the whole horizon was a wall of fire. From this wall continually rose thick black volumes of smoke, through which came tongues of flame leaping to the very sky. For nearly three weeks the people of Le Cap could barely distinguish day from night, while a rain of burning cane straw, driven before the wind like flakes of snow, flew over the city and the shipping in the harbour, threatening both with destruction.

The slaves destroyed tirelessly. Like the peasants in the Jacquerie or the Luddite wreckers, they were seeking their salvation in the most obvious way, the destruction of what they knew was the cause of their sufferings; and if they destroyed much it was because they had suffered much. They knew that as long as these plantations stood their lot would be to labour on them until they dropped. The only thing was to destroy them. From their masters they had known rape, torture, degradation, and, at the slightest provocation, death. They returned in kind. For two centuries the higher civilisation had shown them that power was used for wreaking your will on those whom you controlled. Now that they held power they did as they had been taught. In the frenzy of the first encounters they killed all, yet they spared the priests whom they feared and the surgeons who had been kind to them. They, whose women had undergone countless violations, violated all the women who fell into their hands, often on the bodies of their still bleeding husbands, fathers and brothers. "Vengeance! Vengeance!" was their war-cry, and one of them carried a white child on a pike as a standard.

And yet they were surprisingly moderate,¹ then and afterwards, far more humane than their masters had been or would ever be to them. They did not maintain this revengeful spirit for long. The cruelties of property and privi-

¹ This statement has been criticised. I stand by it. C.L.R.I.

lege are always more ferocious than the revenges of poverty and oppression. For the one aims at perpetuating resented injustice, the other is merely a momentary passion soon appeased. As the revolution gained territory they spared many of the men, women, and children whom they surprised on plantations. To prisoners of war alone they remained merciless. They tore out their flesh with red-hot pincers, they roasted them on slow fires, they sawed a carpenter between two of his boards. Yet in all the records of that time there is no single instance of such fendish tortures as burying white men up to the neck and smearing the holes in their faces to attract insects, or blowing them up with gun-powder, or any of the thousand and one brutalities to which they had been subjected. Compared with what their masters had done to them in cold blood, what they did was negligible, and they were spurred on by the ferocity with which the whites in Le Cap treated all slave prisoners who fell into their hands.

As usual the strength of the mass movement dragged in its wake revolutionary sections of those classes nearest to it. Free blacks joined them. A planter of Port Magot had taught his black foreman to read and write, had made him free, had left him in his will 10,000 francs, had given to the foreman's mother land on which she had made a coffee plantation. But this black raised the slaves on the plantations of his master and his own mother, set them on fire, and joined the revolution, which gave him a high command. The Mulattoes hated the black slaves because they were slaves and because they were black. But when they actually saw the slaves taking action on such a grand scale, numbers of young Mulattoes from Le Cap and round about rushed to join the hitherto despised blacks and fight against the common enemy.

They were fortunate in that the troops in Le Cap were few, and de Blanchelande, afraid of the slaves and the white rabble in the town, preferred to act on the defensive. One attack was made by the regulars, who drove the slaves before them, but de Blanchelande, yielding to the nervous fears awakened in the city, recalled the detachment. This

left the revolution master of the countryside. Gaining courage the blacks extended their destruction over the plain. If they had had the slightest material interest in the plantations, they would not have destroyed so wantonly. But they had none. After a few weeks they stopped for a moment to organise themselves. It is at this period, one month after the revolt had begun, that Toussaint Bréda joined them, and made an unobtrusive entrance into history.

It seems certain that he had been in secret communication with the leaders, but like so many men of better education than the rank and file, he lacked their boldness at the moment of action and waited to see how things would go. Meanwhile, hating destruction, he kept his master's slaves in order and prevented the revolutionary labourers from setting fire to the plantation. While all the other whites in the neighbourhood made a dash for Le Cap, Madame Bayou de Libertas remained on the plantation, protected by Toussaint. Bayou de Libertas himself was with a camp of planters not far off, on guard against the slaves, but came every day to the plantation. Toussaint, then as always master of himself and of all near to him, maintained this untenable situation for over a month. But as the insurrection grew, worn out by the strain of defending the property, his master and his mistress, and learning that Madame de Libertas' life was now in danger, he decided that the old life was over and a new one had begun. He told Madame de Libertas that the time had come for her to go to Le Cap, packed her and some valuables in a carriage and sent her off under the care of his brother, Paul. He sent his own wife and the two children of the household into a safe spot in Spanish San Domingo. Then he slowly made his way to the camp of the revolted slaves.

The man who so deliberately decided to join the revolution was 45 years of age, an advanced age for those times, grey already, and known to everyone as Old Tous-

saint. Out of the chaos in San Domingo that existed then and for years to follow, he would lay the foundations of a Negro State that lasts to this day. From the moment he joined the revolution he was a leader, and moved without serious rivalry to the first rank. We have clearly stated the vast impersonal forces at work in the crisis of San Domingo. But men make history, and Toussaint made the history that he made because he was the man he was.

He had had exceptional opportunities, and both in mind and body was far beyond the average slave. Slavery dulls the intellect and degrades the character of the slave. There was nothing of that dullness or degradation in Toussaint.

His post as steward of the livestock had given him experience in administration, authority, and intercourse with those who ran the plantation. Men who, by sheer ability and character, find themselves occupying positions usually reserved for persons of a different upbringing, education and class, usually perform those duties with exceptional care and devoted labour. In addition to this practical education, he had, as we have seen, been able to read a little. He had read Caesar's Commentaries, which had given him some idea of politics and the military art and the connection between them. Having read and re-read the long volume by the Abbé Raynal on the East and West Indies, he had a thorough grounding in the economics and politics, not only of San Domingo, but of all the great empires of Europe which were engaged in colonial expansion and trade. Finally he had had the exceptional experience of the last three years of the revolution in San Domingo. The plantation was only two miles from Le Cap, and his duties took him often into the town. The masses of the people learn much during a revolution, far more a man like Toussaint. His superb intellect had therefore had some opportunity of cultivating itself in general affairs at home and abroad: from the very beginning he manoeuvred with an uncanny certainty not only between local parties in San Domingo but between the international forces at work.

An important thing for his future was that his character was quite unwarped. Since his childhood he had probably never been whipped as so many slaves had been whipped. He himself tells us that he and his wife were among the fortunate few who had acquired a modest competence and used to go hand in hand and very happy to work on the little plot of land which some of the slaves cultivated for themselves. Besides his knowledge and experience, through natural strength of character he had acquired a formidable mastery over himself, both mind and body. As a boy he was so frail and delicate that his parents had not expected him to live, and he was nicknamed "Little Stick." While still a child he determined to acquire not only knowledge but a strong body, and he strengthened himself by the severest exercises, so that by the time he was 12 he had surpassed all the boys of his age on the plantation in athletic feats. He could swim across a dangerous river, jump on a horse at full speed and do what he liked with it. When he was nearly 60 he was still the finest rider in San Domingo, habitually rode 125 miles a day, and sat his horse with such ease and grace that he was known as the Centaur of the Savannas.

As a young man he had run after women. Then he decided to settle down. Refusing to live in the concubinage which was so widely prevalent among all classes in San Domingo, but particularly among the slaves, he married a woman who already had a son. She bore Toussaint one child, and he and his wife lived together in the greatest harmony and friendship, when he was master of all San Domingo just as in the days when he was an ordinary slave. For the life that so many lived in the colony, for the reputation that he had among the blacks and the opportunities that his position offered, this was an unusual thing for a man who had begun life as Toussaint had, and who, in the days of his greatness, was partial to the society of attractive women.

From childhood he had been taciturn, which singled him out among his countrymen, a talkative, argumentative people. He was very small, ugly and ill-shaped, but al-

though his general expression was one of benevolence, he had eyes like steel and no one ever laughed in his presence. His comparative learning, his success in life, his character and personality gave him an immense prestige among all the Negroes who knew him, and he was a man of some consequence among the slaves long before the revolution. Knowing his superiority he never had the slightest doubt that his destiny was to be their leader, nor would those with whom he came in contact take long to recognise it.

Nothing could be imagined more calculated to revolt his orderly mind than the spectacle which the slave camp presented. Many men were entirely naked; others wore filthy rags made out of bits and pieces of silks and satins pillaged from the plantations. Their weapons were a few guns and pistols that they had seized, old rusty swords, agricultural implements, sticks pointed with iron, pieces of iron hoop, in fact anything they could lay their hands on. They were destitute of ammunition and the cavalry were mounted on old horses and mules worn down by fatigue. They were divided into two large bands—one under Biassou, the other under Jean François, while a third leader was Jeannot. Jean François was a native of San Domingo, good-looking, very intelligent, and of a proud spirit which had made him run away from his master and become a maroon long before the revolution. In addition to his exceptional intelligence he was very brave, very sober, and of a tenacity that never admitted defeat. Biassou was a fire-eater, always drunk, always ready for the fiercest and most dangerous exploits. He also had had a life more easy than usual, having belonged to a religious establishment, the Fathers of Charity, not far from Le Cap. Jeannot was the slave who had led the foolish expedition of the San Domingo whites in the early days of the revolution, when, dressed up in their military uniforms, they had looked around for an enemy on whom to practise.

Like their more educated white masters, the slaves hastened to deck themselves with all the trappings and

titles of the military profession. The officers called themselves generals, colonels, marshals, commanders, and the leaders decorated themselves with scraps of uniforms, ribbons and orders which they found on the plantations or took from the enemy killed in battle. Biassou called himself a Brigadier. So did Jeannot. Later Jean François entitled himself (in the fashion of European colonial governors to this day) Admiral, Generalissimo and Chevalier of the Order of St. Louis, while Biassou, after a quarrel with Jean François, assumed the title of "Viceroy of the Conquered Territories."

Yet, despite these absurdities, which served the same purpose of impressing their inferiors as the trappings, gold epaulettes and multifarious commands of twentieth century royalty, Jean François and Biassou were men born to command. Nothing but an iron discipline could have kept order among that heterogeneous body of men just released from slavery, and Biassou and Jean François imposed it with an iron hand. Jeannot was a cruel monster who used to drink the blood of his white victims and commit abominable cruelties. Jean François arrested him, tried him, and had him shot, a conspicuous difference from the behaviour of the white colonists in the case of Le Jeune. Jean François soon foresaw a long war and ordered the planting of provisions. Thus early the slave leaders were showing a sense of order, discipline and capacity to govern. Many emissaries of the royalist counter-revolution found their way to the slaves. The priests, in large numbers, remained among them. But even the Mulattoes failed to oust these black leaders, and Jean François and Biassou who were in command at the beginning of the revolution remained masters of their respective bands to the end. Toussaint joined the band of Biassou. On account of his knowledge of herbs Biassou appointed him Physician to the Armies of the King, and from the very beginning Toussaint was high up in his councils.

Masses roused to the revolutionary pitch need above all a clear and vigorous direction. But the first coup had failed and Jean François and Biassou, though they could

keep order, had not the faintest idea what to do next. De Blanchelande sent them a proclamation demanding their submission. They refused, but in their reply called themselves the servants of God and the King, and naively invited the whites to take all their possessions and leave the island to those who had watered it with their sweat.

To these bewildered political leaders Toussaint brought his superior knowledge and the political vices which usually accompany it.

The slaves had revolted because they wanted to be free. But no ruling class ever admits such things. The white cockades accused the Patriots and the Friends of the Negro of stirring up the revolt, while the red cockades accused the royalists and the counter-revolution in France. The small whites accused the Mulattoes and massacred them at sight in the streets.²

The Assembly took charge of the colony. It would not ask France for assistance, but sent envoys to the British at Jamaica, to the Spaniards, and to the United States. It did not fear the revolution. It was more afraid of the slaves in Le Cap, and the city rabble, always ready to foment anarchy for the chance of plunder. These small whites refused to fight unless they were given two-thirds of what they found on the plantations as booty. But the majority of the Mulattoes, anxious about their property, volunteered to serve and offered their wives and children as hostages in token of good faith. The Assembly (knowing nothing as yet of the September 24th reversal) promised not only to enforce the decree of May 15th but to extend it to all Mulattoes whether their parents were free or not. But this could only be done, said the Assembly, after the decree had reached the colony and when the troubles were over.

To deceive the Mulattoes the planters were trying tricks, but against the slaves they knew only one weapon—terror. The blacks had their stockades covered with the heads of white victims. The Colonial Assembly stuck the

² Lacroix, *Mémoires pour Servir* . . . , Vol. 1, p. 91.

heads of Negroes on pikes placed all along the roads leading to Le Cap. When Boukman was killed (fighting bravely) the Assembly stuck up his head in Le Cap with a placard: "This is the head of Boukman, chief of the rebels." The whites built three scaffolds in Le Cap and broke 20 or 30 blacks on the wheel every day. With their usual disregard of the slave even as property they massacred all they met, even those on plantations which had not yet revolted. Masters denounced those who had helped them to escape. Slaves presenting themselves to their masters seeking refuge from the devastation of the countryside or merely because they were afraid or tired of revolution, were killed at sight. The result was that all, timid as well as bold, soon understood that there was no hope except with the revolution, and they flocked to join its ranks. In a few weeks the insurgents had grown to nearly 100,000.

To help the slaves and confuse the white planters came news of a Mulatto revolution in the West. Early in August, a body of Mulattoes, weary of being persecuted and lynched by the small whites, now lording it as officials in the revolutionary Municipalities, crept out of Port-au-Prince and assembled at La Croix-des-Bouquets, a district about five miles from the capital. From all parts of the West Province the Mulattoes began to send contingents there, and with their education, not so widespread as among the whites, but immensely superior to the half-wild blacks, they at once found admirable leadership. The most famous of them was Rigaud, a genuine Mulatto, that is to say the son of a white and a black. He had had a good education at Bordeaux and then learned the trade of a goldsmith. Unlike Toussaint, Jean François and Biassou, he was already a trained soldier. He had enlisted as a volunteer in the French Army which fought in the American War of Independence, became a non-commissioned officer, and had also seen service in Guadeloupe. He hated the whites, not only for the indignities which he, an educated and widely-travelled soldier, had to suffer, but also because

they were jealous of his goldsmith's business, in those days an important trade.

A very different type of man was Beauvais. He was a member of a Mulatto family which had long been free and rich. He also had been educated in France, had volunteered for service and fought as a non-commissioned officer in the American War of Independence. On his return home he had taken up teaching. He was not only a man of exceptional personal bravery. Tall, of a fine figure and distinguished presence, he was known as one of the handsomest men in San Domingo, and in that licentious age and country he was distinguished for the severity of his mode of life and the charm of his manners. His own people loved him and it would not be difficult for the whites (when in a corner) to forget his colour.

These were the two soldiers. The politician was Pinchinat, who had studied widely in France. In the first days of the revolution he came back to San Domingo to lead the Mulattoes. In 1791 he was already 60, a man loving play and loose living, and hating the whites with all the hatred of a vicious character. He was a most finished politician and well deserved the qualification of man of genius, given to him by Pamphile de Lacroix.³ "What a man to write and to make treaties," another Mulatto leader would write of him, "he is unique."

Under such leaders, and trained to fight in the *maréchaussée*, the Mulattoes were a formidable force. For this reason the royalist counter-revolution in the West at once sought to make use of them.

Humus de Jumecourt, Commandant of the district of La Croix-des-Bouquets and Cul-de-sac, proposed an alliance guaranteeing them all their rights in return for support of the counter-revolution, or, as he would call it, the lawful government of the island. Pinchinat refused, but offered instead a united front against their common enemy, the Municipality of Port-au-Prince and the Provincial Assembly of the West. De Jumecourt agreed, and the royalist commandants and the rich whites of the West began to join

³ *Mémoires pour Servir* . . . , Vol. I, p. 183.

the Mulattoes at La Croix-des-Bouquets. There were a few free blacks holding high command in this troop, so that despised blacks were now commanding whites. The Mulattoes also incorporated in their force a body of maroons, nicknamed "The Swiss" in imitation of the bodyguard of Louis XVI. Full of contempt for men of colour and hating them now for their persistent royalism, the Patriots attacked La Croix-des-Bouquets. They were heavily defeated, "The Swiss" fighting with great bravery. A few days later, the Mulattoes and the whites of the surrounding districts had a meeting at La Croix-des-Bouquets, where the Mulattoes put before the whites the draft of a concordat embodying their demands for complete equality. The ninth and last clause consisted of four words: "If not, civil war." The whites accepted their demands immediately.

The Patriots of San Domingo were always ready to forget race prejudice in return for something solid. After he had been defeated in the field, Caradeu, leader of the Patriots, offered Beauvais Mulatto rights, in return for an agreement on independence without the intervention of the royalists.⁴ Beauvais refused. By this time nearly all the rich planters had deserted the Patriots, and even the rich merchants in Port-au-Prince would have nothing to do with them. On October 19th a concordat embodying all the Mulatto demands was signed by all parties. The Provincial Assembly of the West was to be dissolved immediately, the white deputies from the West Province to the Colonial Assembly were to be recalled, two battalions of the National Guard were to be recruited among the Mulattoes, the memory of Ogé was to be rehabilitated, and the whole presented for the ratification of the National Assembly and the approval of the King. The leader of the whites extended the hand of friendship.

"We bring you finally words of peace; we come no longer to bargain with you, we come only to accord to you your demands, we come animated by the spirit of justice and peace to give you authentic recognition of your rights,

⁴ Saintoyant, *La Colonisation Française pendant la Révolution* (1789-1799), Paris, 1930, Vol. I, p. 59.

to ask you to see in the white citizens only friends and brothers whom the colony in danger invites you, begs you, to unite with, in order to bring prompt assistance to our troubles. We accept entirely and without any reserve the concordat that you propose to us. Unfortunate circumstances of which you are doubtless aware made us hesitate for a moment. But our courage has broken all obstacles, and we have imposed silence on all mean prejudices, on the petty desire for domination. May the day on which the torch of reason has enlightened us all be forever memorable. May it be a day of forgetfulness for all errors, of pardon for all injuries. Let us henceforth be combatants only in zeal for the public welfare."⁵ The "mean prejudices" and "the petty desire for domination" were the small whites who saw themselves being pushed into the background. But the news of the slave revolution in the North had sobered all who owned slaves, and they wanted peace.

All the 14 parishes of the West Province accepted the terms, and on the 24th of October the great ceremony of reconciliation took place in Port-au-Prince. The leaders of the whites and the leaders of the Mulattoes marched into Port-au-Prince arm in arm, with their troops marching behind, greeted by salvos of artillery and mutual shouts of "Unity and Fidelity." In the general excitement a captain of the white National Guard jumped on a gun-carriage and proclaimed Caradeu Commander of the National Guard of the West Province. There was loud applause which was renewed when he named Beauvais second in command. Then all went to the Church to celebrate with a Te Deum as stipulated in the concordat. One more difficulty remained—"The Swiss." What was to be done with them? The whites argued that to send them back to the plantations would be bad for the slaves and it was agreed to deport them to a deserted beach in Mexico.⁶ Among the leaders, Rigaud and Péton, Mulattoes, fought for "The Swiss";

⁵ Quoted from Deschamps, *Les Colonies pendant . . .*, pp. 257-258.

⁶ The captain of the boat took his money but dumped them in Jamaica. The English Governor in great anger shipped them back. The Colonial Assembly had them all murdered except

Lambert, a free black, supported the deportation. "The Swiss" out of the way, peace seemed assured, Mulatto rights guaranteed, and the counter-revolution well placed for action.

But in Le Cap the Assembly foamed with wrath at these goings-on in the West. The royalist commanders of the local forces, M. de Rouvrai and M. de Touzard, urged the Patriots in the North to grant Mulatto rights. "But, you will say, must we yield to the menaces of an inferior caste, admit it to civic rights, as a ransom for the evils which they cause us? . . . One day," said de Rouvrai, "the scornful laughs with which you greet the important truths which I dare to tell you will change into tears of blood. . . . In the war of 1756 England wished to seize Cuba and Lord Albermarle was ordered to besiege Havana. He landed with 18,000 men; six months after he had only 1,800. . . .

"Where, I ask you, is the army capable of fulfilling our aim? . . . Have you any others than the Mulattoes? No. Well, why do you reject the help which they offer you . . . ?

"I am not finished, I have some other truths to tell you, I shall tell them to you. France at this moment has her eyes fixed on San Domingo. . . . It is impossible that the claims of the Mulattoes will not be listened to in France; if even they were unjust, they will be welcomed. The constitutional decree that you suppose irrevocable, that you regard as your palladium, will be inevitably modified. . . ."

The Assembly promised to give the Mulattoes their rights, but after the troubles were over. True, there was a slave revolt. But they had appealed to France by now, and to give rights to Mulattoes who outnumbered them would be to hand over the colony, military and civil, to these bas-tard upstarts and their allies of the counter-revolution. They could see the results of that unholy alliance in the about 20, whom they sent back to the West so as to prejudice the blacks against the Mulattoes.

West. They had de Blanchelande, the Governor, in their power and they poured out their wrath on the concordat.

The West would not budge from their unity and repudiated the proclamations of the Assembly and the Governor. But six days after the ceremony of reconciliation, there arrived in the colony the decree of the 24th September, by which the Constituent had withdrawn all rights from the Mulattoes and once more put their fate in the hands of the white colonists. "Mean prejudices" and "the petty desire for domination" reared heads again, and the scarcely healed wounds re-opened. The intrigues of Bar-nave & Co. were coming home to roost.

The 21st November was fixed for the ratification of the concordat. Port-au-Prince was divided into four sections for the voting and three had already voted in favour of ratification. This for the small whites was ruin, and Pralotto and his band were on the look-out to create some cause for a breach. It came over a free Negro, a member of the Mulatto force, who was either insulted by or insulted some whites. He was immediately captured and hanged. Despite the moderation of the Mulattoes, fighting began in the streets. The Mulattoes, taken by surprise, retreated. Fire broke out in the city, for which they were made responsible. Pralotto and his followers massacred rich white citizens, Mulattoes, men, women and children; and plundered the wealthy quarter of the town, while the flames spread and burned two-thirds of Port-au-Prince to the ground, estimated at a loss of 50 million francs.

The Mulattoes had been very patient and forbearing, but now they seemed to go mad. Pinchinat, the man of proclamations, issued a ringing call for battle.

"Fly, my friends, to the siege of Port-au-Prince and let us plunge our bleeding arms, avengers of perjury and perfidy, into the breast of these monsters from Europe. Too much and too long have we served as sport for their passions and their insidious manoeuvres; too much and too long have we groaned under this iron yoke. Let us destroy our tyrants, let us bury with them even the smallest vestige

of our degradation, let us tear up by its deepest roots this upas tree of prejudice. Recruit some, persuade others, promise, menace, threaten, drag in your wake the decent white citizens. But above all, dear friends, unity, courage and speed. Bring arms, baggage, cannon, munitions of war, and provisions, and come at once to rally under the common standard. It is there that we all ought to perish, or take vengeance for God, Nature, law and humanity, so long outraged in these climates of horror."

Rigaud's brother wrote to his friends: "I fly to vengeance. . . . If my fate is not death on this expedition, I shall be back soon to join you. . . . Long live liberty, long live equality, long live love." Rich whites and royalist commandants followed the Mulattoes, but the Rigaud brothers, Beauvais, and Pinchinat (despite his treatment of "The Swiss") were genuine revolutionaries, putting liberty before property. In a frenzy of excitement and rage they summoned the slaves of the West Province and drew them into the revolution. In the advanced North the slaves were leading the Mulattoes, in the backward West the Mulattoes were leading the slaves. It does not need much wisdom to foresee the consequences.

In the South, whites and Mulattoes were on the point of forming a concordat on the model of the West. All terms had been agreed upon when Caradeu paid a visit to the South and intrigued so successfully that the unity agreement was broken. As soon as the news of the split in Port-au-Prince reached them, Mulattoes and whites each took to arms. The Mulattoes made themselves masters of Jacmel and other towns. In self-defence the whites in the South, outnumbered by the Mulattoes, raised the slaves.

In the North some Mulatto and white proprietors formed a concordat. The Assembly disallowed it and these Mulattoes joined the slaves.

The whites committed frightful atrocities against the Mulattoes. They killed a pregnant woman, cut the baby out and threw it into the flames. They burnt them alive,

they inoculated them with small-pox. Naturally the Mulattoes retaliated in kind.⁷

But here as everywhere the white planters began it, and exceeded all rivals in barbarism, being trained in violence and cruelty by their treatment of the slaves.

This was the San Domingo that the three Commissioners, Saint-Leger, Mirbeck and Roume, were to restore to order when they landed at Le Cap on November 29th, 1791. They were welcomed by the Assembly and installed with an imposing ceremony. They issued a proclamation mendaciously announcing the near arrival of large bodies of troops. To their surprise and joy this seemed as if it would work a miracle.

Biassou, Jean François and the other Negro leaders, including Toussaint, after four months of insurrection, had come to a dead end. An insurrection must win victories, and the whites were content to hold the line of fortifications known as the Cordon of the West and prevent the insurrection penetrating into the West Province. The former slaves could devastate the country around but that very devastation was making it impossible for them to exist. Famine began to kill them off. Frightened at what they considered their hopeless position, and afraid of being beaten into submission, Jean François and Biassou offered peace to the Commissioners in return for the liberty of a few hundred leaders. Jean François knew that it was a betrayal. "False principles," wrote this four-months-old labour leader, "will make these slaves very obstinate, they will say that they have been betrayed." But if the Commissioners granted liberty to those who were named they would co-operate with the King's troops and hunt down those who refused to submit. Jean François knew that the business would be difficult and dangerous and said as much, proof of the passion for liberty which filled the hearts of the blacks. But he was prepared to do all that he could to help, and to

⁷ For a well-documented summary of these atrocities, see Schoelcher, *Vie de Toussaint-L'Ouverture*, Chapter VI.

soothe his conscience wrote disloyally of his followers as a multitude of Negroes from Africa who did not know two words of French. In the long and cruel list of leaders betraying brave but ignorant masses this stands high, and Toussaint was in it up to the neck. Though working in a subordinate position he took the leading part in the negotiations, and the masterpiece of diplomatic correspondence which the envoys of the slaves presented at the bar of the Assembly showed the distance between the men who a few weeks before had asked the whites to leave the island and the already fully-fledged political maturity of Toussaint. To the end of his days he could hardly speak French, he literally could not write three words without the grossest errors in spelling and grammar. Years afterwards when he was master of San Domingo he wrote thus to Dessalines: *Je vous a vé parlé pour le forli berté avan theiré . . .* He meant to write: *Je vous avais parlé du Fort Liberté à l'avant-hier . . .* He could never do better. But he dictated in the local bastard French or creole, and his secretaries wrote and re-wrote until he got the exact meaning he wanted.

The letter⁸ begins by emphasizing that the King's proclamation has formally accepted the French constitution, and "very clearly and precisely" has asked for a spirit of "justice and moderation" to help in the restoration of a country which has suffered from the repeated shocks of a great revolution. This conciliatory spirit should cross the seas. "We pass now to the law relating to the colonies of September 28th, 1791. This law gives to the colonies the right of deciding on the status of the free men of colour and free blacks." Toussaint and the other traitors wanted not only freedom but political rights. But promises were not enough. They would defend the decisions of the Colonial Assembly "to the last drop of their blood," but these decisions must be "clothed with the requisite formalities." Followed a long apology for the evils which they had helped to afflict "on this rich and important colony." But they had not known of the new laws when they had writ-

⁸ Lacroix, *Mémoires pour Servir* . . . Vol. I, pp. 148-152. For the full correspondence see *Les Archives Nationales*, DXXXV, 1.

ten the first letter. "To-day when we are instructed in the new laws, to-day when we cannot doubt the approbation of the mother-country for all the Legislative Acts that you will decree, concerning the interior régime of the Colony, and the status of citizens, we shall not show ourselves refractory." After another long appeal to the Assembly to seize this opportunity to re-establish order promptly "in so important a colony," the letter touched on the difficult question of the slaves. "The laws which will be in force concerning the status of persons free and not free ought to be the same in the whole colony." This was obviously a finger pointing to the concordats in the West Province. "It would be even to your interest if you declared, by a decree bearing the sanction of the Governor, that it is your intention to concern yourselves with the lot of the slaves, knowing that they are the object of your solicitude." Inasmuch as the slaves had confidence in their chiefs, if the Assembly gave the job of pacification to these chiefs, the slaves would be satisfied, which would facilitate restoration of "the equilibrium which has been broken." The conclusion was a protestation of good faith and desire for a speedy settlement. Freedom for the leaders, however, was "indispensable." The letter was signed by Jean François and Biassou, two others, and two commissioners *ad hoc*, one of whom was Toussaint. In its skilful use of both the moral and political connection between the mother-country and the colony, its dangling before the colonists the chance to restore the former prosperity "of this great and important colony," its firm but delicate insistence on political rights, duly certified by law, for the freed men, its luxuriance whenever it dealt with things that cost nothing such as peace, good-will, etc., the letter could have come from the pen of a man who had spent all his life in diplomacy. The writer, knowing the temper of the colonists, had even taken the trouble to suggest to them exactly how the slaves were to be bluffed back into bondage; no imperialist of to-day with three hundred years of traditional deception behind him could have garlanded his claws with fairer words; "the restoration of the broken

equilibrium" as a phrase for slavery would not have disgraced the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. Jean François had written that the thing was difficult but it could be done, and that they were not only prepared but able to do their Judas work the letter gave ample evidence. Political treachery is not a monopoly of the white race, and this abominable betrayal so soon after the insurrections shows that political leadership is a matter of programme, strategy and tactics, and not the colour of those who lead it, their oneness of origin with their people, nor the services they have rendered.

The high and mighty colonists refused. Treat with these brigands who had murdered and burnt and raped? Impossible. In vain the Commissioners protested. The colonists, supremely confident that they would without difficulty drive these revolted dogs back to their kennels, answered that they would grant pardon only to repentant criminals who returned to work. The message ended with the terse request to the envoys, "Get out!" The white colonists could not understand that Biasson was no longer a slave but a leader of 40,000 men. When he got this message he lost his temper and remembered the white prisoners. "I shall make them pay for the insolence of the Assembly which has dared to write to me with so little respect," and ordered them all to be killed. Toussaint, always a hater of unnecessary bloodshed, calmed his chief.

The disappointed Commissioners arranged an interview with Jean François. The Colonial Assembly accused them of plotting counter-revolution. The Commissioners invited them to send delegates.

At the appointed place and time Jean François appeared, leading his horse by the bridle. At the sight of him, M. Bullet, a colonist, was so overpowered with rage that he struck him with a riding-whip. Jean François, fiercely angry, fell back to his own band and peace hung on a thread. At this dangerous moment Saint-Leger had the quick-wittedness and courage to advance alone among the hostile blacks and speak to them kindly. So moved were they at this unexpected behaviour that Jean François threw

himself at the feet of the men from France. He reiterated his promise. For the freedom of 400 of the leaders and forgetfulness of the past he would lead the blacks back to slavery. The Commissioners asked him as a guarantee of good faith to return the white prisoners. He agreed and asked to return for his wife, a prisoner in Le Cap, whom the whites had not dared to execute for fear of reprisals. The interview ended amicably, Jean François assuring the Commissioners that he was "touched to see at last white men who showed humanity."

Next day he sent the promised prisoners to Le Cap. But the blacks had probably got to know that something was in the wind. The prisoners were under a strong escort, including Toussaint, which was scarcely sufficient to save them from the hostility of those they met on the way. The members of the delegation presented themselves at the bar of the Assembly. The president would not even speak to them but communicated with them only by note. "Continue to give proof of your repentance and say to those who send you, to address themselves to the Commissioners: it is only by their intercession that the Assembly can come to a decision on your fate." He wanted to impress on the blacks that the Commissioners were subordinate to the Assembly, and he succeeded. So disdainful was the Assembly that it would not include the negotiations in the minutes. Toussaint had plenary powers, and in a vain attempt to break down the pride of the colonists he secretly reduced the number to be freed from 400 to 60.⁹ The colonists would not hear of it. Then and only then did Toussaint come to an unalterable decision from which he never wavered and for which he died. Complete liberty for all, to be attained and held by their own strength. The most extreme revolutionaries are formed by circumstances. It is probable that, looking at the wild hordes of blacks who surrounded him, his heart sank at the prospect of the war and the barbarism which would follow freedom even if it

⁹ Toussaint in later years often said this. See Sannon, *Histoire de Toussaint-L'Ouverture*. Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 1933, Vol. III, p. 18.

were achieved. He was ready to go a long way to meet the colonists. He probably hoped for some attempt at better treatment. But having been driven to take his decision, as was his way, he never looked back. On his return he told his chiefs not to look to the Commissioners for anything.¹⁰ They had only a faculty of intercession and their powers were subordinate to those of the Assembly. Biassou, who had demanded an interview, evaded it.

Henceforth it was war, and war needed trained soldiers. Toussaint dropped his post of Physician to the Armies of the King, and assuming the title of Brigadier-General started to train an army. Once only in his political life did he ever fail to meet an emergency with action bold and correct.

In the West Province Rigaud, Beauvais and Pinchinat were using as their agent in the gangs a young slave named Hyacinth. He was only 21 years of age, but he went from plantation to plantation claiming, as most leaders of agricultural revolts, that he was divinely inspired. We can judge the backwardness of the western slaves at the beginning of the revolution from the fact that both Hyacinth, and another man, Romaine the prophetess (*sic*), fortified their authority with divine attributes, while Jean François and Biassou in the North from the very beginning aimed at a social revolution. The blacks flocked to join the confederate army of Mulattoes and whites at La Croix-des-Bouquets, and on March 31st the battle between the Confederates and the Patriots of Port-au-Prince took place. The slaves were nearly all native-born Africans. Armed only with knives, picks, hoes, and sticks with iron points, they went into battle. Led by Hyacinth, they charged the bayonets of the Port-au-Prince volunteers and the French soldiers without fear or care for the volleys from Pralotto's cannon which tore their ranks: if they were killed they would wake again in Africa. Hyacinth, a bull's tail in his hand, ran from rank to rank crying that his talisman would

¹⁰ Lacroix. *Mémoires pour Servir* . . . Vol. I, p. 157.

chase death away. He charged at their head, passing unscathed through the bullets and the grape-shot. Under such leadership the Africans were irresistible. They clutched at the horses of the dragons, and pulled off the riders. They put their arms down into the mouths of the cannon in order to pull out the bullets and called to their comrades "Come, come, we have them." The cannon were discharged, and blew them to pieces. But others swarmed over guns and gunners, threw their arms around them and silenced them. Nothing could stop their devotion, and after six hours the troops of Port-au-Prince retired in disorder. They had lost over a hundred soldiers, but nearly 2,000 slaves lay dead upon the field. The combined army then invested Port-au-Prince.

The whites were not only fighting with the Mulattoes, but were petitioning the Governor to prevent disturbers of the peace coming from the Colonial Assembly to disrupt the West. They sent him the concordats, they said they would stick to them whatever he said. They asked him to publish them, to send them to the King, to the Legislative in France, to the merchants of the great ports, to everybody.¹¹

Whatever the reservations they had made when they formed this pact with the bastard Mulattoes, the whites were now eager to cement the alliance and Roume was overwhelmed by the number of these appeals. Revolution, says Karl Marx, is the locomotive of history. Here was a locomotive that had travelled at remarkable speed, for in April 1792, not yet three years after the fall of the Bastille, the white Patriots in Port-au-Prince were being besieged by a composite army of royalist commandants, white planters, brown-skinned Mulattoes, and black slaves, none of them constrained but all for the time being free and equal partners. No doubt most of the rich were only awaiting the restoration of "order" to put the slaves back in their places again, but the mere fact of the revolutionary asso-

¹¹ Memorandum from the *Commissaires Concliateurs des Citoyens Blancs de l'Artibonite. Les Archives Nationales*, DXXV, 2. One of eight pieces collected by Roume and sent to France.

ciation and the temporary equality meant that the old spell was broken and things would never be the same again.

The Colonial Assembly in addition to war with the slaves and war with the Mulattoes had started a fierce row with the Commissioners over precedence. In Le Cap the Patriots actually had the Governor under arrest for some time and were plotting to murder Mirbeck who sailed for home on February 30th. Saint-Leger had gone to Port-au-Prince. The Patriots there, spurred on by the Assembly in Le Cap, threatened to deport him, and he took refuge with the Confederates. Saint-Leger and Rounne were now seriously alarmed, not at revolting slaves, but at the growth of the counter-revolution. In the same way as Barnave, the Lameths and their friends in France, white San Domingo was growing tired of the red cockade and beginning to look once more to the royal authority. The Confederate Army seemed all white cockade. But just at this time Pinchinat had a meeting with Saint-Leger, and what he told that gentleman made him fly post-haste to France. Rounne also was due to leave three days after, but in a chance conversation he smelt a royalist plot and stayed to ward it off. The royalists indeed thought that San Domingo was now ripe for the picking. But they were mistaken. Pinchinat had played an astute game. The royalists had hoped to use the Mulattoes. Now they found that they had been used instead. As Beauvais told Rounne afterwards, "We were never the dupes of the white cockades. We had to conquer our rights, we needed auxiliaries. If the Devil had presented himself we would have enrolled him. These gentlemen offered and we used them, while allowing them to believe that we were their dupes."

The decree of April 4th now came to clinch the victory of the Mulattoes and allow them openly to support the French Revolution—for a time.

The colonial question had frayed the nerves and exhausted the Constituent, all of whose members were excluded by law from the Legislative which met on October 1st. The new deputies were no better off as far as the colonial question was concerned for in addition to the Rights of Man for Mulattoes they now faced a slave revolt.

On the Right were the Feuillants, or King's Party, led on the colonial question by Vaublanc, who approved the condition of slaves, even Mulattoes. The Left was stronger since the elections. But though there were over a hundred Jacobin deputies in the Legislative they were split; on the extreme Left were Robespierre and the Mountain, on the Right were the Brissotins, or followers of Brissot, better known in history as the Girondins. The Paris masses organised in the Commune were following the Jacobins. Robespierre and the Mountain would fight for Mulatto rights. So would Brissot, but Brissot's group was composed of Vergniaud, Guadet, and others, actual deputies of the maritime towns. The Girondins were so called after the Gironde province, whose chief town was Bordeaux. Vergniaud was deputy for Bordeaux and all the maritime towns were still firmly against the Rights of Man for Mulattoes.

What first frightened them was the way the news of the insurrection reached France. Paris heard of it from an English paper. The English Ambassador gave information about the seriousness of the uprising—he had got it from Jamaica through London. The *Montieur*, day after day, asked, why no news from de Blanchelande? On November 7th the *Montieur* printed a copy of the letter the colonists had written to the Governor of Jamaica. Only on the 8th was a letter from de Blanchelande asking for troops read in the House. The maritime bourgeois began to look at these colonists with a different eye: the Mulattoes at least were faithful to France, and they were strong supporters of slavery.

The first question was for troops to quell the revolt. But in a revolution the revolution comes first. Right and Left wing of the Legislative wanted to know how many

troops were to be sent and who would control them. The King was still head of the Army and Navy. The officers were royalist and centres of the counter-revolution. The King's Ministers and officials were still functioning, in Paris and in San Domingo. To put an army and a fleet into the hands of these people was to be putting weapons which, after the suppression of the insurrection, perhaps before, might be used against the revolution itself, and place the richest colony of France entirely in royalist hands. Jacobins and Feuillants fought it out day after day. But though it was a question of repressing a slave revolt, the Legislative, like the Constituents, would not tolerate the use of the word slave. When a deputy in the course of a speech happened to say "But the slaves are the property of the colonists . . ." there were the usual protests and demands that the speaker be called to order. The Legislative, more to the Left, was, perhaps for this reason, even more sensitive than the Constituents. The Colonial Commission, wishing as usual to have everything settled in the ministry, would not make any report. But the Friends of the Negro were far more powerful now, and Brissot gave warning. If the Commission did not present its report in ten days, he was going to open a debate on December 1st. During the interval delegates from the Colonial Assembly arrived in Paris, and on November 30th one of them, Millet, put the colonists' case. It is probable that never, in any parliamentary assembly, was so much impudent lying and dishonesty packed into any single speech.

Millet's description of slavery proved it to be the happiest form of society known in either ancient or modern times. "We live in peace, gentlemen, in the midst of our slaves. . . . Let an intelligent and educated man compare the deplorable state of these men in Africa with the pleasant and easy life which they enjoy in the colonies. . . . Sheltered by all the necessities of life, surrounded with an ease unknown in the greater part of the countries of Europe, secure in the enjoyment of their property, for they had property and it was sacred, cared for in their illnesses with an expense and an attention that you would seek in

vain in the hospitals so boasted of in England, protected, respected in the infirmities of age; in peace with their children, and with their family . . . freed when they had rendered important services: such was the picture, true and not embellished, of the government of our Negroes, and this domestic government perfected itself particularly during the last ten years with a care of which you will find no model in Europe. The most sincere attachment bound the master to the slave; we slept in safety in the middle of these men who had become our children and many among us had neither locks nor bolts on our doors."

This was supposed to be the lot of the slaves up to 1787, the year before the *Le Jeune* case. Terror, to keep the slaves in subjection, attested in a thousand documents? No such thing. True, there were a small number of hard and ferocious masters. "But what was the lot of these wicked men? Branded by public opinion, looked upon with horror by all honest people, shut out from all society, without credit in their business, they lived in opprobrium and dishonour and died in misery and despair. . . ."

What was it that changed this idyllic state of affairs? At this point enter the villain.

"However, gentlemen, a Society takes shape in the bosom of France and prepares from afar the destruction and the convulsions to which we are subjected. . . . And far from being able to continue with our work, this society forced us to renounce it by sowing the spirit of insubordination among our slaves and anxiety among us."

Having hurled his bomb at the Friends of the Negro, Millet turned to the Assembly itself. He knew the tender spot. "Soon they say this Society will demand that the slave-trade be suppressed, that is to say, that the profits which can result from it for French commerce will be delivered to foreigners, for never will its romantic philosophy persuade all the powers of Europe that it is their duty to abandon the cultivation of the colonies and to leave the inhabitants of Africa a prey to the barbarity of their tyrants rather than to employ them elsewhere. Under kind masters they exploit a territory which would remain uncultivated

without them, and of which the rich productions are, for the nation which possesses them, a great source of industry and of prosperity."

The Mulattoes? They and the whites had lived peacefully—may happily. "The bonds of affection and of good feeling which existed between these two classes of men" would be strengthened by the just and humane laws a Colonial Assembly would pass. But here too the Friends of the Negro falsely represented the attitude of the whites as the pretensions of vanity and an endeavour to resist just claims.

But no man can keep it up for ever, least of all men trained in the French intellectual tradition. Before Millet concluded he suddenly let slip the elegant drapery and gave a glimpse of white San Domingo in all its bloated nakedness.

"These coarse men [the blacks] are incapable of knowing liberty and enjoying it with wisdom, and the imprudent law which would destroy their prejudices would be for them and for us a decree of death."

The Legislature listened in silence. This was no juggling with the word slavery—it was the thing itself, presented to the bourgeoisie for their endorsement through all eternity. Jaures notes that there was no applause, none even of those disgusted interruptions with which the Legislative was wont to express its disapproval of the mere word slavery. When Millet was finished, the President invited the delegates to the honours of the session. But this was too much. One of the extreme Left jumped up in a rage. "What, Mr. President, you invite to the session men who have just outraged philosophy and liberty, men who have just insulted. . . ." But the profits of the slave trade were too much for the Assembly and the Left itself had no heart for this business.

Next day Brissot took the floor, and on behalf of the Mulattoes made a masterly and celebrated speech. He showed the rich whites anxious to have peace and ready to give political rights to the Mulattoes; the Patriots; for the most part heavily indebted to France and bent on in-

dependence, jealous of the Mulattoes who did not owe, and determined to maintain the privilege of race, all the more dear to them in that it rested now on such insecure foundation.

"It is by this that we can explain the existence all at the same time in the heart of the same colonist, of hatred against the man of colour who claims his rights, against the merchant who claims his debts, against a free Government which wishes that justice be done to all."

Once more the bourgeoisie battled over Mulatto rights. This time the contest lasted for weeks, in and out of the House. Vaublanc took the place of the absent Barnave, but the Friends of the Negro had a new argument in the concordats between whites and Mulattoes, and the maritime bourgeois were now convinced that the only way to save the colony was to give the Mulattoes their rights: the negotiations of the Patriots with other countries had opened their eyes as to the real nature of these gentlemen. Vergnaud and Guadet were able to convince their patrons that the old policy was false. The great ship-owners, merchants and traders threw over the colonists. Barnave's group, the Feuillants, formed the governing Ministry, but the revolution was taking courage again. The Feuillants were overthrown on March 10th and a Girondin ministry came in, with Roland at its head, but Madame Roland and Brissot as its leading spirits. On March 24th, by a large majority, the Legislative passed a decree, giving full political rights to the men of colour. Some tried to argue that the decisions of the Constituent were sacrosanct, but a deputy of the Left, to the accompaniment of great applause, challenged the theory that the Legislative was forever bound by the decrees of the Constituent and boldly asserted the sovereignty of the people over the rights of formal assemblies. Three new Commissioners were appointed with supreme powers and large forces to enforce the decree and restore order, and on April 4th the King's signature made the decree law.

But what of the slaves? The slaves had revolted for freedom. The revolt was to be suppressed. But at least there might be a promise of pardon, of kind treatment in the future. Not a word. Neither from Vaublanc on the Right nor Robespierre on the Left. Robespierre made an ass of himself by violently objecting to the word slavery, when proposed as a substitute for non-free. Brissot made a passing reference to them as being unfortunate, and that was all.

"The cause of the men of colour is then the cause of the patriots of the old Third Estate and finally of the people so long oppressed." So had spoken Brissot, and Brissot, representative of the Third Estate, was prepared to help the Third Estate of the Mulattoes and give the people, in France as well as in San Domingo, phrases. The French peasants were still clamouring for the Assembly to relieve them of the feudal dues. The Brissotins would not do it. They would not touch property, and the slaves were property. Blangetty, a deputy, proposed a motion for gradual enfranchisement. The Legislative would not even discuss it. On March 26th, two days after the decree in favour of the Mulattoes, Ducos dared to propose that every Mulatto child be free, "whatever the status of its mother." The Legislative in wrath voted the previous question, and Ducos was not even allowed to speak on his motion. The Friends of the Negro, good Liberals, were now in power and were as silent about slavery as any colonist. The slaves, ignorant of politics, had been right not to wait on these eloquent phrase-makers. Toussaint, that astute student of French politics, read and noted.

Toussaint alone among the black leaders, with freedom for all in his mind, was in those early months of 1792 organising out of the thousands of ignorant and untrained blacks an army capable of fighting European troops. The insurgents had developed a method of attack based on their overwhelming numerical superiority. They did not rush forward in mass formation like fanatics. They placed themselves in groups, choosing wooded spots in such a way as

to envelop their enemy, seeking to crush him by weight of numbers. They carried out these preliminary manoeuvres in dead silence, while their priests (the black ones) chanted the wanga, and the women and children sang and danced in a frenzy. When these had reached the necessary height of excitement the fighters attacked. If they met with resistance they retired without exhausting themselves, but at the slightest hesitation in the defence they became extremely bold and, rushing up to the cannon, swarmed all over their opponents. At first they could not even use the guns they captured, and used to apply the match at the wrong end. It was from these men "unable to speak two words of French" that an army had to be made. Toussaint could have had thousands following him. It is characteristic of him that he began with a few hundred picked men, devoted to himself, who learnt the art of war with him from the beginning, as they fought side by side against the French troops and the colonists. In camp he drilled and trained them assiduously. By July 1792, he had no more than five hundred attached to himself, the best of the revolutionary troops. These and not the perorations in the Legislative would be decisive in the struggle for freedom. But nobody took much notice of Toussaint and his black followers. Feuillants and Jacobins in France, whites and Mulattoes in San Domingo, were still looking upon the slave revolt as a huge riot which would be put down in time, once the division between the slave-owners was closed.

The Commissioners were revolutionaries, the commanding officers were officers of the King. Before the boat left, Desparbes, the commander, quarrelled with the Commissioners about precedence and addressed to the troops "equivocal and unconstitutional" words. They quarrelled so loudly that it was heard by the officers and men. They quarrelled again over the method of landing and they split as soon as they landed. The National Guard were civilians of the revolution. The troops were soldiers of the King. As soon as Desparbes landed, instead of mobilising all his forces for an attack against the slaves, he conspired with the local royalists, and the National Guards were distributed among the various camps under royalist officers. The Commissioners carried the revolution on board with them. They went to meet it. But what was of infinitely more importance for the slaves, they had left it behind them.

They had sailed from Rochefort in the middle of July. Before they reached San Domingo the Paris masses, tired of the equivocations and incompetence of the parliamentarians, had taken matters into their own hands and dragged the Bourbons off the throne.

To escape from the demands of the peasants, the wish of the workers that a maximum price be fixed for food-stuffs, and the other burning questions of the revolution, the Girondins, 17 days after the decree of April 4th, plunged the country into war with Austria. The army was half-royalist, half-revolutionary. Marie Antoinette was sending the war plans to the enemy. Revolutionary France seemed unable to organise itself, and the royalists in France were awaiting the entry of the foreigners to rise and massacre the revolution. The Girondins, afraid of the counter-revolution, but more afraid of the Paris masses, would not take steps against the royalists, and the people of Paris, goaded to exasperation, stormed the Tuileries on August 10th. They imprisoned the royal family, the Legislative was dissolved, and a new parliament, the National Convention, was summoned. The masses administered a rough

V

And the Paris Masses Complete

SIX THOUSAND MEN, 4,000 National Guards and 2,000 troops of the line, sailed from France in 15 ships to finish with all this quarrelling between the slave-owners in San Domingo and to suppress the black revolt. The Commissioners were Sonthonax, a right-wing Jacobin, friend of Brissot; Polverel, who had moved the expulsion of Barnave and his friends from the Jacobins and was also a follower of Brissot; and one Ailhaud, a nonentity. For the task in hand the expedition was adequate. But it could not escape the division which was tearing all France after July 1789.

justice to the royalist plotters in the September massacres, and took the defence of France into their own dirty but strong and honest hands. The Girondin Government proposed to leave Paris. The workers forbade it. They armed 2,000 volunteers a day, and, with the royalists in their rear quiet for a long time to come, went singing happily to drive the counter-revolution from the soil of France. If revolutionary France was saved it was due to them.

What has all this to do with the slaves? Everything. The workers and peasants of France could not have been expected to take any interest in the colonial question in normal times, any more than one can expect similar interest from British or French workers to-day. But now they were roused. They were striking at royalty, tyranny, reaction and oppression of all types, and with these they included slavery. The prejudice of race is superficially the most irrational of all prejudices, and by a perfectly comprehensible reaction the Paris workers, from indifference in 1789, had come by this time to detest no section of the aristocracy so much as those whom they called "the aristocrats of the skin."¹ On August 11th, the day after the Tuileries fell, Page, a notorious agent of the colonists in France, wrote home almost in despair. "One spirit alone reigns here, it is horror of slavery and enthusiasm for liberty."² Henceforth which wins all heads and grows every day."³ Henceforth the Paris masses were for abolition, and their black brothers in San Domingo, for the first time, had passionate allies in France.

The National Convention would be elected and would deliberate under the influence of these masses. The slaves in San Domingo by their insurrection had shown revolutionary France that they could fight and die for freedom; and the logical development of the revolution in France had brought to the front of the stage masses who, when they said abolition, meant it in theory and in practice.

¹ Garran-Coulon, *Rapport sur les Troubles* Vol. IV, p. 21.
² *Débats entre les accusés et les accusateurs dans l'affaire des Colonies*, 6 volumes, Paris, 1798. The official report of the trial of Sonthonax and Polverel. Published by Garran-Coulon. Vol. II, p. 223.

But it takes organisation and time to translate mass feeling into action, and for the moment the revolution had more urgent matters than slavery to deal with.

Neither the new Commissioners nor the people of San Domingo knew anything about August 10th when the Commissioners landed on September 18th.

They had come mainly to deal with the Mulatto question. To their pleased surprise they found that settled. Three years of civil war, one year of the slave revolution, had taught these white planters some sense at last. As soon as the news of the decree arrived all the whites, North, West and South, accepted it. On July 14th, 1792, the whites gave the men of colour a dinner, a few days later the men of colour returned it. The Governor, the commander of the naval station, the Treasurer, all wrote to the Commissioners to say that all the whites had agreed to accept the decree.³ Naturally there was still race prejudice.

³ Enclosures in report of the Commissioners to the Minister of Marine, September 30th, 1792, *Les Archives Nationales* DXXXV.

(a) D Augy, President of the Colonial Assembly, in a speech to the Commissioners on their arrival. . . . to leave you no doubt on our perfect submission to the law of April 4th last in favour of the men of colour and free Negroes."

(b) Letter of Girardin, Commandant of the naval station: "You ask me, Gentlemen, what are the feelings of the soldiers and the sailors relative to the law of April 4th. Their feelings towards the execution of this law are excellent for this law as for all others. When the law speaks they know how to obey, provided that no one seeks to corrupt them. . . . Girardin warned the Commissioners against the "factious" in Le Cap who wished to disrupt "the harmony which exists between the respectable inhabitants, white and coloured. . . ." He suggested that the Commissioners land at St Marc where "unity between all the citizens is perfect."

(c) Letter of de Blanchelande, the Governor, to the Commissioners: "The Law of April 4th has been published and accepted in the whole colony."

Letter of Souchet, the Treasurer, to the Commissioners: "You will find here the Law of April 4th universally accepted. . . ."

Letter of Delpech, another official: "You will see . . . that the first object of your mission, that of assuring the execution of the law of April 4th, will cause you little trouble, but you will have to take many precautions. . . ."

That cannot be destroyed in a day or in a year. But the whites wanted peace, and at the ceremonial reception the white President of the Assembly, the white Mayor of Le Cap, all treated the quarrel with the Mulattoes as a thing of the past. Two things troubled them. One was slavery. "We have not brought half-a-million slaves from the coasts of Africa to make them into French citizens," said the President of the Assembly to Sonthonax, and Sonthonax reassured him. I recognise, he said, only two classes of men in San Domingo, the free, without distinction of colour, and the slaves. But the second question was the revolution. White cockades and red, each hoped for help from the Commissioners. The royalists saw in the Commissioners officials appointed by the King, the revolutionaries saw in them members of the Jacobin Club. Sonthonax, as was inevitable in a Jacobin and a Brissotin, sided with the revolution. He reorganised the Government to concentrate power in the hands of the Commission and included in his council both Mulattoes and a free black. The next step was now obviously the attack on the slaves before the troops began to feel the effects of the climate. But that vigorous attack was never made.

Early in October San Domingo heard the news of August 10th. This was no mere matter of loyalty to a monarch. The bourgeoisie throws over its king for a republic quickly enough if thereby it can save its skin and its goods. August 10th was more than that. It was the bid of the masses for power not with speeches but with arms. There could be no truce anywhere on French territory after August 10th. Royalists under Desparbes and revolutionaries under Sonthonax sprang at each other's throats. The Mulattoes fought for Sonthonax, who was victorious, and de-

Sonthonax himself writes to the Minister that Roume sent the same news from South and West.

Yet Mr. Lothrop Stoddard, frankly pursuing his racial theories, goes so far as to say on p. 187 of *The French Revolution in San Domingo* (Boston & New York, 1914) that the Governor and the Commander of the station wrote special memoirs stating that the soldiers and sailors "shared the colonists' repugnance to the law of April 4th."

ported Desparbes and the other royalist leaders to France. The revolution was triumphant. But Sonthonax was determined to abolish Mulatto discrimination, and the small whites and the rabble, although revolutionary, were furious at seeing the rich people of colour high in favour with Sonthonax. They raged with jealousy and race prejudice. Sonthonax called them "aristocrats of the skin" and stood by the spirit and letter of the April 4th decree. Once more the division between the rulers had given a further breathing space to the ruled.

Yet this apparent good fortune was fundamentally no accident. The first sign of a thoroughly ill-adjusted or bankrupt form of society is that the ruling classes cannot agree how to save the situation. It is this division which opens the breach, and the ruling classes will continue to fight with each other, just so long as they do not fear the mass seizure of power. The insurrection nevertheless now seemed at its last gasp. Laveaux, the French commander, even with his few soldiers, defeated Toussaint and drove the revolting slaves from their positions. Famine and disease were decimating their forces. Then it was that 15,000 men, women and children, starving, with their soldiers defeated and driven into the mountains, came begging to be taken back. Toussaint and his trained band of a few hundred, little more than a year old, were helpless in the crowd, and Jean François and Biassou though superior in numbers were weaker than he. Candy, who led a band of Mulattoes, had deserted the blacks and joined the Commissioners, beginning that Mulatto vacillation which was to have such disastrous consequences in the future. Early in 1793 Laveaux was preparing a final assault to complete the rout of the insurrection, when he was recalled by the Commissioners.

The revolution had overflowed the boundaries of France. On January 21st, 1793, the King was executed. The revolutionary armies were now winning successes and the ruling classes of Europe armed against this new monster—democracy. In February came war with Spain, then with Britain, and it was to defend the coasts against the foreign enemy that Sonthonax recalled Laveaux. The rev-

olutionary tide flowed down into the plain once more, never again to lose heart, and Toussaint begins to emerge as the man of the future.

For the moment the blacks did not know where their true interests lay. And if they did not, it was not their fault, because the French Revolution, being still in the hands of Liberals and "moderates," was clearly bent on driving the blacks back to the old slavery. Thus, when the Spaniards in San Domingo offered the blacks an alliance against the French Government, naturally they accepted. Here were white men offering them guns and ammunition and supplies, recognising them as soldiers, treating them as equals and asking them to shoot other whites. All trooped over to join the Spanish forces and Jean François and Biassou were appointed lieutenants-general of the armies of the King of Spain. Toussaint went also, but he made his terms with the Spaniards as an independent leader, and not as a subordinate of Biassou. He had 600 men, well-trained and absolutely devoted to him, and he received an official title of colonel.⁴ Like all the other blacks, Toussaint attacked the godless kingless republic and fought in the name of royalty, both Spanish and French. But for him, already, these slogans were merely politics, not convictions.

It is his maturity that is so astonishing. Jean François and Biassou were perfectly satisfied with their new official positions. But Toussaint proposed to the Marquis d'Hermona, his immediate chief, a plan for conquering the French colony by granting freedom to all the blacks.⁵ D'Hermona agreed but Don Garcia the Governor refused. Foiled here, before June he wrote to Laveaux⁶—he had not

⁴ Maréchal-de-camp.

⁵ Sannon, *Histoire de Toussaint-L'Ouverture*, Port-au-Prince, 1933, Vol. II, p. 220. Toussaint mentions the plan without giving details but it could not have been otherwise than as stated, for it was immediately after this that he wrote to Laveaux.

⁶ Toussaint himself in a letter of May 18th, 1794, reminds Laveaux of this offer made before the disasters of Le Cap

yet been with the Spaniards four months—offering to join the French and fight against the Spaniards if Laveaux would recognise the liberty of the blacks and grant a plenary amnesty. Laveaux refused and Toussaint, baffled, remained with the Spaniards.

But things went from bad to worse with the French, and on August 6th, Chanlatte, a Mulatto officer, one of Southonax' creations, offered Toussaint "the protection" of the Republic if he would bring his forces over. In politics all abstract terms conceal treachery. Toussaint refused and blandly replied that "the blacks wished a King and that they would lay down their arms only when he had been recognised." Doubtless Chanlatte thought him to be an ignorant and fanatical African, for many historians, even after studying Toussaint's career, have still continued to believe that he had some "African" faith in kingship. Nothing was further from Toussaint's mind. Though allied to the Spaniards he continued boldly to rally the blacks on the slogan of liberty for all. On August 29th he issued a call:

"Brothers and friends. I am Toussaint L'Ouverture, my name is perhaps known to you. I have undertaken vengeance. I want Liberty and Equality to reign in San Domingo. I work to bring them into existence. Unite yourselves to us, brothers, and fight with us for the same cause, etc.

"Your very humble and very obedient servant.

"(Signed) TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE,

"General of the Armies of the King, for the Public Good." ?

which took place in June, 1793. The letter is found in *La Bibliothèque Nationale*, MSS. Department. Toussaint's letters to Laveaux and kindred documents arranged in chronological order fill three volumes. They are of the first importance. Schoelcher's *Vie de Toussaint-L'Ouverture* quotes heavily from these letters, and should be consulted for convenience. See pp. 98-99.

⁷ *Lettres de Toussaint-L'Ouverture, La Bibliothèque Nationale*. (MSS. Dept.)

This curious document shows that already Toussaint had changed his name from Bréda to L'Ouverture,⁸ and already had reason to expect that his name was known. But what is most noteworthy is the confidence with which he is riding two horses at once. He uses the prestige of his position as general of the armies of the King, but he calls on the Negroes in the name of liberty and equality, the watchwords of the French revolution, of which royalty was the sworn enemy. Neither would help his aims, so he was using both.

Sonthonax continued to rule with sternness in the North, the whites sullenly accepting the victory of the revolution, the Mulattoes grabbing greedily at all Government posts. Sonthonax, though later he would be disgusted with this greediness, leaned on them and deported for trial in France all who smelt of counter-revolution. Just at this time there arrived from France, Galbaud, appointed Governor in place of de Blanchelande, arrested and sent to France by Sonthonax. When Galbaud reached Le Cap, Sonthonax was at Port-au-Prince visiting Polverel. The whites of Le Cap, nearly all for the counter-revolution, gave Galbaud, who had property in San Domingo, a tumultuous welcome. Sonthonax and Polverel knew what this meant and hurrying from Port-au-Prince dismissed Galbaud and his staff and put them on a vessel to be taken to France. But Galbaud was not going so easily. The sailors in the fleet took his part. He landed with a force, the whites of the counter-revolution joined him, and together they drove the Commissioners and their forces out of the city. Sonthonax, facing defeat and extermination, gave orders that the slaves and prisoners of Le Cap should be armed; at the same time, promising pardon and freedom to the insurgent

⁸ L'Ouverture means "the opening." Either Laveaux or Polverel is said to have exclaimed at the news of another victory by Toussaint: "This man makes an opening everywhere," whence the new name began. It is not improbable that the slaves called him L'Ouverture from the gap in his teeth. Later he dropped the apostrophe.

slaves who surrounded the city, he unloosed the lot at Galbaud and the whites. Galbaud's sailors, drunk with victory and with wine, had just turned from fighting to pillage when 10,000 blacks swooped down from the hills on to the city. The road from the heights ran along the sea-shore, and the sailors who remained on the ships in the harbour could see them hour after hour swarming down to Le Cap. The counter-revolution fled for the harbour leaving all behind them. Galbaud had to throw himself into the sea to get to a boat, and to complete the royalist discomfiture, fire broke out and burnt two-thirds of the city to the ground, destroying hundreds of millions' worth of property. Ten thousand refugees crowded on to the vessels in the harbour and set out for the United States of America, the great majority of them never to return. It was the end of white domination in San Domingo.

That is how white San Domingo destroyed itself. The current legend that the abolition of slavery resulted in the destruction of the whites is a shameless lie, typical of the means by which reaction covers its crimes in the past and seeks to block advance in the present. In May 1792 the whites were all tumbling over each other to give rights to the Mulattoes, and Roume says that when the decree of April 4th arrived, they published it the day after.⁹ It was too late. If they had done it a year before, at the outbreak of the slave revolution, they would have been able to master it before it spread. Why didn't they? Race prejudice? Nonsense. Why did not Charles I and his followers behave reasonably to Cromwell? As late as 1646, two years after Marston Moor, Mrs. Cromwell and Mrs. Ireton had tea with Charles at Hampton Court. Cromwell, great revolutionary but great bourgeois, was willing to come to terms. Why did not Louis and Marie Antoinette and the court behave reasonably to the moderate revolutionaries before August 10th? Why indeed? The monarchy in France had to be torn up by the roots. Those in power never give way,

⁹ Roume to the Committee of Public Safety. Report of 18 Ventôse (1793), *Les Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*. A document of great value.

and admit defeat only to plot and scheme to regain their lost power and privilege. Had the monarchists been white, the bourgeoisie brown, and the masses of France black, the French Revolution would have gone down in history as a race war. But although they were all white in France they fought just the same. The struggle of classes ends either in the reconstruction of society or in the common ruin of the contending classes. The French Revolution laid the basis of modern France, the country as a whole being strong enough to stand the shock and profit by it, but so corrupt and rotten was the slave society of San Domingo that it could not stand any strain and perished as it deserved to perish.

Sonthonax returned to Le Cap, a town half-ruined. To his surprise, the pillage over, the revolted slaves did not stay with the Commissioners. Gathering up their plunder they went back to their roving life in the hills and to their Spanish allies. The French sent envoys to win them over, but all of them, Toussaint included, replied that they could only obey a King and they would only recognise the Commissioners when they had a King, which piece of sophistry had been carefully taught them by the Spaniards. The royalist officers were deserting Sonthonax for the Spaniards, and now, to complete the difficulties of the Commissioners, the slaves who had not yet revolted, kindled by the revolutionary ferment around them, refused to be slaves any longer. They crowded the streets of Le Cap, exalted as at a revivalist meeting, and called for liberty and equality. On plantations which had hitherto escaped destruction it was the same. The white slave-owners who remained in San Domingo had learnt much in the last two years. One of them who owned hundreds of slaves told Sonthonax that it would be best to declare abolition. Sonthonax learnt that Jean François was about to rally the blacks to his standard by calling them all to liberty. Hemmed in on all sides and looking for support against the enemy at home and the enemy abroad, Sonthonax declared the abolition of slavery

on August 29th, 1793. It was his last card and he could not help himself.

In the West Province, Polverel, although dissatisfied, accepted the decree and persuaded the whites who remained not to oppose it. For the time being, having no other alternative, they accepted. But the decree was a failure. Those freed by Sonthonax remained always faithful to him; but Jean François, Biassou and the other experienced soldiers remained in alliance with the Spaniards, and Toussaint, though not faithful to the Spaniards, still refused to go over to the French.

In the South the slaves had revolted against both whites and Mulattoes, and were winning great victories. But in the West the Mulattoes were still dominant. Rigaud and Beauvais with their white allies had long since captured Port-au-Prince. Chasing the royalists away, the Mulatto army established a Mulatto domination. But when the fighting was over they chose some of the bravest slaves and offered them freedom if they would lead the rest back to slavery and keep them in order. The offer was accepted, and 100,000 slaves were led back to their plantations—the inevitable fate of any class which allows itself to be led by another. Sure of their slaves, many of the Mulatto proprietors in the West, though having the Government in their hands, were furious at the decree of abolition and abandoned the revolution to which they owed so much. Property, white and Mulatto, had come together again under the flag of the counter-revolution.

Sonthonax tried desperately to win over the black slaves. But despite all the overtures by Laveaux, urging the decree of abolition as evidence of good-will toward the blacks, Toussaint would not join the French. His hand was growing fast now, not only in numbers but in quality. Many of the deserting royalist officers, instead of joining the Spanish forces, preferred to join a troop of blacks who had formerly been French, hoping to gain influence over them and use them for their own purposes. They joined Tous-

saint's band. From them he learnt the orthodox military art: used them to train his troops, and organised an efficient staff. There were no maps of the district. He called together the local inhabitants: learnt from them the geography of their neighbourhood and from his early dabbings in geometry was able to construct useful maps. One of his guides was Dessalines, unable to read or write, his body scarred with strokes from the whip, but a born soldier, soon to hold high command.

Toussaint's forces grew, as much by his fearless fighting as by his mastery of politics and intrigue. Lieutenant-Colonel Nully having deserted to Toussaint, the French appointed Brandicourt in his place. With 300 picked men Toussaint prepared an ambush for Brandicourt. As Brandicourt's men approached they were not fired upon but challenged: "Who goes there?" "France." "Then let your general come and speak to ours—no harm shall befall him." Brandicourt who was in the centre ordered an attack, but his men begged him to parley with Toussaint. As soon as Brandicourt went forward he was seized and brought before Toussaint, who commanded him to write an order to his forces to yield. In tears, Brandicourt wrote to Pacot his second-in-command that he was a prisoner and left it to him to do what he thought fit. Toussaint tore up the letter and insisted that Brandicourt should write a direct command to lay down arms. Brandicourt wrote, and on getting the letter, Pacot (who was secretly in touch with Toussaint) said to the other officers, "Do what you like, I shall surrender." The three detachments joined Toussaint's forces without a blow. When Toussaint returned to camp leading these white troops, his own men were so startled that he had difficulty in assuring them that the newcomers were allies, and his chief d'Hermóna was equally astonished.

This bloodless victory gave him London. He marched on Marnelade, where a stern engagement lasted all day. Vernet, the Mulatto commander, called a coward by Poverel, found himself in difficulties, and soon he deserted to Toussaint with 1,200 men. Toussaint took Emery and the commander of that fort joined him. There remained only

Plaisance between him and Gonaïves; but he was driven back by a Mulatto legion from the West, which recaptured Emery. After a short respite to gather his forces he re-took Emery, and in December 1793 he marched into Gonaïves. Going back he took Plaisance, and Charlatte, the commander, joined him with all his troops. All the garrisons at St Marc, Verrettes, Arcahaye, in hopeless isolation, surrendered to Toussaint and joined his forces. The abolition of slavery, the basis of property in San Domingo, had weakened the morale of the republican commanders, and between joining the counter-revolution under Toussaint, and being massacred by his forces, the choice was easy, especially as the black general already had a great reputation for humanity, a very singular thing in the San Domingo of those days. Thus in the early months of 1794 Toussaint held the Cordon of the West from the Spanish colony to the sea, and had isolated the North Province from the West and South. The Spaniards held every fortified post in the North Province except Le Cap itself and two others, and all knew it was Toussaint's doing. Toussaint was still subordinate to Jean François and Biassou, but he now had 4,000 men and under him were blacks, Mulattoes and whites, former officers of the *ancien régime* and former republicans. But the majority were black, and Dessalines, Christophe and Moïse had been slaves. Toussaint was in undisputed command, already a master of the art of war, and a skilful negotiator. But although he had fought under the flag of the counter-revolution, he knew where his power lay, and under the very noses of the Spanish commanders he continued to call the blacks to freedom.

Jean François and Biassou, his rivals, were now the idols of the refugee French colonists. Two years before they would not even speak to them, but revolution is a great teacher and these French planters, "the new subjects of the King of Spain,"¹⁰ as they called themselves, compared

¹⁰ *Lettres de Toussaint-L'Ouverture, La Bibliothèque Nationale.* This and the other passages quoted are from a complaint by the émigré colonists to the Spanish Governor, dated April 4th. 1794. See Schoelcher, p. 92.

Jean François and Biassou to the "great generals of antiquity" and looked to them to clear the mountains, "re-establish order," and then take Le Cap. Biassou, Jean François and d'Hermona formed a plan of campaign and Biassou began to group his forces, suppressing some of the camps Toussaint had instituted. Toussaint replaced the camps and raised the blacks. To the wrath and disgust of the colonists he persisted in violating the "sacred promises" of the Spanish King by promising "general freedom to all the slaves who had gone back to their duty" and were preserving order. The colonists praised Biassou, "whose conduct merited general admiration," but they cursed Toussaint and his liberty for all, called him a traitor to the King, and demanded his head. Toussaint exercised an extraordinary domination over all men with whom he worked, and the Marquis d'Hermona, who admired him greatly, either could not or would not do anything.

And while Toussaint performed these miracles in the North, the British added to the complications by making an armed bid for San Domingo, now apparently without defence.

From the very beginning of the revolution, the planters had been throwing out threats that they would seek the overlordship of Britain, and after the slave revolt in 1791 they offered the colony to Pitt. But San Domingo was hardly Africa or India where one raided at will. Interference would mean war with France. The British therefore refused, but busied themselves with schemes and plans of conquest. In December 1792, Lieutenant Colonel John Chalmers, an expert on West Indian affairs, wrote a memorandum to Pitt on what he called the "vast, vast importance" of San Domingo.¹¹ "The deplorable situation of the French West Indies," said Chalmers, "seems loudly to crave the protection of Great Britain." And oddly enough this protection promised to be most profitable. "The advantages

¹¹ Chatham Papers, C.D. 8/334. Miscellaneous papers relating to France, 1784-1795. (Public Record Office.)

of San Domingo to Great Britain are innumerable and would give her a monopoly of sugar, indigo, cotton, and coffee. This island for ages would give such aid and force to industry as would be most happily felt in every part of the Empire. It would prevent all migration from all the three kingdoms to America, which (without such acquisition) will keep pace and augment with the prosperity of America so as to become truly alarming and detrimental."

Chalmers shared advanced British opinion on the decline of the British West Indies. "The West Indian possessions of Great Britain are comparatively deficient, diminutive, widely extended and, therefore, little capable of defence." Here was a chance to remedy this sad state of affairs. By an alliance with Spain, "offensive and defensive," the two countries could keep France and America out of the West Indies, and secure themselves there. Britain should try to get the whole of San Domingo, but should circumstances or the united powers decide the whole to be "too ponderous for her political scale," she must at all events retain the North part of the island.

The patriotic Colonel ended on a characteristic note. "Gloom and perilous as the present state of Europe is, yet, from these evils, the greatest and most lasting benefits may arise from a brief well-conducted war, terminated by a happy pacification. . . . It is, therefore, humbly hoped that the belligerents will see the strong necessity of confining her [France] to limits as established at the death of Henry the Fourth, adding thereunto all her foreign dominions, San Domingo and the isle of Bourbon, excepting."

Colonel Chalmers' anxiety about the "vast, vast" importance of San Domingo was quite unjustified. Those were Pitt's sentiments exactly. The moment war seemed imminent, Dundas despatched four French colonists to Williamson, the Governor of Jamaica, with a letter of introduction. Immediately after the declaration of war, negotiations were begun and on September 3rd, 1793, capitulations were signed.¹² The colony would accept the pro-

¹² Colonial Office Papers, Jamaica. C.O. 137/91, February 25th, 1793.

tection of Great Britain until the peace. Modifications would be introduced in the Exclusive, but the *ancien régime* would be re-established, slavery, Mulatto discrimination, and all. Clarkson and Wilberforce were left to bewail and bemoan¹³ the peculiar lukewarmness Pitt now showed for the cause he had advocated so urgently a few years before.

If ever there was a good thing, this looked like one. Petitions from all parts of the island assured the British that they would be welcomed by all persons possessing property, and who else in San Domingo mattered? All expenses were to be repaid from the revenues of San Domingo. General Cuyler told Dundas that he entertained "no apprehensions of our successes in West Indies."¹⁴ Pitt and Dundas pressed the expedition on, with a reckless disregard even for the safety of Britain. Dundas was "very nearly out of temper"¹⁵ at some delay. For Pitt "the West Indies was the first point to make certain."¹⁶ What San Domingo meant in those days can be judged from the fact that though a French invasion threatened Britain, even that was not to delay the despatch of the expedition. "Additional exertions will then be necessary to make the country take care of its own internal defence."¹⁷ Two years later this same Dundas would tell Parliament that the war in the West Indies was "on the part of this country . . . not a war for riches or local aggrandisement but a war for security." Dundas knew that not a single member of Parliament would believe him. But Parliament has always agreed to

¹³ James Stephen to Wilberforce: "Mr. Pitt, unhappily for himself, his country and mankind, is not zealous enough in the cause of the negroes to contend for them as decisively as he ought, in this cabinet any more than in Parliament." July 17th, 1797. R. I. and S. Wilberforce, *Life of Wilberforce*, London, 1838, Vol. II, pp. 224-225.

¹⁴ Fortescue MSS. (Historical Manuscripts Commission). Vol. II, p. 405, July 17th, 1793.

¹⁵ Fortescue MSS., Dundas to Grenville, October 12th, 1793, Vol. II, p. 444.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* To Grenville, July, 1793, Vol. II, pp. 407-408.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* Dundas to Grenville, October 11th, 1793, Vol. II, p. 443.

¹⁸ February 18th, 1796.

speak in these terms in order to keep the people quiet.

On September 9th the British expedition of 900 men left Jamaica and landed at Jérémie on the 19th. Property-owners are the most energetic flag-waggers and patriots in every country, but only so long as they enjoy their possessions: to safeguard those they desert God, King and Country in a twinkling. All propertyed San Domingo rushed to welcome the British, the defenders of slavery. Soldiers like the brothers Rigaud and Beauvais and the detachments they commanded, politicians like Pinchinat, stayed with the French, but the Mulatto proprietors, particularly those of the West Province, preferred their slaves to liberty and equality. All the fighting round Port-au-Prince was forgotten. When Beauvais remonstrated with Savary, Mulatto Mayor of St Marc, Savary did not disguise his views. "So long as the proclamations of the Civil Commissioners assured a happy and prosperous future, I carried out all their instructions; but from the moment I saw that they were preparing the thunder-bolt which is bursting on all sides, I took measures to safe-guard our fellow citizens and preserve our property." Ogé's brother went with Savary.

With such a welcome nothing could stop the British. By the beginning of 1794 they were in possession of the whole sea-board of the Gulf of Port-au-Prince, excepting the capital; the whole of the West Province; most of the South, except for a small territory held by Rigaud's troops; and the important fortress of Môle St Nicholas. From the other West Indian islands came even more startling news of the triumph of Britain and the counter-revolution. On February 3rd a British force of 7,000 men and 19 vessels sailed from Barbados and in two months had captured Martinique, Saint Lucia, and Guadeloupe. Williamson, Governor of Jamaica, had information that in Le Cap itself "all the people of property"¹⁹ (the phrase is his own) were waiting to receive them. He wrote to Dundas of the "prodigious"²⁰ trade they were now doing with San Domingo

¹⁹ Colonial Office Papers, Jamaica, C.D. 137/91. To Dundas, July 13th, 1793.

²⁰ *Ibid.* C.D. 137/92. To Dundas, February 9th, 1794.

and hoped that the trade would correspondingly improve British revenues. Dundas congratulated him heartily on this surprisingly quick success.²¹

It was a crucial moment in world history. If the British could hold San Domingo, the finest colony in the world, they would once more be a power in American waters. Instead of being abolitionists they would be the most powerful practitioners and advocates of the slave-trade,²² on a scale exceeding anything they had ever done before. But there was another more urgent issue. If the British completed the conquest of San Domingo, the colonial empire of revolutionary France was gone; its vast resources would be directed into British pockets, and Britain would be able to return to Europe and throw army and navy against the revolution.

Sonthoux, Polverel and Laveaux knew this and fought to save San Domingo for the revolution. "If it is necessary to hide in a double and triple range of hills," said Sonthoux to his followers in Le Cap, "I will show you the way. We shall have no other asylum than cannons, no other food than water and bananas, but we shall live and die free." The British tried to bribe Laveaux, for revolutionaries were of course low fellows who act as they do for money or ambition. Laveaux, a nobleman under the old régime, called out Major James Grant who, however, declined. "Let us perish, citizen," wrote Sonthoux to one of his officers. "Yes, let us perish a thousand times rather than permit the people of San Domingo to fall again into enslavement and servitude. If we are defeated we shall leave for the English only bones and ashes." The British called on him to surrender Port-au-Prince. With a handful of men he disdainfully refused and the British retired. But at the end of May a united force of British soldiers and French

²¹ *Ibid.* C.D. 137/91. December 13th, 1793.

²² On new land which was good, such as San Domingo still offered, and later Brazil, the slave even though expensive still gave good profit, and was often the only labour available.

émigrés attacked the town. Traitors let them into an important fort on the outskirts, and Sonthoux and Polverel, escorted by Beauvais and a small detachment of blacks, fled to Jacmel. It was June 4th and the English celebrated the capture of the capital on the birthday of the King. The rest now was only a matter of days.

Toussaint, a Spanish officer and therefore ally of the British, saw all his secret hopes being wrecked by the British victories. He was following the progress of abolition in England.²³ But from the time there seemed a real possibility of getting San Domingo, the Abolition Bill began its long career as a hardy annual. French republic, British constitutional monarchy, Spanish autocracy, though one might smile and another frown according to the exigencies of the moment, none troubled to disguise that in the last analysis the Negro could expect either the overseer's whip or the bayonet. Once the British were masters of San Domingo, then Spaniards and British would turn on the blacks and drive them back into slavery. Sonthoux had abolished slavery, but he had no authority to do so. It was the republican Government in France alone which could decide this, and the republican Government spoke no word.

Despite the feeling for the slaves in France, the Convention did nothing for over a year. As long as Brissot and the Girondins remained in power no word would be said about the slaves. But Brissot and his party could not last. They would not check the speculations of the bourgeoisie with the currency, they would not fix maximum prices for food, they would not tax the rich to pay for the war, they would not pass the legislation necessary to abolish the feudal dues, they would not ratify the seizure of the land by the peasants. Being afraid of Paris they would not bring the whole country under a strong central government, and despite incessant royalist insurrection and plotting they

²³ Saintoyant, *La Colonisation Française* . . . , Vol. II, p. 148.

remains. That too is now at its last gasp, and equality has been consecrated. A black man, a yellow man, are about to join this Convention in the name of the free citizens of San Domingo. The three deputies of San Domingo entered the hall. The black face of Bellay and the yellow face of Mills excited long and repeated bursts of applause.

Lacroix (of Eure-et-Loire) followed. "The Assembly has been anxious to have within it some of those men of colour who have suffered oppression for so many years. To-day it has two of them. I demand that their introduction be marked by the President's fraternal embrace."

The motion was carried amidst applause. The three deputies of San Domingo advanced to the President and received the fraternal kiss while the hall rang with fresh applause.

Next day, Bellay, the Negro, delivered a long and fiery oration, pledging the blacks to the cause of the revolution and asking the Convention to declare slavery abolished. It was fitting that a Negro and an ex-slave should make the speech which introduced one of the most important legislative acts ever passed by any political assembly. No one spoke after Bellay. Instead Levasseur (of Sarthe) moved a motion: "When drawing up the constitution of the French people we paid no attention to the unhappy Negroes. Posterity will bear us a great reproach for that. Let us repair the wrong—let us proclaim the liberty of the Negroes. Mr. President, do not suffer the Convention to dishonour itself by a discussion." The Assembly rose in acclamation. The two deputies of colour appeared on the tribune and embraced while the applause rolled round the hall from members and visitors. Lacroix led the Mulatto and the Negro to the President who gave them the presidential kiss, when the applause started again.

Cambon drew the attention of the House to an incident which had taken place among the spectators.

"A citizenship of colour who regularly attends the sittings of the Convention has just felt so keen a joy at seeing us give liberty to all her brethren that she has fainted (ap-
 pause). I demand that this fact be mentioned in the min-

utes, and that this citizenship be admitted to the sitting and receive at least this much recognition of her civic virtues." The motion was carried and the woman walked to the front bench of the amphitheatre and sat to the left of the President, drying her tears amidst another burst of cheering.

Lacroix, who had spoken the day before, then proposed the draft of the decree. "I demand that the Minister of Marine be instructed to despatch at once advices to the Colonies to give them the happy news of their freedom, and I propose the following decree: The National Convention declares slavery abolished in all the colonies. In consequence it declares that all men, without distinction of colour, domiciled in the colonies, are French citizens, and enjoy all the rights assured under the Constitution."

Gone was all the talking and fumbling, the sabotage of the Barnaves, the convenient memory of the Brissots. In 1789 Grégoire had proposed equality for Mulattoes and gradual abolition. He had been treated as anyone would be treated who for the Union of South Africa to-day proposed merely social and political equality for educated Africans and relief from the slavery of the pass-laws for the rest. Like Grégoire he would be denounced as a Bolshevik and would be lucky to escape lynching. Yet when the masses turn (as turn they will one day) and try to end the tyranny of centuries, not only the tyrants but all "civilisation" holds up its hands in horror and clamours for "order" to be restored. If a revolution carries high overhead expenses, most of them it inherits from the greed of reactionaries and the cowardice of the so-called moderates. Long before abolition the mischief had been done in the French colonies and it was not abolition but the refusal to abolish which had done it.

At that time slavery had been overturned only in San Domingo of all the French colonies, and the generous spontaneity of the Convention was only a reflection of the overflowing desire which filled all France to end tyranny and oppression everywhere. But the generosity of the revolutionary spirit was at the same time the soundest political policy. Robespierre was not present at the session and did not approve of the step. Danton knew that the Convention

had been swept off its feet by an excess of feeling, and thought that it ought to have been more cautious. But that master of revolutionary tactics could not fail to see that the decree, by ratifying the liberty which the blacks had won, was giving them a concrete interest in the struggle against British and Spanish reaction. "The English are done for," he shouted, "Pitt and his plots are riddled."

But while the revolution swelled with justifiable pride, the rich fumed, remaining shameless and obstinate. As soon as the decree was passed the maritime bourgeois sent to the deputies of the Convention an "address . . . on the occasion of the enfranchisement of the Negroes."

"Bravo! One hundred times bravo, our masters. This is the cry with which all our places of business resound when the public press comes each day and bring us details of your great operations. Certainly, we have all the time to read them at leisure since we have no longer any work to do. There is no longer any ship-building in our ports, still less any construction of boats. The manufactories are deserted and the shops even are closed. Thus, thanks to your sublime decrees, every day is a holiday for the workers. We can count more than three hundred thousand in our different towns who have no other occupation than, arms folded, to talk about the news of the day, of the Rights of Man, and of the Constitution. It is true that every day they become more hungry, but whoever thinks of the stomach when the heart is glad!"

The Convention, bourgeois itself, was not too happy after the first excitement was over,²⁷ but the masses and the radicals hailed the decree as another "great clearance in the forest of abuses."²⁸

It is not known exactly when the news reached the West Indies. But on June 5th, the day after the celebrations of the King's birthday and the capture of Port-au-Prince,

²⁷ Saintoyant, *La Colonisation Française* . . . , Vol. I, pp. 330-333.

²⁸ The phrase is Grégoire's.

the English commanders at St Kitts heard that seven French ships had escaped the British fleet and landed at Guadeloupe. In command was Victor Hugues, a Mulatto, "one of the great personalities of the French revolution to whom nothing was impossible,"²⁹ taken from his post as public prosecutor in Rochefort and sent to the West Indies. Hugues brought only 1,500 men, but he brought also the Convention's message to the blacks. There was no black army in the Windward islands as in San Domingo. He had to make one out of raw slaves. But he gave them the revolutionary message and dressed them in the colours of the Republic. The black army fell on the victorious British, began to drive them out of the French colonies, then carried the war into the British islands.

Toussaint got the news of the decree sometime in May. The fate of the French in San Domingo was hanging by a thread, but now that the decree of Sonthonax was ratified in France, he did not hesitate a moment but at once told Laveaux that he was willing to join him. Laveaux, overjoyed, accepted the offer and agreed to make him a Brigadier-General, and Toussaint responded with a vigour and audacity that left all San Domingo gasping. He sent to the destitute Laveaux some good ammunition from the Spanish stores. Then he persuaded those of his followers who were with him to change over, and all agreed—French soldiers, ex-slaves of the rank-and-file and all his officers, blacks and white royalists who had deserted the Republic to join him. His demeanour at Mass was so devout that d'Hermiona watching him communicate one day commented that God if he came to earth could not visit a purer spirit than Toussaint L'Ouverture. One morning in June, Toussaint, having communicated with his usual devotion, fell on the startled Biassou and routed his troops. Then in a campaign as brilliant as the one by which he had captured the line of camps for the Spaniards, he recaptured them for the French, either conquering them or winning over commanders and men, so that when he joined the French he had 4,000

²⁹ Sir Harry Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*, London, 1910, p. 169.

troops, the North Province was almost recaptured, and the Spaniards, Biassou and Jean François were not only routed but demoralised. The British, having received some overdue reinforcements, were already calculating how much of the conquered San Domingo they could wangle from their allies, the Spaniards. In these matters the more we have the better our pretensions, wrote Dundas to Williamson. On them just about to swallow the prize Toussaint turned with one of his tigerish leaps. He captured all their positions on the right bank of the Artibonite, drove them across the river, and but for a succession of unexpected misfortunes would have taken their stronghold of St Marc.

VI

The Rise of Toussaint

THE RELATION of forces in San Domingo was now completely changed and although few recognised it fully at the time, Toussaint and the blacks were henceforth the decisive factors in the revolution. Toussaint was now a French officer in command of an army of some 5,000 men, holding a line of camps or fortified positions between the North Province and the West, and had pushed his way into the West Province as far as the right bank of the Artibonite. Rigaud in the South had taken the lead over Beauvais and was occupied with his own campaign against the Brit-

narily never spoke but when he thought it necessary, and then said only what he wanted to say. He turned abruptly from Vincent, and evading about a hundred persons who were waiting for him, he sprang on his horse and rode away so quickly that even his guard was taken by surprise.

For these few weeks Vincent seems to have doubted Toussaint. Vincent was a white man. He could never dread slavery as a black man could, never have that unsleeping fear of white treachery so strong in that generation of San Domingo Negroes. Honest himself, Vincent took it for granted that the rulers of France would act with common decency toward those black men whose services to France he had witnessed. To him it seemed that Toussaint was merely pursuing a personal ambition. Before he left he sounded Christophe. Would he leave Le Cap, where he commanded, and go to St. Iago to welcome the French expedition which would certainly come? It would save a great deal of trouble. Christophe, evasive, said he would do his best for peace. With this equivocal answer Vincent had to be satisfied. He did not know what to do. He went home via America and from Philadelphia he wrote to Toussaint, warning him against projects of independence.

Vincent did all that a man could do. Even in trying to detach Christophe from Toussaint he was acting, as he thought, in the best interests of France and of San Domingo. To him the restoration of slavery was unthinkable. He expected it as little as millions of British people expected the intrigues of Baldwin, Hoare and Eden with Laval and Mussolini after the denial of arms to Abyssinia and the grandiose promises of fidelity to the League of Nations and the idea of collective security. Many an honest subordinate has in this way been the unwilling instrument of the inevitable treachery up above; the trouble is that when faced with the brutal reality he goes in the end with his own side, and by the very confidence which his integrity created does infinitely more harm than the open enemy.

XII

The Bourgeoisie Prepares to Restore Slavery

TOUSSAINT was perfectly right in his suspicions. What is the régime under which the colonies have most prospered, asked Bonaparte, and on being told the *ancien régime* he decided to restore it, slavery and Mulatto discrimination.

Bonaparte hated black people. The revolution had appointed that brave and brilliant Mulatto, General Dumas,¹ Commander-in-Chief of one of its armies, but Bonaparte

¹ Father of Alexandre père and grandfather of Alexandre fils. France has erected a monument to these three in the Place Malesherbes, Paris.

detested him for his colour, and persecuted him. Yet Bonaparte was no colonist, and his anti-Negro bias was far from influencing his major policies. He wanted profits for his supporters, and the clamorous colonists found in him a ready ear. The bourgeoisie of the maritime towns wanted the fabulous profits of the old days. The passionate desire to free all humanity which had called for Negro freedom in the great days of the revolution now huddled in the slums of Paris and Marseilles, exhausted by its great efforts and terrorised by Bonaparte's bayonets and Fouché's police.

But the abolition of slavery was one of the proudest memories of the revolution; and, much more important, the San Domingo blacks had an army and leaders trained to fight in the European manner. These were no savage tribesmen with spears, against whom European soldiers armed with rifles could win undying glory.

Occupied with his European campaigns, Bonaparte never lost sight of San Domingo, as he never lost sight of anything. His officers presented plan after plan, but the British fleet and the unknown strength of the blacks prevented action. Yet early in March 1801, a shift in his policy nearly compelled him to leave Toussaint in complete charge of San Domingo.

French and British bourgeoisie were in the middle of that struggle for world supremacy which lasted over twenty years and devastated Europe. Bonaparte aimed at India, and having missed his first spring by way of Egypt, he won over the Tsar Paul, and these two arranged to march overland and steal from the British what these had stolen from the Indians. Bonaparte could not fight in two hemispheres at once, and on March 4th he wrote a letter to Toussaint, a letter beaming with goodwill.² He had been busy, but now that peace was near he had had time to read Toussaint's letters. He would appoint him Captain-General of the island. He asked Toussaint to develop agriculture and build up the armed forces. "The time I hope will not be far when a division from San Domingo will be able to contrib-

² Correspondence of Napoleon.

ute in your part of the world to the glory and the possessions of the Republic."

But the British bourgeoisie, driven out of America, now fully realised the importance of India. Pitt, in collusion with Paul's son Alexander, organised the murder of the pro-French Paul.³ Seven days after the letter to Toussaint was written, Paul was strangled, and on the following day the British fleet sailed into the Baltic. When Bonaparte heard he knew at once that Pitt had beaten him, and the Indian raid was off. The letter and instructions to Toussaint were never sent, and Bonaparte prepared to destroy Toussaint. It is Toussaint's supreme merit that while he saw European civilisation as a valuable and necessary thing, and strove to lay its foundations among his people, he never had the illusion that it conferred any moral superiority. He knew French, British, and Spanish imperialists for the insatiable gangsters that they were, that there is no oath too sacred for them to break, no crime, deception, treachery, cruelty, destruction of human life and property which they would not commit against those who could not defend themselves.

When Vincent arrived in Paris preparations were well under way, but the Constitution gave Bonaparte a convenient excuse. Poor Vincent had attempted to persuade Toussaint to give way to Bonaparte by condemning the Constitution as treason. Now he tried to persuade Bonaparte to give way to Toussaint by denying that the Constitution was treason. Bonaparte accused Toussaint of being sold to the British. Stouly Vincent defended him. Bonaparte swore at Vincent, cursed the "gilded Africans," said that he would not leave an epaulette on the shoulders of a single nigger in the colony. Vincent put it to him that Britain might assist Toussaint. Bonaparte boasted that Britain had shown some inclination to oppose the expedition, but when he threatened to clothe Toussaint with unlimited powers and acknowledge his independence, the

³ Eugene Tarlé, *Bonaparte*, London, 1937, pp. 116-117.

British had kept silence. (Bonaparte thought that they dreaded the effect of an independent San Domingo on their own slave colony of Jamaica. But Pitt, Dundas and Maitland were laughing in their sleeves and rubbing their hands in anticipation.) Vincent tried to point out the dangers of the expedition. Bonaparte called Toussaint a "revolted slave," called Vincent a coward and drove him from his presence. Vincent was appalled at Bonaparte's violence. If this was the spirit in which the French were going to San Domingo, they were heading for a fall. As anxious now for France as for San Domingo, he took the bold step of addressing a memoir to the Minister, in which he tried to paint the strength of the colony and the extraordinary genius of the man who ruled there.

"At the head of so many resources is a man the most active and tireless of whom one can possibly have any idea; it is the strictest truth to say that he is everywhere and, above all, in that spot where a sound judgment and danger make it essential for him to be; his great sobriety, the facility accorded to him alone of never taking a rest, the advantage he enjoys of being able to start at once with the work in his office after wearisome journeys, of replying to a hundred letters a day and tiring out his secretaries; more than that, the art of tantalising and confusing everybody even to deceit: all this makes of him a man so superior to all around him that respect and submission reach the limits of fanaticism in a vast number of heads. He has imposed on his brothers in San Domingo a power without bounds. He is the absolute master of the island and nothing can counteract his wishes, whatever they may be, although some distinguished men, but very few blacks among them, know what are his plans and view them with great fear."

Vincent described Toussaint as superior to everyone in San Domingo, but if one reads that extract again it becomes clear that this brave, honest, intelligent, and experienced officer was obviously describing the most extraordinary human being he had ever met in his life, with powers beyond what he thought possible. In the writings of contemporaries describing the great figures of the French

Revolution and Napoleonic era, one finds this note of astonishment, this "I can't believe my own eyes" attitude, in writings about only three men, Bonaparte, Nelson the sailor and Toussaint.

Bonaparte was so angry that he banished Vincent to the island of Elba.

Personally loved and respected by all their contemporaries, Vincent and Beauvais failed, as will fail all who do not understand that in a revolution each must choose his side and stick to it.

But though Bonaparte might shout "nigger" in the best slave-owning manner, more than anyone in France he divined the difficulties. At first he had thought it easy. The colonists who had fled in the early days of the revolution thought of the slaves as a motley crowd of black brigands who would fly at the first sight of white men. How could such cowed and trembling niggers ever be anything else? They had defeated the British? Nonsense. That was fever. General Michel of the last Commission, who had not seen Toussaint's armies in action, called his officers a collection of concealed incompetents.

But Roume, Pascal, and Vincent, all of whom liked the blacks and therefore knew what they were capable of, were against any expedition. Pascal said that the more enlightened of the blacks, i.e. those who had been free before the revolution, did not love Toussaint, but forty-nine-fiftieths of the population followed him blindly, regarding him as being inspired by God. Roume's attitude was most astonishing. Roume was not even a Frenchman, but a creole from Tobago. Yet, despite his rough treatment at the hands of Toussaint, he still retained his belief in Toussaint's devotion to France. He wrote that Toussaint had acted irregularly because of his fear of slavery. Let Bonaparte clothe him with full civil and military power and reassure him about the future. At the end of the war he would hand back the colony.⁴

⁴ To the Minister. *Les Archives Nationales*. AF. IV, 1187.

Malenfant, an old colonist who was now an official in San Domingo, was offered a post in the expedition. He drafted a memorandum full of praise for Toussaint and the labourers, and warned Bonaparte against the catastrophe he was preparing. When he met Leclerc, the Captain-General, a few days before the fleet sailed, Leclerc accused him of cowardice. "All the niggers, when they see an army, will lay down their arms. They will be only too happy that we pardon them."

"You are misinformed, General . . ."

"But there is a colonist who has offered to arrest Toussaint in the interior of the country with 60 grenadiers."

"He is bolder than I, for I would not attempt it with 60,000."

"He is very rich, Toussaint. He has more than 40 millions."

Patently Malenfant pointed out to him that it was impossible for Toussaint to have this sum. Malenfant shared Roume's opinion of Toussaint. He said afterwards that if Bonaparte had sent Laveaux to San Domingo with 3,000 men all would have been well. Toussaint was an eminently reasonable man, and he and Laveaux would have worked out a *modus vivendi* whereby French capital would have had full opportunity in the island. It was not to be. Leclerc pooh-pooched Malenfant's remonstrances and dismissed him.

Bonaparte never had any such foolish ideas. Vincent had told him of the strength of Toussaint's army, with its soldiers and officers tried and experienced by ten years of constant fighting, and the great soldier added more and more men to the force. So as to avoid too much talk, he distributed his preparations in every harbour in France, Holland and Belgium. The preliminaries of peace were signed on October 1st, 1801. Eight days after Bonaparte gave the word, and even the delay of adverse winds held up the expedition only until December 14th.

It was the largest expedition that had ever sailed from France, consisting of 20,000 veteran troops, under some of Bonaparte's ablest officers. The Chief of Staff was Dugua, whom Bonaparte had left in charge of Egypt when he set

out on the march to Palestine. Boudet had commanded the advance-guard of Dessaix, whose last minute attack had saved Bonaparte from a disastrous defeat at Marengo. Boyer had commanded the mobile guards which patrolled Upper Egypt; Humbert had commanded the expedition against Ireland. There were men who had experience of guerrilla warfare in La Vendée. General Pamphile de La-croix, who sailed with the expedition and wrote a valuable history of the campaign and the San Domingo revolution, has left us his opinion. "The army of Leclerc was composed of an infinite number of soldiers with great talent, good strategists, great tacticians, officers of engineers and artillery, well educated and very resourceful." At the last moment Bonaparte changed the command, putting his brother-in-law, Leclerc, at the head, a sign of the importance he attached to the venture. Pauline, Leclerc's wife, and their son went with the expedition. She carried musicians, artists, and all the paraphernalia of a court. Slavery would be re-established, civilisation restarted, and a good time would be had by all.

And in these last crucial months, Toussaint, fully aware of Bonaparte's preparations, was busy sawing off the branch on which he sat.

In the North, around Plaisance, Limbé, Dondon, the vanguard of the revolution was not satisfied with the new régime. Toussaint's discipline was hard, but it was infinitely better than the old slavery. What these old revolutionary blacks objected to was working for their white masters. Moise was the Commandant of the North Province, and Moise sympathised with the blacks. Work, yes, but not for whites. "Whatever my old uncle may do, I cannot bring myself to be the executioner of my colour. It is always in the interests of the metropolis that he scolds me; but these interests are those of the whites, and I shall only love them when they have given me back the eye that they made me lose in battle."

⁵ *Mémoires pour Servir* Vol. II, p. 319.

Gone were the days when Toussaint would leave the front and ride through the night to enquire into the grievances of the labourers, and, though protecting the whites, make the labourers see that he was their leader.

Revolutionaries through and through, those bold men, own brothers of the Cordeliers in Paris and the Vyborg workers in Petrograd, organised another insurrection. Their aim was to massacre the whites, overthrow Toussaint's government and, some hoped, put Moïse in his place. Every observer, and Toussaint himself, thought that the labourers were following him because of his past services and his unquestioned superiority. This insurrection proved that they were following him because he represented that complete emancipation from their former degradation which was their chief goal. As soon as they saw that he was no longer going to this end, they were ready to throw him over.⁶

This was no mere riot of a few discontented or lazy blacks. It was widespread over the North. The revolution-
⁶ Georges Lefebvre: *La Convention*, Volume I, p. 45, mimeographed lectures delivered at the Sorbonne (see Bibliography, p. 379). "The Jacobins, furthermore, were authoritarian in outlook. Consciously or not, they wished to act with the people and for them, but they claimed the right of leadership, and when they arrived at the head of affairs they ceased to consult the people, did away with elections, proscribed the Hébertistes and the Enragés. They can be described as enlightened despots. The sansculottes on the contrary were extreme democrats: they wanted the direct government of the people by the people; if they demanded a dictatorship against the aristocrats they wished to exercise it themselves and to make their leaders do what they wanted."

The sansculottes, of Paris in particular, saw very clearly what was required at each stage of the revolution at least until it reached its highest peak. Their difficulty was that they had neither the education, experience nor the resources to organise a modern state if only temporarily. *This was pretty much the position of the revolutionaries of Plaisance, Limbé and Dondon in relation to Toussaint. Events were soon to show how right they were and that in not listening to them Toussaint made the greatest mistake of his career.*

For a balanced account of the way in which the sansculottes themselves worked out and forced upon an unwilling Robespierre the great policies which saved the revolution, see Lefebvre (mimeographed lectures), *Le Gouvernement Révolutionnaire* (2 Juin 1793-9 Thermidor II), Folio II.

aries chose a time when Toussaint was away at Petite-Rivière attending the wedding of Dessalines. The movement should have begun in Le Cap on September 21st, but Christophe heard of it just in time to check the first outbreaks in various quarters of the town. On the 22nd and 23rd the revolt burst in the revolutionary districts of Marmelade, Plaisance, Limbé, Port Margot, and Dondon, home of the famous regiment of the sansculottes. On the morning of the 23rd it broke out again in Le Cap, while armed bands, killing all the whites whom they met on the way, appeared in the suburbs to make contact with those in the town. While Christophe defeated these, Toussaint and Dessalines marched against the rising in Marmelade and Dondon, and it fell to pieces before him and his terrible lieutenant. Moïse, avoiding a meeting with Toussaint, attacked and defeated another band. But blacks in certain districts had revolted to the cry of "Long Live Moïse!" Toussaint therefore had him arrested, and would not allow the military tribunal even to hear him. The documents, he said, were enough. "I flatter myself that the Commissioners will not delay a judgment so necessary to the tranquillity of the colony." He was afraid that Moïse might supplant him.⁷

Upon this hint the Commission gave judgment, and Moïse was shot. He died as he had lived. He stood before the place of execution in the presence of the troops of the garrison, and in a firm voice gave the word to the firing squad: "Fire, my friends, fire."

What exactly did Moïse stand for? We shall never know. Forty years after his death Madou, the Haitian historian, gave an outline of Moïse's programme, whose authenticity, however, has been questioned. Toussaint refused to break up the large estates. Moïse wanted small grants of land for junior officers and even the rank-and-file. Toussaint favoured the whites against the Mulattoes. Moïse sought to build an alliance between the blacks and the Mu-

⁷ Toussaint himself admitted this not very long afterwards. See Poyen, *Histoire Militaire de la Révolution de Saint-Domingue*, Paris, 1899, p. 228.

lattoes against the French. It is certain that he had a strong sympathy for the labourers and hated the old slave-owners. But he was not anti-white. He bitterly regretted the indignities to which he had been forced to submit Roume and we know how highly he esteemed Southoux. We have very little to go on but he seems to have been a singularly attractive and possibly profound person. The old slave-owners hated him and they pressed Toussaint to get rid of him. Christophe too was jealous of Moïse and Christophe loved white society. Guilty or not guilty of treason, Moïse had too many enemies to escape the implications of the "Long Live Moïse" shouted by the revolutionaries.

To the blacks of the North, already angry at Toussaint's policy, the execution of Moïse was the final disillusionment. They could not understand it. As was (and is) inevitable, they thought in terms of colour. After Toussaint himself, Moïse, his nephew, symbolised the revolution. He it was who had led the labourers against Hédouville. He also had led the insurrection which extorted the authority from Roume to take over Spanish San Domingo, an insurrection which to the labourers had been for the purpose of stopping the Spanish traffic in slaves. Moïse had arrested Roume, and later Vincent. And now Toussaint had shot him, for taking the part of the blacks against the whites.

Toussaint recognised his error. If the break with the French and Vincent had shaken him from his usual calm in their last interview, it was nothing to the remorse which moved him after the execution of Moïse. None who knew him had ever seen him so agitated. He tried to explain it away in a long proclamation: Moïse was the soul of the insurrection; Moïse was a young man of loose habits. It was useless. Moïse had stood too high in his councils for too long.

But so set was Toussaint that he could only think of further repression. Why should the blacks support Moïse

against him? That question he did not stop to ask or, if he did, failed to appreciate the answer. In the districts of the insurrection he shot without mercy. He lined up the labourers and spoke to them in turn; and on the basis of a stumbling answer or uncertainty decided who should be shot. Cowed by his power they submitted.

He published a series of laws surpassing in severity anything he had yet decreed. He introduced a rigid passport system for all classes of the population. He confined the labourers to their plantations more strictly than ever, and he made the managers and foremen responsible for this law under pain of imprisonment. Anyone fomenting disorder could be condemned to six months' hard labour with a weight attached to his foot by a chain. He prohibited the soldiers from visiting a plantation except to see their fathers or mothers, and then only for a limited period: he was now afraid of the contact between the revolutionary army and the people, an infallible sign of revolutionary degeneration.

And while he broke the morale of the black masses, he laboured to reassure the whites. Some of them rejoiced openly at the rumours of the expedition, and Toussaint, instead of treating them as he had treated the labourers, merely deported them. There were others, we need not doubt, who, holding the same views, thought it wiser to keep their mouths shut. A substantial number, however, accepted the new order, and viewed with dismay the violence and destruction which they knew were inevitable if a French expedition came. Some began to leave, and asked for passports. One of the most notable creoles in San Domingo, a man of good education and judgment, who fully accepted the new San Domingo,⁸ came to Toussaint and asked him for a passport. Here was what Toussaint dreaded: the break-up of the unstable régime before it had had a chance to acquire cohesion. He went quickly to the door to see that he was not likely to be overheard (a char-

⁸ We know this from his report to Bonaparte. *Les Archives Nationales*, F. 7, 6266.

acteristic action). Then coming back, he looked de Nogerée full in the face and asked him: "Why do you want to go away, you whom I esteem and love?"

"Because I am white, and notwithstanding the kindly feelings you have for me, I see that you are about to become the irritated chief of the blacks."

With some injustice he accused Toussaint of deporting those whites who had rejoiced at the coming of the expedition. Toussaint justified his action with warmth:

"They have had the imprudence and folly to rejoice at such news, as if the expedition was not destined to destroy me, to destroy the whites, to destroy the colony."

With a mind such as his, essentially creative and orderly, this was the prospect which preoccupied him and warped his judgment.

"In France I am represented as an independent power, and therefore they are arming against me; against me, who refused General Maitland's offer to establish my independence under the protection of England, and who always rejected the proposals which Sonthonax made to me on the subject."

He knew that the expedition was on its way, but still he hoped that somehow the coming catastrophe might be averted.

"Since, however, you wish to set out for France, I consent, but at least let your voyage be useful to the colony. I will send letters to the First Consul by you, and I will entreat him to listen to you. Tell him about me, tell him how prosperous agriculture is, how prosperous is commerce; in a word, tell him what I have done. It is according to all I have done here that I ought and that I wish to be judged. Twenty times I have written to Bonaparte, to ask him to send Civil Commissioners, to tell him to dispatch hither the old colonists, whites instructed in administering public affairs, good machinists, good workmen: he has never replied. Suddenly he avails himself of the peace (of which he has not deigned to inform me and of which I learn only through the English) in order to direct against me a formidable expedition, in the ranks of which I see my

personal enemies and people injurious to the colony, whom I sent away.

"Come to me within twenty-four hours. I want,—oh, how I want you and my letters to arrive in time to make the First Consul change his determination, to make him see that in ruining me he ruins the blacks—ruins not only San Domingo but all the western colonies. If Bonaparte is the first man in France, Toussaint is the first man in the Archipelago of the Antilles."

He had no false modesty as to what he meant to San Domingo.

He reflected for a moment, then said in a firm tone that he had been making arrangements with the English to get 20,000 blacks from Africa, but not for treachery, to make them soldiers of France. "I know the perfidy of the English. I am under no obligation to them for the information they gave me as to the expedition coming to San Domingo. No! Never will I am for them!"

But reality forced itself on him again.

"I took up arms for the freedom of my colour, which France alone proclaimed, but which she has no right to nullify. Our liberty is no longer in her hands: it is in our own. We will defend it or perish."

This strange duality, so confusing to his people who had to do the fighting, continued to the very end. And yet, in this moment of his greatest uncertainty, so different from his usual clarity of mind and vigour of action, Toussaint showed himself one of those few men for whom power is a means to an end, the development of civilization, the betterment of his fellow-creatures. His very hesitations were a sign of the superior cast of his mind. Dessalines and Moïse would not have hesitated. He issued another proclamation, and devoted most of it to reassuring the white proprietors who "will always find in us ardent protectors, true friends, zealous defenders. . . ."

What did all this mean to the former slaves? When he touched the expedition, the confusion of his mind was evident in every line. "Men of good faith . . . will not be able any longer to believe that France, who abandoned

San Domingo to herself at a time when her enemies disputed possession . . . will now send there an army to destroy the men who have not ceased to serve her will. . . ."

After thus sowing doubt in the minds of the people as to the intentions of the French, he continued: "But if it so happens that this crime of which the French Government is suspected is real, it suffices for me to say that a child who knows the rights that nature has given over it to the author of its days, shows itself obedient and submissive toward its father and mother; and if, in spite of its submission and obedience, the father and mother are unnatural enough to wish to destroy it, there remains no other course than to place its vengeance in the hands of God."

So God was to defend the blacks from slavery. What of the army and the people and himself, their leader?

"Brave soldiers, generals, officers, and rank and file, do not listen to the wicked . . . I shall show you the road you ought to follow . . . I am a soldier, I am afraid of no man and I fear only God. If I must die, it shall be as a soldier of honour with no fear of reproach."

Toussaint could not believe that the French ruling class would be so depraved, so lost to all sense of decency, as to try to restore slavery. His grasp of politics led him to make all preparations, but he could not admit to himself and to his people that it was easier to find decency, gratitude, justice, and humanity in a cage of starving tigers than in the councils of imperialism, whether in the cabinets of Pitt or Bonaparte, of Baldwin, Laval or Blum.

Criticism is not enough. What should Toussaint have done? A hundred and fifty years of history and the scientific study of revolution begun by Marx and Engels, and amplified by Lenin and Trotsky, justify us in pointing to an alternative course.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks after the October Revolution faced much the same problem as Toussaint. Russian bour-

geois culture was a relatively poor thing, but Lenin admitted frankly that it was superior to that of the proletariat and would have to be used until the bourgeoisie had developed itself. He rigidly excluded the bourgeoisie from political power, but he proposed that they should be given important posts and good salaries, higher than those of Communist Party members. Even some Communists who had suffered and fought under Tsarism were after a time dismissed and replaced by competent bourgeois. We can measure Toussaint's gigantic intellect by the fact that, untrained as he was, he attempted to do the same, his black army and generals filling the political rôle of the Bolshevik Party. If he kept whites in his army, it was for the same reason that the Bolsheviks also kept Tsarist officers. Neither revolution had enough trained and educated officers of its own, and the black Jacobins, relatively speaking, were far worse off culturally than the Russian Bolsheviks.

The whole theory of the Bolshevik policy was that the victories of the new régime would gradually win over those who had been constrained to accept it by force. Toussaint hoped for the same. If he failed, it is for the same reason that the Russian socialist revolution failed, even after all its achievements—the defeat of the revolution in Europe. Had the Jacobins been able to consolidate the democratic republic in 1794, Haiti would have remained a French colony, but an attempt to restore slavery would have been most unlikely.

It was in method, and not in principle, that Toussaint failed. The race question is subsidiary to the class question in politics, and to think of imperialism in terms of race is disastrous. But to neglect the racial factor as merely incidental as an error only less grave than to make it fundamental. There were Jacobin workmen in Paris who would have fought for the blacks against Bonaparte's troops. But the international movement was not then what is it to-day, and there were none in San Domingo. The black labourers saw only the old slave-owning whites. These would accept the new régime, but never to the extent of fighting for it against a French army, and the masses knew this. Tous-

saint of course knew this also. He never trusted Agé, his Chief of Staff who was a Frenchman, and asked Agé's junior, Lamartinière, to keep an eye on him. But whereas Lenin kept the party and the masses thoroughly aware of every step, and explained carefully the exact position of the bourgeois servants of the Workers' State, Toussaint explained nothing, and allowed the masses to think that their old enemies were being favoured at their expense. In allowing himself to be looked upon as taking the side of the whites against the blacks, Toussaint committed the unpardonable crime in the eyes of a community where the whites stood for so much evil. That they should get back their property was bad enough. That they should be privileged was intolerable. And to shoot Moïse, the black, for the sake of the whites was more than an error, it was a crime. It was almost as if Lenin had had Trotsky shot for taking the side of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

Toussaint's position was extraordinarily difficult. San Domingo was, after all, a French colony. Granted that, before the expedition was a certainty, plain speech was impossible; once he understood that it was coming, there should have been no hesitation. He should have declared that a powerful expedition could have no other aim than the restoration of slavery, summoned the population to resist, declared independence, confiscated the property of all who refused to accept and distributed it among his supporters. Agé and the other white officers should have been given a plain choice: accept or leave. If they had accepted, intending to be traitors, the black officers would have been on guard against them, the men would have known where they stood and would have shot them at the slightest vacillation before the enemy. The whites should have been offered the same choice: accept the black régime which has guaranteed and will guarantee your property, or leave; traitors in war-time would be dealt with as all traitors in war. Many of the planters favoured independence. They would have stayed and contributed their knowledge, such as it was, to the new State. Not only former slaves had followed Toussaint. Lamartinière was a Mulatto so white that

only those who knew his origins could tell that he had Negro ancestry, but he was absolutely and completely devoted to the cause of Toussaint. So was Maurepas, an old free black. With Dessalines, Belair, Moïse and the hundreds of other officers, ex-slave and formerly free, it would have been easy for Toussaint to get the mass of the population behind him. Having the army, some of the better educated blacks and Mulattoes and the labourers who had supported him so staunchly in everything, he would have been invincible. With the issue unobscure and his power clear, many who might otherwise have hesitated would have come down on the side that was taking decisive action. With a decisive victory won it was not impossible to re-open negotiations with a chastened French government to establish the hoped-for relations.

It was the ex-slave labourers and the ex-slave army which would decide the issue, and Toussaint's policy crippled both.

He left the army with a divided allegiance. There were Frenchmen in it whose duty would be to fight for France. They, the Mulattoes and the old free blacks had no fears about their liberty.

Instead of bringing the black labourers nearer he drove them away from him. Even after the revolt it was not too late. Lenin crushed the Kronstadt revolt with a relentless hand, but, in a manner so abrupt as to call forth protests from sticklers for party discipline, he proposed the New Economic Policy immediately afterwards. It was this quick recognition of danger that saved the Russian Revolution. Toussaint crushed the revolt as he was bound to do. But instead of recognising the origin of the revolt as springing from the fear of the same enemy that he was arranging against, he was sterner with the revolutionaries than he had ever been before. It happened that the day on which Moïse was executed, November 21st, was the very day fixed by Bonaparte for the departure of the expedition.

Instead of reprisals Toussaint should have covered the country, and in the homely way that he understood so well, mobilised the masses, talked to the people, explained

the situation to them and told them what he wanted them to do. As it was, the policy he persisted in reduced the masses to a state of stupor.⁹ It has been said that he was thinking of the effect in France. His severity and his proclamation reassuring the whites aimed at showing Bonaparte that all classes were safe in San Domingo, and that he could be trusted to govern the colony with justice. It is probably true, and is his greatest condemnation.

Bonaparte was not going to be convinced by Toussaint's justice and fairness and capacity to govern. Where imperialists do not find disorder they create it deliberately, as Hédouville did. They want an excuse for going in. But they can find that easily and will go in even without any. It is force that counts, and chiefly the organised force of the masses. Always, but particularly at the moment of struggle, a leader must think of his own masses. It is what they think that matters, not what the imperialists think. And if to make matters clear to them Toussaint had to condone a massacre of the whites, so much the worse for the whites. He had done everything possible for them, and if the race question occupied the place that it did in San Domingo, it was not the fault of the blacks. But Toussaint, like Robespierre, destroyed his own Left-wing, and with it sealed his own doom. The tragedy was that there was no need for it. Robespierre struck at the masses because he was bourgeois and they were communist. That clash was inevitable, and regrets over it are vain. But between Toussaint and his people there was no fundamental difference of outlook or of aim. Knowing the race question for the political and social question that it was, he tried to deal with it in a purely political and social way. It was a grave error. Lenin in his thesis to the Second Congress of the Communist International warned the white revolutionaries—a warning they badly need—that such has been the effect of the policy of imperialism on the relationship be-

⁹ Illinger, Treasurer to the Colony. Report to the French Government, *Les Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. Fonds divers, Section Américaine*, No. 14.

tween advanced and backward peoples that European Communists will have to make wide concessions to natives of colonial countries in order to overcome the justified prejudice which these feel toward all classes in the oppressing countries. Toussaint, as his power grew, forgot that. He ignored the black labourers, bewildered them at the very moment that he needed them most, and to bewilder the masses is to strike the deadliest of all blows at the revolution.

His personal weakness, the obverse side of his strength, played its part also. He left even his generals in the dark. A naturally silent and reserved man, he had been formed by military discipline. He gave orders and expected them to be obeyed. Nobody ever knew what he was doing. He said suddenly that Southonax must go and invited his generals to sign the letter or not, as they pleased. When Vincent spoke to Christophe and Moïse about the Constitution, they knew nothing about it. Moïse's bitter complaint about Toussaint and the whites came obviously from a man to whom Toussaint had never explained the motives of his policy. They would not have needed much persuasion to follow a bold lead. Moïse was feeling his way towards it, and we can point out Toussaint's weakness all the more clearly because Dessalines had actually found the correct method. His speech to the army was famous, and another version—he probably made it more than once—ran this way: "If France wishes to try any nonsense here, everybody must rise together, men and women." Loud acclamations greeted this bold pronouncement, worth a thousand of Toussaint's equivocal proclamations reassuring the whites. Dessalines had not the slightest desire to reassure whites.

The whites were whites of the old régime. Dessalines did not care what they said or thought. The black labourers had to do the fighting—and it was they who needed reassurance. It was not that Toussaint had any illusions about the whites. He had none whatever. When the war had actually begun, he sent a curt message to his com-

manders: "Leave nothing white behind you."¹⁰ But the mischief had been done.

Yet Toussaint's error sprang from the very qualities that made him what he was. It is easy to see to-day, as his generals saw after he was dead, where he had erred. It does not mean that they or any of us would have done better in his place. If Dessalines could see so clearly and simply, it was because the ties that bound this uneducated soldier to French civilisation were of the slenderest. He saw what was under his nose so well because he saw no further. Toussaint's failure was the failure of enlightenment, not of darkness.

In the last days of December, the fleet of Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse, bearing on board the first detachment of 12,000 men, sailed into the harbour of Samana Bay. Toussaint, standing alone on a neighbouring peak, watched the vessels. Unaccustomed to naval armaments, he was overwhelmed by their number; as he returned to his staff he uttered the words, "We shall perish. All France is come to overwhelm us." It was not fear. He was never afraid. But certain traits of character run deep in great men. Despite all that he had done he was at bottom the same Toussaint who had hesitated to join the revolution in 1791 and for one whole month had protected his master's plantation from destruction. Only this time it was not a plantation and a few score slaves but a colony and hundreds of thousands of people.

10 Mauviel, Bishop of San Domingo, memorandum to Napoleon, *Les Archives Nationales*, AF. IV. 1187.

XIII

The War of Independence

THE DEFEAT of Toussaint in the War of Independence and his imprisonment and death in Europe are universally looked upon as a tragedy. They contain authentic elements of the tragic in that even at the height of the war Toussaint strove to maintain the French connection as necessary to Haiti in its long and difficult climb to civilisation. Convinced that slavery could never be restored in San Domingo, he was equally convinced that a population of slaves recently landed from Africa could not attain to civilisation by "going it alone." His tergiversations, his inability to take the

PART VI: THE MARXIST METHOD

Questions:

1. What is philosophy? What is a philosopher?
2. What is the relationship of language to philosophy?
3. How does consciousness shape personality? Is "proletarianization" a justifiable kind of "conformism" for an individual? for a communist organization?
4. During World War II an overwhelming majority of United Auto Workers' members voted in a referendum to abide by a no-strike pledge agreed to by the union's leadership. Before, during, and after the passage of the referendum a majority of the union's membership participated in wildcat strikes. Was this hypocrisy? Explain it in Gramsci's categories.
5. Under what conditions can intellectuals propagate their views among the masses? Under what conditions can the revolutionary party?
6. Gramsci says Marxism seems like a philosophy of intellectuals separated from common people and from common sense. Is he right?
7. What, according to Gramsci, is the conflict within the consciousness of the average person? Relate this conflict to the contradictions discussed in earlier sessions.
8. Would Gramsci agree with Rosa Luxemburg's statement that the working class cannot create its own culture under capitalism? Do you agree with Luxemburg?
9. Gramsci writes [page 334], "Critical self-consciousness means, historically and politically, the creation of an elite of intellectuals." Was Gramsci an elitist?
10. How does the "average person" retain his/her views in the face of a superior intellect? How does she/he change views?
11. Why are new converts to Marxism often extremely unstable? What should we do about it?
12. Reread the second paragraph on page 341 of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*. One reader, commenting on the passage at the end of that paragraph, asked if Gramsci is "taking back with the left hand what he gave with the right." How do you interpret this passage? (Remember that Gramsci often uses "intellectual" in a double sense to refer to the revolutionary party.)
13. What is orthodox Marxism? Was Marx an orthodox Marxist? Is Lukacs correct in saying that even if every one of Marx's individual theses could be disproved, Marxism would still be valid?
14. In a speech Lenin said, "A journal of the Communist International recently appeared under the title of *Narody Vostoka*. It carries the following slogan issued by the Communist International for the peoples of the East: 'Workers of all countries and all oppressed peoples, unite!' 'When did the Executive Committee give orders for slogans to be modified?' one of the comrades asked. Indeed, I do not remember that it ever did. Of course, the modification is wrong from the standpoint of the *Communist Manifesto*, but then the *Communist Manifesto* was written under entirely different conditions. From the point of view of present-day politics, however, the change is correct." [31:453] Was Lenin an orthodox Marxist?
15. Explain the distinction between the "real existence" and the "inner core" of facts.
16. How would you understand the ideas of "imputed class consciousness" [Lukacs, page 51] and "identical subject-object" [Lukacs, page 206] ? How are they related to each other?

THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY

SOME PRELIMINARY POINTS OF REFERENCE

It is essential to destroy the widespread prejudice that philosophy is a strange and difficult thing just because it is the specific intellectual activity of a particular category of specialists or of professional and systematic philosophers. It must first be shown that all men are "philosophers", by defining the limits and characteristics of the "spontaneous philosophy" which is proper to everybody. This philosophy is contained in: 1. language itself, which is a totality of determined notions and concepts and not just of words grammatically devoid of content; 2. "common sense" and "good sense";¹ 3. popular religion and, therefore, also in the entire system of beliefs, superstitions, opinions, ways of seeing things and of acting, which are collectively bundled together under the name of "folklore".

Having first shown that everyone is a philosopher, though in his own way and unconsciously, since even in the slightest manifestation of any intellectual activity whatever, in "language", there is contained a specific conception of the world, one then moves on to the second level, which is that of awareness and criticism. That is to say, one proceeds to the question—is it better to "think", without having a critical awareness, in a disjointed and episodic way? In other words, is it better to take part in a conception of the world mechanically imposed by the external environment, i.e. by one of the many social groups in which everyone is automatically involved from the moment of his entry into the conscious world (and this can be one's village or province; it can have its origins in the parish and the "intellectual activity" of the local priest or aging patriarch whose wisdom is law, or in the little old woman who has inherited the lore of the witches or the minor intellectual soured by his own stupidity and inability to act)? Or, on the other hand, is it better to work out consciously and critically one's own conception of the world and thus, in connection with the labours of one's own brain, choose one's sphere of activity, take an active part in the creation of the history of the world, be one's own guide, refusing to accept

¹ The meaning that Gramsci gives to these two terms is explained in the paragraphs which follow. Broadly speaking, "common sense" means the incoherent set of generally held assumptions and beliefs common to any given society, while "good sense" means practical empirical common sense in the English sense of the term. See also introduction to this section.

passively and supinely from outside the moulding of one's personality?

Note I. In acquiring one's conception of the world one always belongs to a particular grouping which is that of all the social elements which share the same mode of thinking and acting. We are all conformists of some conformism or other, always man-in-the-mass or collective man. The question is this: of what historical type is the conformism, the mass humanity to which one belongs? When one's conception of the world is not critical and coherent but disjointed and episodic, one belongs simultaneously to a multiplicity of mass human groups. The personality is strangely composite: it contains Stone Age elements and principles of a more advanced science, prejudices from all past phases of history at the local level and intuitions of a future philosophy which will be that of a human race united the world over. To criticise one's own conception of the world means therefore to make it a coherent unity and to raise it to the level reached by the most advanced thought in the world. It therefore also means criticism of all previous philosophy, in so far as this has left stratified deposits in popular philosophy. The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is "knowing thyself"² as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory.

Note II. Philosophy cannot be separated from the history of philosophy, nor can culture from the history of culture. In the most immediate and relevant sense, one cannot be a philosopher, by which I mean have a critical and coherent conception of the world, without having a consciousness of its historicity, of the phase of development which it represents and of the fact that it contradicts other conceptions or elements of other conceptions. One's conception of the world is a response to certain specific problems posed by reality, which are quite specific and "original" in their immediate relevance. How is it possible to consider the present, and quite specific present, with a mode of thought elaborated for a past which is often remote and superseded? When someone does this, it means that he is a walking anachronism, a fossil, and not living in the modern world, or at the least that he is strangely composite. And it is in fact the case that social groups which in some ways express the most developed

² "I know thyself" was the inscription written above the gate of the Oracle at Delphi, and became a principle of Socratic philosophy.

modernity, lag behind in other respects, given their social position, and are therefore incapable of complete historical autonomy.

Note III. If it is true that every language contains the elements of a conception of the world and of a culture, it could also be true that from anyone's language one can assess the greater or lesser complexity of his conception of the world. Someone who only speaks dialect, or understands the standard language incompletely, necessarily has an intuition of the world which is more or less limited and provincial, which is fossilised and anachronistic in relation to the major currents of thought which dominate world history. His interests will be limited, more or less corporate or economic,³ not universal. While it is not always possible to learn a number of foreign languages in order to put oneself in contact with other cultural lives, it is at the least necessary to learn the national language properly. A great culture can be translated into the language of another great culture, that is to say a great national language with historic richness and complexity, and it can translate any other great culture and can be a world-wide means of expression. But a dialect cannot do this.

Note IV. Creating a new culture does not only mean one's own individual "original" discoveries. It also, and most particularly, means the diffusion in a critical form of truths already discovered, their "socialisation" as it were, and even making them the basis of vital action,⁴ an element of co-ordination and intellectual and moral order. For a mass of people to be led to think coherently and in the same coherent fashion about the real present world, is a "philosophical" event far more important and "original" than the discovery by some philosophical "genius" of a truth which remains the property of small groups of intellectuals.

Connection between "common sense", religion and philosophy

Philosophy is intellectual order, which neither religion nor common sense can be. It is to be observed that religion and common sense do not coincide either, but that religion is an element of fragmented common sense. Moreover common sense is a collective noun, like religion: there is not just one common sense, for that too is a product

³ See note on Gramsci's terminology, pp. xlii-xiv.

⁴ "vital action." The concept here would appear to derive from Bergson, some of whose ideas were filtered to Gramsci through Sorel and in a sense provided him with a psychological antidote to the fatalism of Austro-Marxism. There is no question, however, of Bergson having had a systematic influence on Gramsci's "philosophy of praxis," as such.

of history and a part of the historical process.⁵ Philosophy is criticism and the superseding of religion and "common sense". In this sense it coincides with "good" as opposed to "common" sense.

Relation between science, religion and common sense

Religion and common sense cannot constitute an intellectual order, because they cannot be reduced to unity and coherence even within an individual consciousness, let alone collective consciousness. Or rather they cannot be so reduced "freely"—for this may be done by "authoritarian" means, and indeed within limits this has been done in the past.

Note the problem of religion taken not in the confessional sense but in the secular sense of a unity of faith between a conception of the world and a corresponding norm of conduct. But why call this unity of faith "religion" and not "ideology", or even frankly "politics"?⁶

Philosophy in general does not in fact exist. Various philosophies or conceptions of the world exist, and one always makes a choice between them. How is this choice made? Is it merely an intellectual event, or is it something more complex? And is it not frequently the case that there is a contradiction between one's intellectual choice and one's mode of conduct? Which therefore would be the real conception of the world: that logically affirmed as an intellectual choice? or that which emerges from the real activity of each man, which is implicit in his mode of action? And since all action is political, can one not say that the real philosophy of each man is contained in its entirety in his political action?

This contrast between thought and action, i.e. the co-existence of two conceptions of the world, one affirmed in words and the other displayed in effective action, is not simply a product of self-

⁵ "part of the historical process." In the original "*in divenire storico*"—historical becoming. For this aspect of common sense see Int., p. 144: "Every social stratum has its own 'common sense' and its own 'good sense', which are basically the most widespread conception of life and of man. Every philosophical current leaves behind a sedimentation of 'common sense': this is the document of its historical effectiveness. Common sense is not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life. 'Common sense' is the folklore of philosophy, and is always half-way between folklore properly speaking and the philosophy, science, and economics of the specialists. Common sense creates the folklore of the future, that is as a relatively rigid phase of popular knowledge at a given place and time."

⁶ For Gramsci's uses of "ideology" in its various senses see pp. 375-77. By "politics" Gramsci means conscious action (praxis) in pursuit of a common social goal.

deception [*malafede*]. Self-deception can be an adequate explanation for a few individuals taken separately, or even for groups of a certain size, but it is not adequate when the contrast occurs in the life of great masses. In these cases the contrast between thought and action cannot but be the expression of profounder contrasts of a social historical order. It signifies that the social group in question may indeed have its own conception of the world, even if only embryonic; a conception which manifests itself in action, but occasionally and in flashes—when, that is, the group is acting as an organic totality. But this same group has, for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination, adopted a conception which is not its own but is borrowed from another group; and it affirms this conception verbally and believes itself to be following it, because this is the conception which it follows in "normal times"⁷—that is when its conduct is not independent and autonomous, but submissive and subordinate. Hence the reason why philosophy cannot be divorced from politics. And one can show furthermore that the choice and the criticism of a conception of the world is also a political matter.

What must next be explained is how it happens that in all periods there co-exist many systems and currents of philosophical thought, how these currents are born, how they are diffused, and why in the process of diffusion they fracture along certain lines and in certain directions. The fact of this process goes to show how necessary it is to order in a systematic, coherent and critical fashion one's own intuitions of life and the world, and to determine exactly what is to be understood by the word "systematic"; so that it is not taken in the pedantic and academic sense. But this elaboration must be, and can only be, performed in the context of the history of philosophy, for it is this history which shows how thought has been elaborated over the centuries and what a collective effort has gone into the creation of our present method of thought which has subsumed and absorbed all this past history, including all its follies and mistakes. Nor should these mistakes themselves be neglected, for, although made in the past and since corrected, one cannot be sure that they will not be reproduced in the present and once again require correcting.

What is the popular image of philosophy? It can be reconstructed by looking at expressions in common usage. One of the most usual

⁷ "normal times": as opposed to the exceptional (and hence potentially revolutionary) moments in history in which a class or group discovers its objective and subjective unity in action.

is "being philosophical about it", which, if you consider it, is not to be entirely rejected as a phrase. It is true that it contains an implicit invitation to resignation and patience, but it seems to me that the most important point is rather the invitation to people to reflect and to realise fully that whatever happens is basically rational and must be confronted as such, and that one should apply one's power of rational concentration and not let oneself be carried away by instinctive and violent impulses. These popular turns of phrase could be compared with similar expressions used by writers of a popular stamp—examples being drawn from a large dictionary—which contain the terms "philosophy" or "philosophically". One can see from these examples that the terms have a quite precise meaning: that of overcoming bestial and elemental passions through a conception of necessity which gives a conscious direction to one's activity. This is the healthy nucleus that exists in "common sense", the part of it which can be called "good sense" and which deserves to be made more unitary and coherent. So it appears that here again it is not possible to separate what is known as "scientific" philosophy from the common and popular philosophy which is only a fragmentary collection of ideas and opinions.

But at this point we reach the fundamental problem facing any conception of the world, any philosophy which has become a cultural movement, a "religion", a "faith", any that has produced a form of practical activity or will in which the philosophy is contained as an implicit theoretical "premiss". One might say "ideology" here, but on condition that the word is used in its highest sense of a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in all manifestations of individual and collective life. This problem is that of preserving the ideological unity of the entire social bloc which that ideology serves to cement and to unify. The strength of religions, and of the Catholic church in particular, has lain, and still lies, in the fact that they feel very strongly the need for the doctrinal unity of the whole mass of the faithful and strive to ensure that the higher intellectual stratum does not get separated from the lower. The Roman church has always been the most vigorous in the struggle to prevent the "official" formation of two religions, one for the "intellectuals" and the other for the "simple souls". This struggle has not been without serious disadvantages for the Church itself, but these disadvantages are connected with the historical process which is transforming the whole of civil society and which contains overall a corrosive critique of all religion, and they only serve to emphasise the organisational

capacity of the clergy in the cultural sphere and the abstractly rational and just relationship which the Church has been able to establish in its own sphere between the intellectuals and the simple. The Jesuits have undoubtedly been the major architects of this equilibrium, and it order to preserve it they have given the Church a progressive forward movement which has tended to allow the demands of science and philosophy to be to a certain extent satisfied. But the rhythm of the movement has been so slow and methodical that the changes have passed unobserved by the mass of the simple, although they appear "revolutionary" and demagogic to the "integralists".⁸

One of the greatest weaknesses of immanentist⁹ philosophies in general consists precisely in the fact that they have not been able to create an ideological unity between the bottom and the top, between the "simple" and the intellectuals. In the history of Western civilisation the fact is exemplified on a European scale, with the rapid collapse of the Renaissance and to a certain extent also the Reformation faced with the Roman church. Their weakness is demonstrated in the educational field, in that the immanentist philosophies have not even attempted to construct a conception which could take the place of religion in the education of children. Hence the pseudo-historicist sophism whereby non-religious, non-confessional, and in reality atheist, educationalists justify allowing the teaching of religion on the grounds that religion is the philosophy of the infancy of mankind renewed in every non-metaphorical infancy. Idealism has also shown itself opposed to cultural movements which "go out to the people", as happened with the so-called "Popular Universities"¹⁰ and similar institutions. Nor was the objection solely to the worst aspects of the institutions, because in that case they could simply have tried to improve them. And yet these movements were worthy of attention, and deserved study. They enjoyed a certain success, in the sense that they demonstrated on

⁸ "Integralists." See note 13 on p. 332.

⁹ By "immanentist philosophies" Gramsci normally means Italian idealism of the beginning of the century (Croce, Gentile, etc.), one of whose features was its rejection of Catholic transcendentalism; but he uses the term here also to characterise much of the philosophical thought of, for example, the Renaissance, which was in a similar way hermetic and incapable of extending its influence beyond elite circles. It should be noted however that Gramsci also describes the philosophy of praxis as in a different sense "immanentist", in that it offers the first consistent rejection of any form of transcendence.

¹⁰ "Popular Universities"—*Università Popolari*. Independent institutes of adult education, more or less equivalent in scope, though not in extension, to the English W.E.A.

the part of the "simple" a genuine enthusiasm and a strong determination to attain a higher cultural level and a higher conception of the world. What was lacking, however, was any organic quality either of philosophical thought or of organisational stability and central cultural direction. One got the impression that it was all rather like the first contacts of English merchants and the negroes of Africa: trashy baubles were handed out in exchange for nuggets of gold. In any case one could only have had cultural stability and an organic quality of thought if there had existed the same unity between the intellectuals and the simple as there should be between theory and practice. That is, if the intellectuals had been organically the intellectuals of those masses, and if they had worked out and made coherent the principles and the problems raised by the masses in their practical activity, thus constituting a cultural and social bloc. The question posed here was the one we have already referred to, namely this: is a philosophical movement properly so called when it is devoted to creating a specialised culture among restricted intellectual groups, or rather when, and only when, in the process of elaborating a form of thought superior to "common sense" and coherent on a scientific plane, it never forgets to remain in contact with the "simple" and indeed finds in this contact the source of the problems it sets out to study and to resolve? Only by this contact does a philosophy become "historical", purify itself of intellectualistic elements of an individual character and become "life".*

A philosophy of praxis¹¹ cannot but present itself at the outset in a polemical and critical guise, as superseding the existing mode of thinking and existing concrete thought (the existing cultural world). First of all, therefore, it must be a criticism of "common sense", basing itself initially, however, on common sense in order to demonstrate that "everyone" is a philosopher and that it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought

* Perhaps it is useful to make a "practical" distinction between philosophy and common sense in order to indicate more clearly the passage from one moment to the other. In philosophy the features of individual elaboration of thought are the most salient: in common sense on the other hand it is the diffuse, unco-ordinated features of a generic form of thought common to a particular period and a particular popular environment. But every philosophy has a tendency to become the common sense of a fairly limited environment (that of all the intellectuals). It is a matter therefore of starting with a philosophy which already enjoys, or could enjoy, a certain diffusion, because it is connected, to and implicit in practical life, and elaborating it so that it becomes a renewed common sense possessing the coherence and the sniew of individual philosophies. But this can only happen if the demands of cultural contact with the "simple" are continually felt.

¹¹ "philosophy of praxis." See Introduction, p. xxi.

into everyone's individual life, but of renovating and making "critical" an already existing activity. It must then be a criticism of the philosophy of the intellectuals out of which the history of philosophy developed and which, in so far as it is a phenomenon of individuals (in fact it develops essentially in the activity of single particularly gifted individuals) can be considered as marking the "high points" of the progress made by common sense, or at least the common sense of the more educated strata of society but through them also of the people. Thus an introduction to the study of philosophy must expound in synthetic form the problems that have grown up in the process of the development of culture as a whole and which are only partially reflected in the history of philosophy. (Nevertheless it is the history of philosophy which, in the absence of a history of common sense, impossible to reconstruct for lack of documentary material, must remain the main source of reference.) The purpose of the synthesis must be to criticise the problems, to demonstrate their real value, if any, and the significance they have had as superseded links of an intellectual chain, and to determine what the new contemporary problems are and how the old problems should now be analysed.

The relation between common sense and the upper level of philosophy is assured by "politics", just as it is politics that assures the relationship between the Catholicism of the intellectuals and that of the simple. There are, however, fundamental differences between the two cases. That the Church has to face up to a problem of the "simple" means precisely that there has been a split in the community of the faithful. This split cannot be healed by raising the simple to the level of the intellectuals (the Church does not even envisage such a task, which is both ideologically and economically beyond its present capacities), but only by imposing an iron discipline on the intellectuals so that they do not exceed certain limits of differentiation and so render the split catastrophic and irreparable. In the past such divisions in the community of the faithful were healed by strong mass movements which led to, or were absorbed in, the creation of new religious orders centred on strong personalities (St. Dominic, St. Francis).*

* The heretical movements of the Middle Ages were a simultaneous reaction against the politticking of the Church and against the scholastic philosophy which expressed this. They were based on social conflicts determined by the birth of the Commons, and represented a split between masses and intellectuals within the Church. This split was "stitched over" by the birth of popular religious movements subsequently reabsorbed by the Church through the formation of the mendicant orders and a new religious unity.

But the Counter-Reformation has rendered sterile this upsurge of popular forces. The Society of Jesus is the last of the great religious orders. Its origins were reactionary and authoritarian, and its character repressive and "diplomatic".¹² Its birth marked the hardening of the Catholic organism. New orders which have grown up since then have very little religious significance but a great "disciplinary" significance for the mass of the faithful. They are, or have become, ramifications and tentacles of the Society of Jesus, instruments of "resistance" to preserve political positions that have been gained, not forces of renovation and development. Catholicism has become "Jesuitism". Modernism¹³ has not created "religious orders", but a political party—Christian Democracy.*

The position of the philosophy of praxis is the antithesis of the Catholic. The philosophy of praxis does not tend to leave the "simple" in their primitive philosophy of common sense, but rather to lead them to a higher conception of life. If it affirms the need for contact between intellectuals and simple it is not in order to restrict scientific activity and preserve unity at the low level of the masses, but precisely in order to construct an intellectual.

¹² "diplomatic." In a disparaging sense, common in Italian as applied to the superficial machinations of Italian bourgeois politics from Cavour to Giolitti.

¹³ "Modernism." A product of the challenge of Socialism among the masses. Modernism aimed to revitalise the Church as a social force at the end of the nineteenth century and to counteract the effects of its refusal to allow Catholics to participate in the affairs of the Italian state. Modernism's concern was with the relationship of the Church to state and society rather than with theological questions as such, and its main ideological contribution was the theory of "Christian Democracy"—a term which is, for this period, to be understood literally. The Modernist/Christian-Democrat movement was suppressed under the pontificate of Pius X (1903-14) but re-emerged with Sturzo and the Partito Popolare in 1918. The reaction to Modernism connected with Pius X goes under the name of Integralism and was a theological movement aimed at reasserting Church authority against secularisation. Integralism, although ostensibly purely doctrinal, had in practice reactionary social effects, and Christian Democracy was for a long time a progressive trend within the Church. The *Partito Popolare* adopted an ambiguous attitude to fascism at the outset, but was nevertheless eventually banned, along with the other parties, by the regime; it re-emerged during its resistance, as Christian Democracy. The present-day role of Christian Democracy as a mass political organisation dominated by big capital and the Church hierarchy dates effectively from 1945-47.

* Recall the anecdote, recounted by Steed in his *Memoirs*,¹⁴ about the Cardinal who explains to the pro-Catholic English Protestant that the miracles of San Gennaro [St. Januarius] are an article of faith for the ordinary people of Naples, but not for the intellectuals, and that even the Gospels contain "exaggerations" and who answers the question "But aren't we Christians?" with the words "We are the prelates", that is the "politicians" of the Church of Rome.

¹⁴ "Steed's memoirs." *Through Thirty Years*, London, 1924, by Henry Wickham Steed, a former editor of *The Times*.

moral bloc which can make politically possible the intellectual progress of the mass and not only of small intellectual groups.

The active man-in-the-mass has a practical activity, but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity, which nonetheless involves understanding the world in so far as it transforms it.¹⁵ His theoretical consciousness can indeed be historically in opposition to his activity. One might almost say that he has two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with all his fellow-workers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one, superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed. But this verbal conception is not without consequences. It holds together a specific social group, it influences moral conduct and the direction of will, with varying efficacy but often powerfully enough to produce a situation in which the contradictory state of consciousness does not permit of any action, any decision or any choice, and produces a condition of moral and political passivity. Critical understanding of self takes place therefore through a struggle of political "hegemonies" and of opposing directions, first in the ethical field and then in that of politics proper, in order to arrive at the working out at a higher level of one's own conception of reality. Consciousness of being part of a particular hegemonic force (that is to say, political consciousness) is the first stage towards a further progressive self-consciousness in which theory and practice will finally be one. Thus the unity of theory and practice is not just a matter of mechanical fact, but a part of the historical process, whose elementary and primitive phase is to be found in the sense of being "different" and "apart", in an instinctive feeling of independence, and which progresses to the level of real possession of a single and coherent conception of the world. This is why it must be stressed that the political development of the concept of hegemony represents a great philosophical advance as well as a politico-practical one.¹⁶ For it necessarily supposes an intellectual unity and an ethic in conformity with a conception of reality that has gone beyond common

¹⁵ A reference to the 11th of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*, which Gramsci interprets as meaning that philosophy (and, in particular, the philosophy of praxis) is a socio-practical activity, in which thought and action are reciprocally determined.

¹⁶ The reference here is not only to Marx's argument about "ideas becoming a material force", but also to Lenin and the achievement of proletarian hegemony through the Soviet revolution (see below pp. 381-82).

sense and has become, if only within narrow limits, a critical conception.

However, in the most recent developments of the philosophy of praxis the exploration and refinement of the concept of the unity of theory and practice is still only at an early stage. There still remain residues of mechanism, since people speak about theory as a "complement" or an "accessory" of practice, or as the handmaid of practice.¹⁷ It would seem right for this question too to be considered historically, as an aspect of the political question of the intellectuals. Critical self-consciousness means, historically and politically, the creation of an *élite* of intellectuals. A human mass does not "distinguish" itself, does not become independent in its own right without, in the widest sense, organising itself; and there is no organisation without intellectuals, that is without organisers and leaders,¹⁸ in other words, without the theoretical aspect of the theory-practice nexus being distinguished concretely by the existence of a group of people "specialised" in conceptual and philosophical elaboration of ideas. But the process of creating intellectuals is long, difficult, full of contradictions, advances and retreats, dispersals and regroupings, in which the loyalty of the masses is often sorely tried. (And one must not forget that at this early stage loyalty and discipline are the ways in which the masses participate and collaborate in the development of the cultural movement as a whole.)

The process of development is tied to a dialectic between the intellectuals and the masses. The intellectual stratum develops both quantitatively and qualitatively, but every leap forward towards a new breadth and complexity of the intellectual stratum is tied to an analogous movement on the part of the mass of the "simple", who raise themselves to higher levels of culture and at the same time extend their circle of influence towards the stratum of specialised intellectuals, producing outstanding individuals and groups of

¹⁷ The notion of the subservience of theory to practice, neatly summed up in this adaptation of the medieval adage *philosophia ancilla theologiae* (philosophy the handmaid of theology) has been widespread in the Marxist movement, in forms as diverse as Stalin's formulation "theory must serve practice" (Works, Vol. VI, p. 88) and Rosa Luxemburg's argument (in *Sitzstand und Fortschritt im Marxismus*) that theory only develops to the extent that the need for it is created by the practice of the movement.

¹⁸ "Elite." As is made clear later in the text, Gramsci uses this word (in French in the original) in a sense very different from that of the reactionary Pareto theorists of "political elites". The *élite* in Gramsci is the revolutionary vanguard of a social class in constant contact with its political and intellectual base. (But see also note 79 on p. 430.)

⁹ "dirigenti." See notes on Gramsci's terminology, p. xiii.

greater or less importance. In the process, however, there continually recur moments in which a gap develops between the mass and the intellectuals (at any rate between some of them, or a group of them), a loss of contact, and thus the impression that theory is an "accessory", a "complement" and something subordinate. Insistence on the practical element of the theory-practice nexus, after having not only distinguished but separated and split the two elements (an operation which in itself is merely mechanical and conventional), means that one is going through a relatively primitive historical phase, one which is still economic-corporate, in which the general "structural" framework is being quantitatively transformed and the appropriate quality-superstructure is in the process of emerging, but is not yet organically formed. One should stress the importance and significance which, in the modern world, political parties have in the elaboration and diffusion of conceptions of the world, because essentially what they do is to work out the ethics and the politics corresponding to these conceptions and act as if were as their historical "laboratory". The parties recruit individuals out of the working mass, and the selection is made on practical and theoretical criteria at the same time. The relation between theory and practice becomes even closer the more the conception is vitally and radically innovative and opposed to old ways of thinking. For this reason one can say that the parties are the elaborators of new integral and totalitarian intelligentsias²⁰ and the crucibles where the unification of theory and practice, understood as a real historical process, takes place. It is clear from this that the parties should be formed by individual memberships and not on the pattern of the British Labour Party, because, if it is a question of providing an organic leadership for the entire economically active mass, this leadership should not follow old schemas but should innovate. But innovation cannot come from the mass, at least at the beginning, except through the mediation of an *élite* for whom the conception implicit in human activity has already become to a certain degree a coherent and systematic ever-present awareness and a precise and decisive will.

One of these phases can be studied by looking at the recent discussion in which the latest developments of the philosophy of praxis are brought out, and which has been summarised in an

²⁰ "intellektualitid totalitarii." It seems certain that *intellektualitid* here is a concrete noun meaning "intelligentsia" rather than the abstract "intellectual conception". "Totalitarian" is to be understood not in its modern sense, but as meaning simultaneously "unified" and "all-absorbing".

article by D. S. Mirsky, a collaborator on *La Cultura*.²¹ One can see from this that a change has taken place from a mechanistic and purely external conception to one which is activist and, as has been pointed out, closer to a correct understanding of the unity of theory and practice, although it has not yet attained the full synthetic meaning of the concept. It should be noted how the deterministic, fatalistic and mechanistic element has been a direct ideological "aroma" emanating from the philosophy of praxis, rather like religion or drugs (in their stupefying effect). It has been made necessary and justified historically by the "subaltern"²² character of certain social strata.

When you don't have the initiative in the struggle and the struggle itself comes eventually to be identified with a series of defeats, mechanical determinism becomes a tremendous force of moral resistance, of cohesion and of patient and obstinate perseverance. "I have been defeated for the moment, but the tide of history is working for me in the long term." Real will takes on the garments of an act of faith in a certain rationality of history and in a primitive and empirical form of impassioned finalism²⁴ which appears in the role of a substitute for the Predetermination or Providence of confessional religions. It should be emphasised, though, that a strong activity of the will is present even here, directly intervening in the "force of circumstance", but only implicitly, and in a veiled and, as it were, shamefaced manner. Consciousness here, therefore, is contradictory and lacking critical unity, etc. But when the "subaltern" becomes directive and responsible for the economic activity of the masses, mechanismism at a certain point becomes an imminent danger and a revision must take place in modes of thinking because a change has taken place in the social mode of existence.²⁵ The boundaries and the dominion of the "force of

circumstance" become restricted. But why? Because, basically, if yesterday the subaltern element was a thing, today it is no longer a thing but an historical person, a protagonist; if yesterday it was not responsible, because "resisting" a will external to itself, now it feels itself to be responsible because it is no longer resisting but an agent, necessarily active and taking the initiative.

But even yesterday was it ever mere "resistance", a mere "thing", mere "non-responsibility"? Certainly not. Indeed one should emphasise how fatalism is nothing other than the clothing worn by real and active will when in a weak position. This is why it is essential at all times to demonstrate the futility of mechanical determinism: for, although it is explicable as a naive philosophy of the mass and as such, but only as such, can be an intrinsic element of strength, nevertheless when it is adopted as a thought-out and coherent philosophy on the part of the intellectuals, it becomes a cause of passivity, of idiotic self-sufficiency. This happens when they don't even expect that the subaltern will become directive and responsible. In fact, however, some part of even a subaltern mass is always directive and responsible, and the philosophy of the part always precedes the philosophy of the whole, not only as its theoretical anticipation but as a necessity of real life.

That the mechanistic conception has been a religion of the subaltern is shown by an analysis of the development of the Christian religion. Over a certain period of history in certain specific historical conditions religion has been and continues to be a "necessity", a necessary form taken by the will of the popular masses and a specific way of rationalising the world and real life, which provided the general framework for real practical activity. This quotation from an article in *La Civiltà Cattolica* (*Individualismo pagano e individualismo cristiano*: issue of 5 March 1932) seems to me to express very well this function of Christianity:

"Faith in a secure future, in the immortality of the soul destined to beatitude, in the certainty of arriving at eternal joy, was the force behind the labour for intense interior perfection and spiritual elevation. True Christian individualism found here the impulse that led it to victory. All the strength of the Christian was gathered around this noble end. Free from the flux of speculation which weakens the soul with doubt, and illuminated by immortal principles, man felt his hopes reborn; sure that a superior force was supporting him in the struggle against Evil, he did violence to himself and conquered the world."²³

²¹ The article referred to is probably D. S. Mirsky, *Demokratie und Partei im Bolschewismus*, in *Demokratische Partei*, ed. P. R. Rohden, Vienna, 1932. A different article of Mirsky had appeared in *La Cultura* in 1931, and it is possible that Gramsci refers to this magazine in order to quiet the suspicions of the censor, alerted by the Russian name.

²² "subaltern". See note on Gramsci's terminology, p. xiii.

²³ "fatalism": the notion that history is always working towards a determined end. The idea that Gramsci is attacking is that of historical inevitability, and in particular of the "inevitable" spontaneous collapse of capitalism and its replacement by the socialist order.

²⁴ This is an echo of Marx's statement (Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*) that it is not consciousness which determines being but man's social being which determines his consciousness. This conception is very important to Gramsci and constantly recurs in his prison writings, as do other ideas from the same Preface.

But here again it is naive Christianity that is being referred to: not Jesuitised Christianity, which has become a pure narcotic for the popular masses.

The position of Calvinism, however, with its iron conception of predestination and grace, which produces a vast expansion of the spirit of initiative (or becomes the form of this movement) is even more revealing and significant.*

What are the influential factors in the process of diffusion (which is also one of a substitution of the old conception, and, very often, of combining old and new), how do they act, and to what extent? Is it the rational form in which the new conception is expounded and presented? Or is it the authority (in so far as this is recognised and appreciated, if only generically) of the expositor and the thinkers and experts whom the expositor calls in in his support? Or the fact of belonging to the same organisation as the man who upholds the new conception (assuming, that is, that one has entered the organisation for other reasons than that of already sharing the new conception)?

In reality these elements will vary according to social groups and the cultural level of the groups in question. But the enquiry has a particular interest in relation to the popular masses, who are slower to change their conceptions, or who never change them in the sense of accepting them in their "pure" form, but always and only as a more or less heterogeneous and bizarre combination. The rational and logically coherent form, the exhaustive reasoning which neglects no argument, positive or negative, of any significance, has a certain importance, but is far from being decisive. It can be decisive, but in a secondary way, when the person in question is already in a state of intellectual crisis, wavering between the old and the new, when he has lost his faith in the old and has not yet come down in favour of the new, etc.

One could say this about the authority of thinkers and experts: it is very important among the people, but the fact remains that every conception has its thinkers and experts to put forward, and authority does not belong to one side; further, with every thinker

* On this question see: Max Weber, *L'etica protestante e lo spirito del capitalismo* published in *Minor Studi*, volume for 1931 et seq. (*Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, first published in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, Vols. XX and XXI, 1904 and 1905. English translation (by Talcott Parsons) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1930.) And see Groethuyzen's book on the religious origins of the bourgeoisie in France. [*Origines de l'esprit bourgeois en France*, Vol. I. *L'Eglise et la bourgeoisie*, Paris, 1927.]

it is possible to make distinctions, to cast doubt on whether he really said such and such a thing, etc.

One can conclude that the process of diffusion of new conceptions takes place for political (that is, in the last analysis, social) reasons; but that the formal element, that of logical coherence, the element of authority and the organisational element have a very important function in this process immediately after the general orientation has been reached, whether by single individuals or groups of a certain size. From this we must conclude, however, that in the masses *as such*, philosophy can only be experienced as a faith.

Imagine the intellectual position of the man of the people: he has formed his own opinions, convictions, criteria of discrimination, standards of conduct. Anyone with a superior intellectual formation with a point of view opposed to his can put forward arguments better than he and really tear him to pieces logically and so on. But should the man of the people change his opinions just because of this? Just because he cannot impose himself in a bout of argument? In that case he might find himself having to change every day, or every time he meets an ideological adversary who is his intellectual superior. On what elements, therefore, can his philosophy be founded? and in particular his philosophy in the form which has the greatest importance for his standards of conduct?

The most important element is undoubtedly one whose character is determined not by reason but by faith. But faith in whom, or in what? In particular in the social group to which he belongs, in so far as in a diffuse way it thinks as he does. The man of the people thinks that so many like-thinking people can't be wrong, not so radically, as the man he is arguing against would like him to believe; he thinks that, while he himself, admittedly, is not able to uphold and develop his arguments as well as the opponent, in his group there is someone who could do this and could certainly argue better than the particular man he has against him; and he remembers, indeed, hearing expounded, discursively, coherently, in a way that left him convinced, the reasons behind his faith. He has no concrete memory of the reasons and could not repeat them, but he knows that reasons exist, because he has heard them expounded, and was convinced by them. The fact of having once suddenly seen the light and been convinced is the permanent reason for his reasons persisting, even if the arguments in its favour cannot be readily produced.

These considerations lead, however, to the conclusion that new conceptions have an extremely unstable position among the popular

masses; particularly when they are in contrast with orthodox convictions (which can themselves be new) conforming socially to the general interests of the ruling classes. This can be seen if one considers the fortunes of religions and churches. Religion, or a particular church, maintains its community of faithful (within the limits imposed by the necessities of general historical development) in so far as it nourishes its faith permanently and in an organised fashion, indefatigably repeating its apologetics, struggling at all times and always with the same kind of arguments, and maintaining a hierarchy of intellectuals who give to the faith, in appearance at least, the dignity of thought. Whenever the continuity of relations between the Church and the faithful has been violently interrupted, for political reasons, as happened during the French Revolution, the losses suffered by the Church have been incalculable. If the conditions had persisted for a long time in which it was difficult to carry on practising one's own religion, it is quite possible that these losses would have been definitive, and a new religion would have emerged, as indeed one did emerge in France in combination with the old Catholicism. Specific necessities can be deduced from this for any cultural movement which aimed to replace common sense and old conceptions of the world in general:

1. Never to tire of repeating its own arguments (though offering literary variation of form): repetition is the best didactic means for working on the popular mentality.

2. To work incessantly to raise the intellectual level of ever-growing strata of the populace, in other words, to give a personality to the amorphous mass element. This means working to produce *élites* of intellectuals of a new type which arise directly out of the masses, but remain in contact with them to become, as it were, the whalebone in the corset.²⁶

This second necessity, if satisfied, is what really modifies the "ideological panorama" of the age. But these *élites* cannot be formed or developed without a hierarchy of authority and intellectual competence growing up within them. The culmination of this process can be a great individual philosopher. But he must be capable of re-living concretely the demands of the massive ideological community and of understanding that this cannot have the flexibility of movement proper to an individual brain, and must succeed in giving formal elaboration to the collective doctrine in

²⁶ For Gramsci's theory of the "organic" intellectuals see the essay "The Formation of the Intellectuals", pp. 314-4.

the most relevant fashion, and the one most suited to the modes of thought of a collective thinker.

It is evident that this kind of mass creation cannot just happen "arbitrarily", around any ideology, simply because of the formally constructive will of a personality or a group which puts it forward solely on the basis of its own fanatical philosophical or religious convictions. Mass adhesion or non-adhesion to an ideology is the real critical test of the rationality and historicity of modes of thinking. Any arbitrary constructions are pretty rapidly eliminated by historical competition, even if sometimes, through a combination of immediately favourable circumstances, they manage to enjoy popularity of a kind; whereas constructions which respond to the demands of a complex organic period of history always impose themselves and prevail in the end, even though they may pass through several intermediary phases during which they manage to affirm themselves only in more or less bizarre and heterogeneous combinations.

These developments pose many problems, the most important of which can be subsumed in the form and the quality of the relations between the various intellectually qualified strata; that is, the importance and the function which the creative contribution of superior groups must and can have in connection with the organic capacity of the intellectually subordinate strata to discuss and develop new critical concepts. It is a question, in other words, of fixing the limits of freedom of discussion and propaganda, a freedom which should not be conceived of in the administrative and police sense, but in the sense of a self-limitation which the leaders impose on their own activity, or, more strictly, in the sense of fixing the direction of cultural policy. In other words—who is to fix the "rights of knowledge" and the limits of the pursuit of knowledge? And can these rights and limits indeed be fixed? It seems necessary to leave the task of researching after new truths and better, more coherent, clearer formulations of the truths themselves to the free initiative of individual specialists, even though they may continually question the very principles that seem most essential. And it will in any case not be difficult to expose the fact whenever such proposals for discussion arise because of interested and not scientific motives. Nor is it inconceivable that individual initiatives should be disciplined and subject to an ordered procedure, so that they have to pass through the sieve of academies or cultural institutes of various kinds and only become public after undergoing a process of selection. It would be interesting to study concretely the forms of cultural

organisation which keep the ideological world in movement within a given country, and to examine how they function in practice. A study of the numerical relationship between the section of the population professionally engaged in active cultural work in the country in question and the population as a whole, would also be useful, together with an approximate calculation of the unattached forces. The school, at all levels, and the Church, are the biggest cultural organisations in every country, in terms of the number of people they employ. Then there are newspapers, magazines and the book trade and private educational institutions, either those which are complementary to the state system, or cultural institutions like the Popular Universities. Other professions include among their specialised activities a fair proportion of cultural activity. For example, doctors, army officers, the legal profession. But it should be noted that in all countries, though in differing degrees, there is a great gap between the popular masses and the intellectual groups, even the largest ones, and those nearest to the peripheries of national life, like priests and school teachers. The reason for this is that, however much the ruling class may affirm to the contrary, the State, as such, does not have a unitary, coherent and homogeneous conception, with the result that intellectual groups are scattered between one stratum and the next, or even within a single stratum. The Universities, except in a few countries, do not exercise any unifying influence: often an independent thinker has more influence than the whole of university institutions, etc.

With regard to the historical role played by the fatalistic conception of the philosophy of praxis one might perhaps prepare its funeral oration, emphasising its usefulness for a certain period of history, but precisely for this reason underlining the need to bury it with all due honours. Its role could really be compared with that of the theory of predestination and grace for the beginnings of the modern world, a theory which found its culmination in classical German philosophy and in its conception of freedom as the consciousness of necessity.²⁷ It has been a replacement in the popular consciousness for the cry of " 'tis God's will", although even on this primitive, elementary plane it was the beginnings of a more modern and fertile conception than that contained in the expression " 'tis God's will" or in the theory of grace. Is it possible that a "formally" new conception can present itself in a guise other than the crude, unsophisticated version of the populace? And yet the

²⁷ "The consciousness of necessity." This notion, which originated with Spinoza, plays a particularly important role in Hegelian philosophy.

historian, with the benefit of all necessary perspective, manages to establish and to understand the fact that the beginnings of a new world, rough and jagged though they always are, are better than the passing away of the world in its death-throes and the swan-song that it produces.*

PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY

Scientific discussion

In the formulation of historico-critical problems it is wrong to conceive of scientific discussion as a process at law in which there is an accused and a public prosecutor whose professional duty it is to demonstrate that the accused is guilty and has to be put out of

* The fading away of "fatalism" and "mechanicism" marks a great historical turning-point: hence the great impression of Mirsky's résumé. Memories that it has raised: I remember in Florence in November 1917, a discussion with Mario Trozzi, and the first mention of Bergsonism, voluntarism, etc.²⁸ One could make a semi-serious sketch of how this conception presented itself in reality. I also remember a discussion with Professor Presutti in Rome in June 1924. Comparison with Capt. Giulietti made by G. M. Serrati, which was for him decisive and culminated a death sentence. For Serrati, Giulietti was like the Confucian to the Taoist, like the southern Chinese, the busy and active merchant, in the eyes of the mandarin scholar from the North, who looks down with the supreme contempt of the enlightened sage for whom life holds no more mysteries, on the southern mannikins who hope, with their busy, anti-like movements to capture "the way". Speech by Claudio Treves on expiation. This speech had something of the spirit of an Old Testament prophet. Those who had wanted and had made the war, who had to in the world from its hinges and were therefore responsible for post-war disorder, had to expiate their sins and bear the responsibility for the disorder; they were guilty of "voluntarism" and had to be punished for their sin, etc. There was a certain priestly grandeur about this speech, a crescendo of maledictions which should have petrified us with terror but were instead a great consolation, because they showed that the undertaker was not yet ready and that Lazarus could still rise again.

²⁸ The meeting in question took place between various leaders and adherents of the "intransigent" current of the Socialist Party on the night of 18 November 1917. It was mainly concerned with preparing a document criticising the reformist wing of the Party for its attitude to the war. In the course of the discussion Trozzi appears to have taken Gramsci to task for Bergsonian voluntarism. That Gramsci's views at the time were decidedly unorthodox by the standards of the Second International, is shown by his famous article saluting the Soviet revolution, *La Rivoluzione contro il Capitalismo*, published in *Avanti!* a week after the meeting with Trozzi and others, which was subsequently widely criticised for apparently counterposing "Leninist" revolutionism to "Marxist" passivity and determinism. Gramsci, in fact, as he makes clear here in the *Quaderni* did not know Bergson's writing at the time. Bergson had, however, influenced Sorel, who in turn had influenced Gramsci in an early period. The result of Trozzi's charge was to lead Gramsci to a re-examination and criticism of idealistic and Bergsonian influences in Sorel's work.

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circulation. In scientific discussion, since it is assumed that the purpose of discussion is the pursuit of truth and the progress of science, the person who shows himself most "advanced" is the one who takes up the point of view that his adversary may well be expressing a need which should be incorporated, if only as a subordinate aspect, in his own construction. To understand and to evaluate realistically one's adversary's position and his reasons (and sometimes one's adversary is the whole of past thought) means precisely to be liberated from the prison of ideologies in the bad sense of the word—that of blind ideological fanaticism. It means taking up a point of view that is "critical", which for the purpose of scientific research is the only fertile one.

Philosophy and History

Question of what should be understood by philosophy, or by philosophy in a particular epoch, and of what is the importance and the significance of philosophers' philosophy in each of these historical epochs.

Accepting Croce's definition of religion as a conception of the world which has become a norm of life²⁹ (since the term norm of life is understood here not in a bookish sense but as being carried out in practical life) it follows that the majority of mankind are philosophers in so far as they engage in practical activity and in their practical activity (or in their guiding lines of conduct) there is implicitly contained a conception of the world, a philosophy. The history of philosophy as it is generally understood, that is as the history of philosophers' philosophies, is the history of attempts made and ideological initiatives undertaken by a specific class of people to change, correct or perfect the conceptions of the world that exist in any particular age and thus to change the norms of conduct that go with them; in other words, to change practical activity as a whole.

From our point of view, studying the history and the logic of the various philosophers' philosophies is not enough. At least as a methodological guide-line, attention should be drawn to the other parts of the history of philosophy; to the conceptions of the world held by the great masses, to those of the most restricted ruling (intellectual) groups, and finally to the links between these various

²⁹ *norma di vita*. Croce's own word was "ethics" (*etica*), which Gramsci has adopted to emphasise the connection between ethical standards and practical life, implicitly denied in the Crocean system.

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cultural complexes and the philosophy of the philosophers. The philosophy of an age is not the philosophy of this or that philosopher, of this or that group of intellectuals, of this or that broad section of the popular masses. It is a process of combination of all these elements, which culminates in an overall trend, in which the culmination becomes a norm of collective action and becomes concrete and complete (integral) "history".

The philosophy of an historical epoch is, therefore, nothing other than the "history" of that epoch itself, nothing other than the mass of variations that the leading group has succeeded in imposing on preceding reality. History and philosophy are in this sense indivisible: they form a bloc. But the philosophical elements proper can be "distinguished", on all their various levels: as philosophers' philosophy and the conceptions of the leading groups (philosophical culture) and as the religions of the great masses. And it can be seen how, at each of these levels, we are dealing with different forms of ideological "combination".

"Creative" philosophy

What is philosophy? Is it a purely receptive or, at the very most, ordering activity? Or is it an absolutely creative activity? One must first define what is meant by "receptive", "ordering" and "creative". "Receptive" implies the certainty of an external world which is absolutely immutable, which exists "in general", objectively in the vulgar sense. "Ordering" is similar to "receptive". Although it implies an activity of thought, this activity is limited and narrow. But what does "creative" mean? Should it mean that the external world is created by thought? But what thought and whose? There is a danger of falling into solipsism,³⁰ and in fact every form of idealism necessarily does fall into solipsism. To escape simultaneously from solipsism and from mechanistic conceptions implicit in the concept of thought as a receptive and ordering activity, it is necessary to put the question in an "historicist" fashion, and at the same time to put the "will" (which in the last analysis equals practical or political activity) at the base of philosophy. But it must be a rational, not an arbitrary, will, which is realised in so far as it corresponds to objective historical necessities, or in so far as it is universal history itself in the moment of its progressive actualisation. Should this will be represented at the beginning by a single indi-

³⁰ Solipsism: the form of subjective idealism which maintains that the self is the only object of knowledge.

one on the "sociological law", in which one simply repeats the same fact twice, the first time as a fact and the second time as a law, and which is a sophism of the double fact and not a law at all.

Concept of "orthodoxy"

From a few of the points developed above it emerges that the concept of "orthodoxy" requires to be renewed and brought back to its authentic origins. Orthodoxy is not to be looked for in this or that adherent of the philosophy of praxis, or in this or that tendency connected with currents extraneous to the original doctrine, but in the fundamental concept that the philosophy of praxis is "sufficient unto itself"; that it contains in itself all the fundamental elements needed to construct a total and integral conception of the world, a total philosophy and theory of natural science, and not only that but everything that is needed to give life to an integral practical organisation of society, that is, to become a total integral civilisation.

This concept of orthodoxy, thus renewed, helps to give a better definition of the attribute "revolutionary" which is applied with such facility to various conceptions of the world, theories or philosophies. Christianity was revolutionary in relation to paganism because it was an element of complete split between the supporters of the old and new worlds. A theory is "revolutionary" precisely to the extent that it is an element of conscious separation and distinction into two camps and is a peak inaccessible to the enemy camp. To maintain that the philosophy of praxis is not a completely autonomous and independent structure of thought in antagonism to all traditional philosophies and religions, means in reality that one has not severed one's links with the old world, if indeed one has not actually capitulated. The philosophy of praxis has no need of support from alien sources. It is sufficiently robust and rich in new truths for the old world to come to it to supply itself with a more modern and efficacious arsenal of weapons. This means that the philosophy of praxis is beginning to exercise its own hegemony over traditional culture. But traditional culture, which is still strong and above all is more polished and refined, is trying to react like Greece in defeat which finished by vanquishing its uncouth Roman conqueror.

It could be said that a large part of the philosophy of Croce represents this attempt to reabsorb the philosophy of praxis and incorporate it as the handmaid of traditional culture. But, as the

What is Orthodox Marxism? (1919)

The philosophers have only *interpreted the world* in various ways; the point, however, is to *change it*.
Marx: *Theses on Feuerbach*.

THIS question, simple as it is, has been the focus of much discussion in both proletarian and bourgeois circles. But among intellectuals it has gradually become fashionable to greet any profession of faith in Marxism with ironical disdain. Great disunity has prevailed even in the 'socialist' camp as to what constitutes the essence of Marxism, and which theses it is 'permissible' to criticise and even reject without forfeiting the right to the title of 'Marxist'. In consequence it came to be thought increasingly 'unscientific' to make scholastic exegeses of old texts with a quasi-Biblical status, instead of fostering an 'impartial' study of the 'facts'. These texts, it was argued, had long been 'superseded' by modern criticism and they should no longer be regarded as the sole fount of truth.

If the question were really to be formulated in terms of such a crude antithesis it would deserve at best a pitying smile. But in fact it is not (and never has been) quite so straightforward. Let us assume for the sake of argument that recent research had disproved once and for all every one of Marx's individual theses. Even if this were to be proved, every serious 'orthodox' Marxist would still be able to accept all such modern findings without reservation and hence dismiss all of Marx's theses in toto – without having to renounce his orthodoxy for a single moment. Orthodox Marxism, therefore, does not imply the uncritical acceptance of the results of Marx's investigations. It is not the 'belief' in this or that thesis, nor the exegesis of a 'sacred' book. On the contrary, orthodoxy refers exclusively to *method*. It is the scientific conviction that dialectical materialism is the road to truth and that its methods can be developed, expanded and deepened only along the lines laid down by its founders. It is the conviction, moreover, that all attempts to surpass or 'improve' it have led and must lead to over-simplification, triviality and eclecticism.

1

Materialist dialectic is a revolutionary dialectic. This definition is so important and altogether so crucial for an understanding of its nature that if the problem is to be approached in the right way this must be fully grasped before we venture upon a discussion of the dialectical method itself. The issue turns on the question of theory and practice. And this not merely in the sense given it by Marx when he says in his first critique of Hegel that "theory becomes a material force when it grips the masses."^[1] Even more to the point is the need to discover those features and definitions both of the theory and the ways of gripping the masses which convert the theory, the dialectical method, into a vehicle of revolution. We must extract the practical essence of the theory from the method and its relation to its object. If this is not done that 'gripping the masses' could well turn out to be a will o' the wisp. It might turn out that the masses were in the grip of quite different forces, that they were in pursuit of quite different ends. In that event, there would be no necessary connection between the theory and their activity, it would be a form that enables the masses to become conscious of their socially necessary or fortuitous actions, without ensuring a genuine and necessary bond between consciousness and action.

In the same essay^[2] Marx clearly defined the conditions in which a relation between theory and practice becomes possible. "It is not enough that thought should seek to realise itself; reality must also strive towards thought." Or, as he expresses it in an earlier work:^[3] "It will then be realised that the world has long since possessed something in the form of a dream which it need only take possession of consciously, in order to possess it in reality." Only when consciousness stands in such a relation to reality can theory and practice be united. But for this to happen the emergence of consciousness must become the *decisive step* which the historical process must take towards its proper end (an end constituted by the wills of men, but neither dependent on human whim, nor the product of human invention). The historical function of theory is to make this step a practical possibility. Only when a historical situation has arisen in which a class must understand society if it is to assert itself; only when the fact that a class understands itself means that it understands society as a whole and when, in consequence, the class becomes both the subject and the object of knowledge; in short, only when these

conditions are all satisfied will the unity of theory and practice, the precondition of the revolutionary function of the theory, become possible.

Such a situation has in fact arisen with the entry of the proletariat into history. "When the proletariat proclaims the dissolution of the existing social order," Marx declares, "it does no more than disclose the secret of its own existence, for it is the effective dissolution of that order."^[4] The links between the theory that affirms this and the revolution are not just arbitrary, nor are they particularly tortuous or open to misunderstanding. On the contrary, the theory is essentially the intellectual expression of the revolutionary process itself. In it every stage of the process becomes fixed so that it may be generalised, communicated, utilised and developed. Because the theory does nothing but arrest and make conscious each necessary step, it becomes at the same time the necessary premise of the following one.

To be clear about the function of theory is also to understand its own basis, i.e. dialectical method. This point is absolutely crucial, and because it has been overlooked much confusion has been introduced into discussions of dialectics. Engels' arguments in the *Anti-Dühring* decisively influenced the later life of the theory. However we regard them, whether we grant them classical status or whether we criticise them, deem them to be incomplete or even flawed, we must still agree that this aspect is nowhere treated in them. That is to say, he contrasts the ways in which concepts are formed in dialectics as opposed to 'metaphysics'; he stresses the fact that in dialectics the definite contours of concepts (and the objects they represent) are dissolved. Dialectics, he argues, is a continuous process of transition from one definition into the other. In consequence a one-sided and rigid causality must be replaced by interaction. But he does not even mention the most vital interaction, namely the *dialectical relation between subject and object in the historical process*, let alone give it the prominence it deserves. Yet without this factor dialectics ceases to be revolutionary, despite attempts (illusory in the last analysis) to retain 'fluid' concepts. For it implies a failure to recognise that in all metaphysics the object remains untouched and unaltered so that thought remains contemplative and fails to become practical; while for the dialectical method the central problem is *to change reality*.

If this central function of the theory is disregarded, the virtues of forming 'fluid' concepts become altogether problematic: a purely 'scientific' matter. The theory might then be accepted or rejected in accordance with the prevailing state of science without any modification at all to one's basic attitudes, to the question of whether or not reality can be changed. Indeed, as the so-called Machists among Marx's supporters have demonstrated it even reinforces the view that reality with its 'obedience to laws', in the sense used by bourgeois, contemplative materialism and the classical economics with which it is so closely bound up, is impenetrable, fatalistic and immutable. That Machism can also give birth to an equally bourgeois voluntarism does not contradict this. Fatalism and voluntarism are only mutually contradictory to an undialectical and unhistorical mind. In the dialectical view of history they prove to be necessarily complementary opposites, intellectual reflexes clearly expressing the antagonisms of capitalist society and the intractability of its problems when conceived in its own terms.

For this reason all attempts to deepen the dialectical method with the aid of 'criticism' inevitably lead to a more superficial view. For 'criticism' always starts with just this separation between method and reality, between thought and being. And it is just this separation that it holds to be an improvement deserving of every praise for its introduction of true scientific rigour into the crude, uncritical materialism of the Marxian method. Of course, no one denies the right of 'criticism' to do this. But if it does so we must insist that it will be moving counter to the essential spirit of dialectics.

The statements of Marx and Engels on this point could hardly be more explicit. "Dialectics thereby reduced itself to the science of the general laws of motion – both in the external world and in the thought of man – two sets of laws which are identical in *substance*" (Engels).^[5] Marx formulated it even more precisely. "In the study of economic categories, as in the case of every historical and social science, it must be borne in mind that ... *the categories are therefore but forms of being, conditions of existence ...*"^[6] If this meaning of dialectical method is obscured, dialectics must inevitably begin to look like a superfluous additive, a mere ornament of Marxist 'sociology' or 'economics'. Even worse, it will appear as an obstacle to the 'sober', 'impartial' study of the 'facts', as an empty construct in whose name Marxism does violence to the facts.

This objection to dialectical method has been voiced most clearly and cogently by Bernstein, thanks in part to a ‘freedom from bias’ unclouded by any philosophical knowledge. However, the very real political and economic conclusions he deduces from this desire to liberate method from the ‘dialectical snares’ of Hegelianism, show clearly where this course leads. They show that it is precisely the dialectic that must be removed if one wishes to found a thorough-going opportunistic theory, a theory of ‘evolution’ without revolution and of ‘natural development’ into Socialism without any conflict.

2

We are now faced with the question of the methodological implications of these so-called facts that are idolised throughout the whole of Revisionist literature. To what extent may we look to them to provide guidelines for the actions of the revolutionary proletariat? It goes without saying that all knowledge starts from the facts. The only question is: which of the data of life are relevant to knowledge and in the context of which method?

The blinkered empiricist will of course deny that facts can only become facts within the framework of a system – which will vary with the knowledge desired. He believes that every piece of data from economic life, every statistic, every raw event already constitutes an important fact. In so doing he forgets that however simple an enumeration of ‘facts’ may be, however lacking in commentary, it already implies an ‘interpretation’. Already at this stage the facts have been comprehended by a theory, a method; they have been wrenched from their living context and fitted into a theory.

More sophisticated opportunists would readily grant this despite their profound and instinctive dislike of all theory. They seek refuge in the methods of natural science, in the way in which science distills ‘pure’ facts and places them in the relevant contexts by means of observation, abstraction and experiment. They then oppose this ideal model of knowledge to the forced constructions of the dialectical method.

If such methods seem plausible at first this is because capitalism tends to produce a social structure that in great measure encourages such views. But for that very reason we need the dialectical method to puncture the social illusion so produced and help us to glimpse the reality underlying it. The ‘pure’ facts of the natural sciences arise when a phenomenon of the real world is placed (in thought or in reality) into an environment where its laws can be inspected without outside interference. This process is reinforced by reducing the phenomena to their purely quantitative essence. to their expression in numbers and numerical relations. Opportunists always fail to recognise that it is in the nature of capitalism to process phenomena in this way. Marx gives an incisive account ^[7] of such a ‘process of abstraction’ in the case of labour, but he does not omit to point out with equal vigour that he is dealing with a *historical* peculiarity of capitalist society.

“Thus the most general abstractions commonly appear where there is the highest concrete development, where one feature appears to be shared by many, and to be common to all. Then it cannot be thought of any longer in one particular form.”

But this tendency in capitalism goes even further. The fetishistic character of economic forms, the reification of all human relations, the constant expansion and extension of the division of labour which subjects the process of production to an abstract, rational analysis, without regard to the human potentialities and abilities of the immediate producers, all these things transform the phenomena of society and with them the way in which they are perceived. In this way arise the ‘isolated’ facts, ‘isolated’ complexes of facts, separate, specialist disciplines (economics, law, etc.) whose very appearance seems to have done much to pave the way for such scientific methods. It thus appears extraordinarily ‘scientific’ to think out the tendencies implicit in the facts themselves and to promote this activity to the status of science.

By contrast, in the teeth of all these isolated and isolating facts and partial systems, dialectics insists on the concrete unity of the whole. Yet although it exposes these appearances for the illusions they are – albeit illusions necessarily engendered by capitalism – in this ‘scientific’ atmosphere it still gives the impression of being an arbitrary construction.

The unscientific nature of this seemingly so scientific method consists, then, in its failure to see and take account of the *historical character* of the facts on which it is based. This is the source of more than one error (constantly overlooked by the practitioners of the method) to which Engels has explicitly drawn attention. ^[8] The

nature of this source of error is that statistics and the 'exact' economic theory based upon them always lag behind actual developments.

"For this reason, it is only too often necessary in current history, to treat this, the most decisive factor, as constant, and the economic situation existing at the beginning of the period concerned as given and unalterable for the whole period, or else to take notice of only those changes in the situation as arise out of the patently manifest events themselves and are therefore, likewise, patently manifest."

Thus we perceive that there is something highly problematic in the fact that capitalist society is predisposed to harmonise with scientific method, to constitute indeed the social premises of its exactness. If the internal structure of the 'facts' of their interconnections is essentially historical, if, that is to say, they are caught up in a process of continuous transformation, then we may indeed question when the greater scientific inaccuracy occurs. It is when I conceive of the 'facts' as existing in a form and as subject to laws concerning which I have a methodological certainty (or at least probability) that they no longer apply to these facts? Or is it when I consciously take this situation into account, cast a critical eye at the 'exactitude' attainable by such a method and concentrate instead on those points where this *historical* aspect, this decisive fact of change really manifests itself?

The historical character of the 'facts' which science seems to have grasped with such 'purity' makes itself felt in an even more devastating manner. As the products of historical evolution they are involved in continuous change. But in addition they are also *precisely in their objective structure the products of a definite historical epoch, namely capitalism*. Thus when 'science' maintains that the manner in which data immediately present themselves is an adequate foundation of scientific conceptualisation and that the actual form of these data is the appropriate starting-point for the formation of scientific concepts, it thereby takes its stand simply and dogmatically on the basis of capitalist society. It uncritically accepts the nature of the object as it is given and the laws of that society as the unalterable foundation of 'science'.

In order to progress from these 'facts' to facts in the true meaning of the word it is necessary to perceive their historical conditioning as such and to abandon the point of view that would see them as immediately given: they must themselves be subjected to a historical and dialectical examination. For as Marx says: ^[9]

"The finished pattern of economic relations as seen on the surface in their real existence and consequently in the ideas with which the agents and bearers of these relations seek to understand them, is very different from, and indeed quite the reverse of and antagonistic to their inner, essential but concealed core and the concepts corresponding to it."

If the facts are to be understood, this distinction between their real existence and their inner core must be grasped clearly and precisely. This distinction is the first premise of a truly scientific study which in Marx's words, "would be superfluous if the outward appearance of things coincided with their essence." ^[10] Thus we must detach the phenomena from the form in which they are immediately given and discover the intervening links which connect them to their core, their essence. In so doing, we shall arrive at an understanding of their apparent form and see it as the form in which the inner core necessarily appears. It is necessary because of the historical character of the facts, because they have grown in the soil of capitalist society. This twofold character, the simultaneous recognition and transcendence of immediate appearances is precisely the dialectical nexus.

In this respect, superficial readers imprisoned in the modes of thought created by capitalism, experienced the gravest difficulties in comprehending the structure of thought in *Capital*. For on the one hand, Marx's account pushes the capitalist nature of all economic forms to their furthest limits, he creates an intellectual milieu where they can exist in their purest form by positing a society 'corresponding to the theory', i.e. capitalist through and through, consisting of none but capitalists and proletarians. But conversely, no sooner does this strategy produce results, no sooner does this world of phenomena seem to be on the point of crystallising out into theory than it dissolves into a mere illusion, a distorted situation appears as in a distorting mirror which is, however, "only the conscious expression of an. imaginary movement."

Only in this context which sees the isolated facts of social life as aspects of the historical process and integrates them in a *totality*, can knowledge of the facts hope to become knowledge of *reality*. This knowledge starts from the simple (and to the capitalist world), pure, immediate, natural determinants described above. It progresses from

them to the knowledge of the concrete totality, i.e. to the conceptual reproduction of reality. This concrete totality is by no means an unmediated datum for thought.

“The concrete is concrete,” Marx says,^[11] “because it is a synthesis of many particular determinants, i.e. a unity of diverse elements.”

Idealism succumbs here to the delusion of confusing the intellectual reproduction of reality with the actual structure of reality itself. For “in thought, reality appears as the process of synthesis, not as starting-point, but as outcome, although it is the real starting-point and hence the starting-point for perception and ideas.”

Conversely, the vulgar materialists, even in the modern guise donned by Bernstein and others, do not go beyond the reproduction of the immediate, simple determinants of social life. They imagine that they are being quite extraordinarily ‘exact’ when they simply take over these determinants without either analysing them further or welding them into a concrete totality. They take the facts in abstract isolation, explaining them only in terms of abstract laws unrelated to the concrete totality. As Marx observes:

“Crudeness and conceptual nullity consist in the tendency to forge arbitrary unmediated connections between things that belong together in an organic union.”^[12]

The crudeness and conceptual nullity of such thought lies primarily in the fact that it obscures the historical, transitory nature of capitalist society. Its determinants take on the appearance of timeless, eternal categories valid for all social formations. This could be seen at its crassest in the vulgar bourgeois economists, but the vulgar Marxists soon followed in their footsteps. The dialectical method was overthrown and with it the methodological supremacy of the totality over the individual aspects; the parts were prevented from finding their definition within the whole and, instead, the whole was dismissed as unscientific or else it degenerated into the mere ‘idea’ or ‘sum’ of the parts. With the totality out of the way, the fetishistic relations of the isolated parts appeared as a timeless law valid for every human society.

Marx’s dictum: “The relations of production of every society form a whole”^[13] is the methodological point of departure and the key to the *historical* understanding of social relations. All the isolated partial categories can be thought of and treated – in isolation – as something that is always present in every society. (If it cannot be found in a given society this is put down to ‘chance’ as the exception that proves the rule.) But the changes to which these individual aspects are subject give no clear and unambiguous picture of the real differences in the various stages of the evolution of society. These can really only be discerned in the context of the total historical process of their relation to society as a whole.

3

This dialectical conception of totality seems to have put a great distance between itself and reality, it appears to construct reality very ‘unscientifically’. But it is the only method capable of understanding and reproducing reality. Concrete totality is, therefore, the category that governs reality.^[14] The rightness of this view only emerges with complete clarity when we direct our attention to the real, material substratum of our method, viz. capitalist society with its internal antagonism between the forces and the relations of production. The methodology of the natural sciences which forms the methodological ideal of every fetishistic science and every kind of Revisionism rejects the idea of contradiction and antagonism in its subject matter. If, despite this, contradictions do spring up between particular theories, this only proves that our knowledge is as yet imperfect. Contradictions between theories show that these theories have reached their natural limits; they must therefore be transformed and subsumed under even wider theories in which the contradictions finally disappear.

But we maintain that in the case of social reality these contradictions are not a sign of the imperfect understanding of society; on the contrary, they belong to *the nature of reality itself and to the nature of capitalism*. When the totality is known they will not be transcended and *cease* to be contradictions. Quite the reverse. they will be seen to be necessary contradictions arising out of the antagonisms of this system of production. When theory (as the knowledge of the whole) opens up the way to resolving these contradictions it does so by revealing the *real tendencies* of social evolution. For these are destined to effect a real resolution of the contradictions that have emerged in the course of history.

From this angle we see that the conflict between the dialectical method and that of ‘criticism’ (or vulgar materialism, Machism, etc.) is a social problem. When the ideal of scientific knowledge is applied to nature it

simply furthers the progress of science. But when it is applied to society it turns out to be an ideological weapon of the bourgeoisie. For the latter it is a matter of life and death to understand its own system of production in terms of eternally valid categories: it must think of capitalism as being predestined to eternal survival by the eternal laws of nature and reason. Conversely, contradictions that cannot be ignored must be shown to be purely surface phenomena, unrelated to this mode of production.

The method of classical economics was a product of this ideological need. But also its limitations as a science are a consequence of the structure of capitalist reality and the antagonistic character of capitalist production. When, for example, a thinker of Ricardo's stature can deny the "necessity of expanding the market along with the expansion of production and the growth of capital", he does so (unconsciously of course), to avoid the necessity of admitting that crises are inevitable. For crises are the most striking illustration of the antagonisms in capitalist production and it is evident that "the bourgeois mode of production implies a limitation to the free development of the forces of production."^[15] What was good faith in Ricardo became a consciously misleading apologia of bourgeois society in the writings of the vulgar economists. The vulgar Marxists arrived at the same results by seeking either the thorough-going elimination of dialectics from proletarian science, or at best its 'critical' refinement.

To give a grotesque illustration, Max Adler wished to make a critical distinction between dialectics as method, as the movement of thought on the one hand and the dialectics of being, as metaphysics on the other. His 'criticism' culminates in the sharp separation of dialectics from both and he describes it as a "piece of positive science" which "is, what is chiefly meant by talk of real dialectics in Marxism." This dialectic might more aptly be called 'antagonism', for it simply "asserts that an opposition exists between the self-interest of an individual and the social forms in which he is confined."^[16] By this stroke the objective economic antagonism as expressed in the *class struggle* evaporates, leaving only a conflict between the *individual and society*. This means that neither the emergence of internal problems, nor the collapse of capitalist society, can be seen to be necessary. The end-product, whether he likes it or not, is a Kantian philosophy of history' Moreover, the structure of bourgeois society is established as the universal form of society in general. For the central problem Max Adler tackles, of the real "dialectics or, better, antagonism" is nothing but one of the typical ideological forms of the capitalist social order. But whether capitalism is rendered immortal on economic or on ideological grounds, whether with naive nonchalance, or with critical refinement is of little importance.

Thus with the rejection or blurring of the dialectical method history becomes unknowable. This does not imply that a more or less exact account of particular people or epochs cannot be given without the aid of dialectics. But it does put paid to attempts to understand history *as a unified process*. (This can be seen in the sociologically abstract, historical constructs of the type of Spencer and Comte whose inner contradictions have been convincingly exposed by modern bourgeois historians, most incisively by Rickert. But it also shows itself in the demand for a 'philosophy of history' which then turns out to have a quite inscrutable relationship to historical reality.) The opposition between the description of an aspect of history and the description of history as a unified process is not just a problem of scope, as in the distinction between particular and universal history. It is rather a conflict of method, of approach. Whatever the epoch or special topic of study, the question of a unified approach to the process of history is inescapable. It is here that the crucial importance of the dialectical view of totality reveals itself. For it is perfectly possible for someone to describe the essentials of an historical event and yet be in the dark about the real nature of that event and of its function in the historical totality, i.e. without understanding it as part of a unified historical process.

A typical example of this can be seen in Sismondi's treatment of the question of crisis.^[17] He understood the immanent tendencies in the processes of production and distribution. But ultimately he failed because, for all his incisive criticism of capitalism, he remained imprisoned in capitalist notions of the objective and so necessarily thought of production and distribution as two independent processes, "not realising that the relations of distribution are only the relations of production *sub alia specie*." He thus succumbs to the same fate that overtook Proudhon's false dialectics; "he converts the various limbs of society into so many independent societies."^[18]

We repeat: the category of totality does not reduce its various elements to an undifferentiated uniformity, to identity. The apparent independence and autonomy which they possess in the capitalist system of production is an illusion only in so far as they are involved in a dynamic dialectical relationship with one another and can be thought of as the dynamic dialectical aspects of an equally dynamic and dialectical whole. “The result we arrive at,” says Marx, “is not that production, distribution, exchange and consumption are identical, but that they are all members of one totality, different aspects of a unit. . . . Thus a definite form of production determines definite forms of consumption, distribution and exchange as well as *definite relations between these different elements*.... A mutual interaction takes place between these various elements. This is the case with every organic body.” ^[19] But even the category of interaction requires inspection. If by interaction we mean just the reciprocal causal impact of two otherwise unchangeable objects on each other, we shall not have come an inch nearer to an understanding of society. This is the case with the vulgar materialists with their one-way causal sequences (or the Machists with their functional relations). After all, there is e.g. an interaction when a stationary billiard ball is struck by a moving one: the first one moves, the second one is deflected from its original path. The interaction we have in mind must be more than the interaction of *otherwise unchanging objects*. It must go further in its relation to the whole: for this relation determines the objective form of every object of cognition. Every substantial change that is of concern to knowledge manifests itself as a change in relation to the whole and through this as a change in the form of objectivity itself. ^[20] Marx has formulated this idea in countless places. I shall cite only one of the best-known passages: ^[21]

“A negro is a negro. He only becomes a slave in certain circumstances. A cotton-spinning jenny is a machine for spinning cotton. Only in certain circumstances does it become capital. Torn from those circumstances it is no more capital than gold is money or sugar the price of sugar.”

Thus the objective forms of all social phenomena change constantly in the course of their ceaseless dialectical interactions with each other. The intelligibility of objects develops in proportion as we grasp their function in the totality to which they belong. This is why only the dialectical conception of totality can enable us to understand *reality as a social process*. For only this conception dissolves the fetishistic forms necessarily produced by the capitalist mode of production and enables us to see them as mere illusions which are not less illusory for being seen to be necessary. These unmediated concepts, these ‘laws’ sprout just as inevitably from the soil of capitalism and veil the real relations between objects.

They can all be seen as ideas necessarily held by the agents of the capitalist system of production. They are, therefore, objects of knowledge, but the object which is known through them is not the capitalist system of production itself, but the ideology of its ruling class.

Only when this veil is torn aside does historical knowledge become possible. For the function of these unmediated concepts that have been derived from the fetishistic forms of objectivity is to make the phenomena of capitalist society appear as supra-historical essences. The knowledge of the real, objective nature of a phenomenon, the knowledge of its historical character and the knowledge of its actual function in the totality of society form, therefore, a single, undivided act of cognition. This unity is shattered by the pseudo-scientific method. Thus only through the dialectical method could the distinction between constant and variable capital, crucial to economics, be understood. Classical economics was unable to go beyond the distinction between fixed and circulating capital. This was not accidental. For “variable capital is only a particular historical manifestation of the fund for providing the necessaries of life, or the labour-fund which the labourer requires for the maintenance of himself and his family, and which whatever be the system of social production, he must himself produce and reproduce. If the labour-fund constantly flows to him in the form of money that pays for his labour, it is because the product he has created moves constantly away from him in the form of capital.... The transaction is veiled by the fact that the product appears as a commodity and the commodity as money.” ^[22]

The fetishistic illusions enveloping all phenomena in capitalist society succeed in concealing reality, but more is concealed than the historical, i.e. transitory, ephemeral nature of phenomena. This concealment is made possible by the fact that in capitalist society man’s environment, and especially the categories of economics, appear to him immediately and necessarily in forms of objectivity which conceal the fact that they are the categories of the *relations of men with each other*. Instead they appear as things and the relations of things with

each other. Therefore, when the dialectical method destroys the fiction of the immortality of the categories it also destroys their reified character and clears the way to a knowledge of reality. According to Engels in his discussion of Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*, "economics does not treat of things, but of the relations between persons and, in the last analysis, between classes; however, these relations are always *bound to things and appear as things*." ^[23]

It is by virtue of this insight that the dialectical method and its concept of totality can be seen to provide real knowledge of what goes on in society. It might appear as if the dialectic relations between parts and whole were no more than a construct of thought as remote from the true categories of social reality as the unmediated formulae of bourgeois economics. If so, the superiority of dialectics would be purely methodological. The real difference, however, is deeper and more fundamental.

At every stage of social evolution each economic category reveals a definite relation between men. This relation becomes conscious and is conceptualised. Because of this the inner logic of the movement of human society can be understood at once as the product of men themselves and of forces that arise from their relations with each other and which have escaped their control. Thus the economic categories become dynamic and dialectical in a double sense. As 'pure' economic categories they are involved in constant interaction with each other, and that enables us to understand any given historical cross-section through the evolution of society. But since they have arisen out of human relations and since they function in the process of the transformation of human relations, the actual process of social evolution becomes visible in their reciprocal relationship with the reality underlying their activity. That is to say, the production and reproduction of a particular economic totality, which science hopes to understand, is necessarily transformed into the process of production and reproduction of a particular *social* totality; in the course of this transformation, 'pure' economics are naturally transcended, though this does not mean that we must appeal to any transcendental forces. Marx often insisted upon this aspect of dialectics. For instance: ^[24]

"Capitalist production, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process or as a process of reproduction produces not only commodities, not only surplus value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation itself, on the one hand the capitalist and on the other, the labourer."

4

To posit oneself, to produce and reproduce oneself – that is *reality*. Hegel clearly perceived this and expressed it in a way closely similar to that of Marx, albeit cloaked in abstraction and misunderstanding itself and thus opening the way to further misunderstanding. "What is actual is necessary in itself," he says in the *Philosophy of Right*. "Necessity consists in this that the whole is sundered into the different concepts and that this divided whole yields a fixed and permanent determinacy. However, this is not a fossilised determinacy but one which permanently recreates itself in its dissolution." ^[25] The deep affinities between historical materialism and Hegel's philosophy are clearly manifested here, for both conceive of theory as the *self-knowledge of reality*. Nevertheless, we must briefly point to the crucial difference between them. This is likewise located in the problem of reality and of the unity of the historical process.

Marx reproached Hegel (and, in even stronger terms, Hegel's successors who had reverted to Kant and Fichte) with his failure to overcome the duality of thought and being, of theory and practice, of subject and object. He maintained that Hegel's dialectic, which purported to be an inner, real dialectic of the historical process, was a mere illusion: in the crucial point he failed to go beyond Kant. His knowledge is no more than *knowledge about* an essentially alien material. It was not the case that this material, human society, came to now itself. As he remarks in the decisive sentences of his critique, ^[26]

"Already with Hegel, the absolute spirit of history has its material in the masses, but only finds adequate expression in philosophy. But the philosopher appears merely as the instrument by which absolute spirit, which makes history, arrives at self-consciousness after the historical movement has been completed. The philosopher's role in history is thus limited to this subsequent consciousness, for the real movement is executed unconsciously by the absolute spirit. Thus the philosopher arrives *post festum*."

Hegel, then, permits

“absolute spirit qua absolute spirit to make history only in appearance. ... For, as absolute spirit does not appear in the mind of the philosopher in the shape of the creative world-spirit until after the event, it follows that it makes history only in the consciousness, the opinions and the ideas of the philosophers, only in the speculative imagination.”

Hegel’s conceptual mythology has been definitively eliminated by the critical activity of the young Marx.

It is, however, not accidental that Marx achieved ‘self-understanding’ in the course of opposing a reactionary Hegelian movement reverting back to Kant. This movement exploited Hegel’s obscurities and inner uncertainties in order to eradicate the revolutionary elements from his method. It strove to harmonise the reactionary content, the reactionary conceptual mythology, the vestiges of the contemplative dualism of thought and existence with the consistently reactionary philosophy which prevailed in the Germany of the day.

By adopting the progressive part of the Hegelian method, namely the dialectic, Marx not only cut himself off from Hegel’s successors; he also split Hegel’s philosophy in two. He took the historical tendency in Hegel to its logical extreme: he radically transformed all the phenomena both of society and of socialised man into historical problems: he concretely revealed the real substratum of historical evolution and developed a seminal method in the process. He measured Hegel’s philosophy by the yardstick he had himself discovered and systematically elaborated, and he found it wanting. The mythologising remnants of the ‘eternal values’ which Marx eliminated from the dialectic belong basically on the same level as the philosophy of reflection which Hegel had fought his whole life long with such energy and bitterness and against which he had pitted his entire philosophical method, with its ideas of process and concrete totality, dialectics and history. In this sense Marx’s critique of Hegel is the direct continuation and extension of the criticism that Hegel himself levelled at Kant and Fichte. ^[27] So it came about that Marx’s dialectical method continued what Hegel had striven for but had failed to achieve in a concrete form. And, on the other hand, the corpse of the written system remained for the scavenging philologists and system-makers to feast upon.

It is at reality itself that Hegel and Marx part company. Hegel was unable to penetrate to the real driving forces of history. Partly because these forces were not yet fully visible when he created his system. In consequence he was forced to regard the peoples and their consciousness as the true bearers of historical evolution. (But he did not discern their real nature because of the heterogeneous composition of that consciousness. So he mythologised it into the ‘spirit of the people’.) But in part he remained imprisoned in the Platonic and Kantian outlook, in the duality of thought and being, of form and matter, notwithstanding his very energetic efforts to break out. Even though he was the first to discover the meaning of concrete totality, and even though his thought was constantly bent upon overcoming every kind of abstraction, matter still remained tainted for him with the ‘*stain* of the specific’ (and here he was very much the Platonist). These contradictory and conflicting tendencies could not be clarified within his system. They are often juxtaposed, unmediated, contradictory and unreconciled. In consequence, the ultimate (apparent) synthesis had perforce to turn to the past rather than the future. ^[28] It is no wonder that from very early on bourgeois science chose to dwell on these aspects of Hegel. As a result the revolutionary core of his thought became almost totally obscure even for Marxists.

A conceptual mythology always points to the failure to understand a fundamental condition of human existence, one whose effects cannot be warded off. This failure to penetrate the object is expressed intellectually in terms of transcendental forces which construct and shape reality, the relations between objects, our relations with them and their transformations in the course of history in a mythological fashion. By recognising that “the production and reproduction of real life (is) in the last resort the decisive factor in history”, ^[29] Marx and Engels gained a vantage-point from which they could settle accounts with all mythologies. Hegel’s absolute spirit was the last of these grandiose mythological schemes. It already contained the totality and its movement, even though it was unaware of its real character. Thus in historical materialism reason “which has always existed though not always in a rational form”, ^[30] achieved that ‘rational’ form by discovering its real substratum, the basis from which human life will really be able to become conscious of itself. This completed the programme of Hegel’s philosophy of history, even though at the cost of the destruction of his system. In contrast to nature in which, as

Hegel emphasises, ^[31] “change goes in a circle, repeating the same thing”, change in history takes place “in the concept as well as on the surface. It is the concept itself which is corrected.”

5

The premise of dialectical materialism is, we recall: “It is not men’s consciousness that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness.” Only in the context sketched above can this premise point beyond mere theory and become a question of praxis. Only when the core of existence stands revealed as a social process can existence be seen as the product, albeit the hitherto unconscious product, of human activity. This activity will be seen in its turn as the element crucial for the transformation of existence. Man finds himself confronted by purely natural relations or social forms mystified into natural relations. They appear to be fixed, complete and immutable entities which can be manipulated and even comprehended, but never overthrown. But also this situation creates the possibility of praxis in the individual consciousness. Praxis becomes the form of action appropriate to the isolated individual, it becomes his ethics. Feuerbach’s attempt to supersede Hegel foundered on this reef: like the German idealists, and to a much greater extent than Hegel, he stopped short at the isolated individual of ‘civil society’.

Marx urged us to understand ‘the sensuous world’, the object, reality, as human sensuous activity. ^[32] This means that man must become conscious of himself as a social being, as simultaneously the subject and object of the socio-historical process. In feudal society man could not yet see himself as a social being because his social relations were still mainly natural. Society was far too unorganised and had far too little control over the totality of relations between men for it to appear to consciousness as *the* reality of man. (The question of the structure and unity of feudal society cannot be considered in any detail here.) Bourgeois society carried out the process of socialising society. Capitalism destroyed both the spatio-temporal barriers between different lands and territories and also the legal partitions between the different ‘estates’ (*Stände*). In its universe there is a formal equality for all men; the economic relations that directly determined the metabolic exchange between men and nature progressively disappear. Man becomes, in the true sense of the word, a social being. Society. becomes the reality for man.

Thus the recognition that society is reality becomes possible only under capitalism, in bourgeois society. But the class which carried out this revolution did so without consciousness of its function; the social forces it unleashed, the very forces that carried it to supremacy seemed to be opposed to it like a second nature, but a more soulless, impenetrable nature than feudalism ever was. ^[33] It was necessary for the proletariat to be born for social reality to become fully conscious. The reason for this is that the discovery of the class-outlook of the proletariat provided a vantage point from which to survey the whole of society. With the emergence of historical materialism there arose the theory of the “conditions for the liberation of the proletariat” and the doctrine of reality understood as the total process of social evolution. This was only possible because for the proletariat the total knowledge of its class-situation was a vital necessity, a matter of life and death; because its class situation becomes comprehensible only if the whole of society can be understood; and because this understanding is the inescapable precondition of its actions. Thus the unity of theory and practice is only the reverse side of the social and historical position of the proletariat. From its own point of view self-knowledge coincides with knowledge of the whole so that the proletariat is at one and the same time the subject and object of its own knowledge.

The mission of raising humanity to a higher level is based, as Hegel rightly observed ^[34] (although he was still concerned with nations), on the fact that these “stages of evolution exist as *immediate, natural, principles*” and it devolves upon every nation (i.e. class) “endowed with such a *natural* principle to put it into practice.” Marx concretises this idea with great clarity by applying it to social development: ^[35]

“If socialist writers attribute this world-historical role to the proletariat it is not because they believe ... that the proletariat are gods. Far from it. The proletariat can and must liberate itself because when the proletariat is fully developed, its humanity and even the appearance of its humanity has become totally abstract; because in the conditions of its life all the conditions of life of contemporary society find their most inhuman consummation; because in the proletariat man is lost to himself but at the same time he has acquired a theoretical consciousness of this loss, and is driven by the absolutely imperious dictates of his misery – the practical expression of this necessity – which can no longer be ignored or whitewashed, to

rebel against this inhumanity. However, the proletariat cannot liberate itself without destroying the conditions of its own life. But it cannot do that without destroying all the inhuman conditions of life in contemporary society which exist in the proletariat in a concentrated form.”

Thus the essence of the method of historical materialism is inseparable from the ‘practical and critical’ activity of the proletariat: both are aspects of the same process of social evolution. So, too, the knowledge of reality provided by the dialectical method is likewise inseparable from the class standpoint of the proletariat. The question raised by the Austrian Marxists of the methodological separation of the ‘pure’ science of Marxism from socialism is a pseudo-problem.^[36] For, the Marxist method, the dialectical materialist knowledge of reality, can arise only from the point of view of a class, from the point of view of the struggle of the proletariat. To abandon this point of view is to move away from historical materialism, just as to adopt it leads directly into the thick of the struggle of the proletariat.

Historical materialism grows out of the “immediate, natural” life-principle of the proletariat; it means the acquisition of total knowledge of reality from this one point of view. But it does not follow from this that this knowledge or this methodological attitude is the inherent or natural possession of the proletariat as a class (let alone of proletarian individuals). On the contrary. It is true that the proletariat is the conscious subject of total social reality. But the conscious subject is not defined here as in Kant, where ‘subject’ is defined as that which can never be an object. The ‘subject’ here is not a detached spectator of the process. The proletariat is more than just the active and passive part of this process: the rise and evolution of its knowledge and its actual rise and evolution in the course of history are just the two different sides of the same real process. It is not simply the case that the working class arose in the course of spontaneous, unconscious actions born of immediate, direct despair (the Luddite destruction of machines can serve as a primitive illustration of this), and then advanced gradually through incessant social struggle to the point where it “formed itself into a class.” But it is no less true that proletarian consciousness of social reality, of its own class situation, of its own historical vocation and the materialist view of history are all products of this self-same process of evolution which historical materialism understands adequately and for what it really is for the first time in history.

Thus the Marxist method is equally as much the product of class warfare as any other political or economic product. In the same way, the evolution of the proletariat reflects the inner structure of the society which it was the first to understand. “Its result, therefore, appears just as constantly presupposed by it as its presuppositions appear as its results.”^[37] The idea of totality which we have come to recognise as the presupposition necessary to comprehend reality is the product of history in a double sense.

First, historical materialism became a formal, objective possibility only because economic factors created the proletariat, because the proletariat did emerge (i.e. at a particular stage of historical development), and because the subject and object of the knowledge of social reality were transformed. Second, this formal possibility became a real one only in the course of the evolution of the proletariat. If the meaning of history is to be found in the process of history itself and not, as formerly, in a transcendental, mythological or ethical meaning foisted on to recalcitrant material, this presupposes a proletariat with a relatively advanced awareness of its own position, i.e. a relatively advanced proletariat, and, therefore, a long preceding period of evolution. The path taken by this evolution leads from utopia to the knowledge of reality; from transcendental goals fixed by the first great leaders of the workers’ movement to the clear perception by the Commune of 1871 that the working-class has “no ideals to realise”, but wishes only “to liberate the elements of the new society.” It is the path leading from the “class opposed to capitalism” to the class “for itself.”

Seen in this light the revisionist separation of movement and ultimate goal represents a regression to the most primitive stage of the working-class movement. For the ultimate goal is not a ‘state of the future’ awaiting the proletariat somewhere independent of the movement and the path leading up to it. It is not a condition which can be happily forgotten in the stress of daily life and recalled only in Sunday sermons as a stirring contrast to workaday cares. Nor is it a ‘duty’, an ‘idea’ designed to regulate the ‘real’ process. The ultimate goal is rather that *relation to the totality* (to the whole of society seen as a process), through which every aspect of the struggle acquires its revolutionary significance. This relation informs every aspect in its simple and sober ordinariness, but only consciousness makes it real and so confers reality on the day-to-day struggle by manifesting its relation to

the whole. Thus it elevates mere existence to reality. Do not let us forget either that every attempt to rescue the ‘ultimate goal’ or the ‘essence’ of the proletariat from every impure contact with – capitalist- existence leads ultimately to the same remoteness from reality, from ‘practical, critical activity’ and to the same relapse into the utopian dualism of subject and object, of theory and practice to which Revisionism has succumbed. ^[38]

The practical danger of every such dualism shows itself in the loss of any directive for *action*. As soon as you abandon the ground of reality that has been conquered and reconquered by dialectical materialism, as soon as you decide to remain on the ‘natural’ ground of existence, of the empirical in its stark, naked brutality, you create a gulf between the subject of an action and the milieu of the ‘facts’ in which the action unfolds so that they stand opposed to each other as harsh, irreconcilable principles. It then becomes impossible to impose the subjective will, wish or decision upon the facts or to discover in them any directive for action. A situation in which the ‘facts’ speak out unmistakably for or against a definite course of action has never existed, and neither can or will exist. The more conscientiously the facts are explored – in their isolation, i.e. in their unmediated relations – the less compellingly will they point in any one direction. It is self-evident that a merely subjective decision will be shattered by the pressure of uncomprehended facts acting automatically ‘according to laws’.

Thus dialectical materialism is seen to offer the only approach to reality which can give action a direction. The self-knowledge, both subjective and objective, of the proletariat at a given point in its evolution is at the same time knowledge of the stage of development achieved by the whole society. The facts no longer appear strange when they are comprehended in their coherent reality, in the relation of all partial aspects to their inherent, but hitherto unelucidated roots in the whole: we then perceive the tendencies which strive towards the centre of reality, to what we are wont to call the ultimate goal. This ultimate goal is not an abstract ideal opposed to the process, but an aspect of truth and reality. It is the concrete meaning of each stage reached and an integral part of the concrete moment. Because of this, to comprehend it is to recognise the direction taken (unconsciously) by events and tendencies towards the totality. It is to know the direction that determines concretely the correct course of action at any given moment – in terms of the interest of the total process, viz. the emancipation of the proletariat.

However, the evolution of society constantly heightens the tension between the partial aspects and the whole. Just because the inherent meaning of reality shines forth with an ever more resplendent light, the meaning of the process is embedded ever more deeply in day-to-day events, and totality permeates the spatio-temporal character of phenomena. The path to consciousness throughout the course of history does not become smoother but on the contrary ever more arduous and exacting. For this reason the task of orthodox Marxism, its victory over Revisionism and utopianism can never mean the defeat, once and for all, of false tendencies. It is an ever-renewed struggle against the insidious effects of bourgeois ideology on the thought of the proletariat. Marxist orthodoxy is no guardian of traditions, it is the eternally vigilant prophet proclaiming the relation between the tasks of the immediate present and the totality of the historical process. Hence the words of the *Communist Manifesto* on the tasks of orthodoxy and of its representatives, the Communists, have lost neither their relevance nor their value:

“The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties *by this only*: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independent of nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of *the movement as a whole*.”

March 1919.

NOTES

1. [Introduction to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right](#), p. 52.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
3. *Nachlass I*, pp. 382-3. [*Correspondence of 1843*].
4. *Ibid.*, p. 398. See also the essay on [Class Consciousness](#).
5. [Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy](#).
6. [A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy](#), (my italics). It is of the first importance to realise that the method is limited here to the realms of history and society. The misunderstandings that arise from Engels’ account of dialectics can in

the main be put down to the fact that Engels – following Hegel’s mistaken lead – extended the method to apply also to nature. However, the crucial determinants of dialectics – the interaction of subject and object, the unity of theory and practice, the historical changes in the reality underlying the categories as the root cause of changes in thought, etc. – are absent from our knowledge of nature. Unfortunately it is not possible to undertake a detailed analysis of these questions here.

7. [Ibid.](#), pp. 298-9.

8. Introduction to [The Class Struggles in France](#). But it must be borne in mind that ‘scientific exactitude’ presupposes that the elements remain ‘constant’. This had been postulated as far back as Galileo.

9. [Capital III](#), p. 205. Similarly also pp. 47-8 and 307. The distinction between existence (which is divided into appearance, phenomenon and essence) and reality derives from [Hegel’s Logic](#). It is unfortunately not possible here to discuss the degree to which the conceptual framework of *Capital* is based on these distinctions. Similarly, the distinction between idea (Vorstellung) and concept (Begriff) is also to be found in Hegel.

10. [Capital III](#), p. 797.

11. [A Contribution to Political Economy](#), p. 293.

12. [Ibid.](#), p. 273. The category of reflective connection also derives from Hegel’s *Logic*. [See Explanatory Notes for this concept].

13. [The Poverty of Philosophy](#), p. 123.

14. We would draw the attention of readers with a greater interest in questions of methodology to the fact that in Hegel’s logic, too, the relation of the parts to the whole forms the dialectical transition from existence to reality. It must be noted in this context that the question of the relation of internal and external also treated there is likewise concerned with the problem of totality. Hegel, *Werke IV*, pp. 156 ff.

15. *Marx, Theorien über den Mehrwert*, Stuttgart, 1905, II, II, pp. 305-9.

16. *Marxistische Probleme*, p. 77.

17. *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, III, pp. 55 and 93-4.

18. [The Poverty of Philosophy](#), pp. 123-4.

19. [A Contribution to Political Economy](#), pp. 291-2.

20. The very subtle nature of Cunow’s opportunism can be observed by the way in which – despite his thorough knowledge of Marx’s works – he substitutes the word ‘sum’ for the concept of the whole (totality) thus eliminating every dialectical relation. Cf. *Die Marxsche Geschichts- Gesellschafts- und Staatstheorie*, Berlin, 1929, II, pp. 155-7.

21. [Wage Labour and Capital](#).

22. [Capital I](#), p. 568.

23. Cf. the essay on [Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat](#).

24. [Capital I](#), p. 578.

25. Hegel, [The Philosophy of Right](#), trans. T. M. Knox, Oxford, 1942, p. 283.

26. *Nachlass II*, p. 187. [[The Holy Family](#), Chapter 6]

27. It comes as no surprise that at the very point where Marx radically departs from Hegel, Cunow should attempt to correct Marx by appealing to Hegel as seen through Kantian spectacles. To Marx’s purely historical view of the state he opposes the Hegelian state as ‘an eternal value’. Its ‘errors’ are to be set aside as nothing more than ‘historical matters’ which do not ‘determine the nature, the fate and the objectives of the state’. For Cunow, Marx is inferior to Hegel on this point because he ‘regards the question politically and not from the standpoint of the sociologist’. Cunow, op. cit. p. 308. It is evident that all Marx’s efforts to overcome Hegelian philosophy might never have existed in the eyes of the opportunists. If they do not return to vulgar materialism or to Kant they use the reactionary elements of Hegel’s philosophy of the state to erase revolutionary dialectics from Marxism, so as to provide an intellectual immortalisation of bourgeois society.

28. Hegel’s attitude towards national economy is highly significant in this context. ([Philosophy of Right](#), § 189.) He clearly sees that the problem of chance and necessity is fundamental to it methodologically (very like Engels: *Origin of the Family* S.W. II, p. 293 and *Feuerbach*, etc. S.W. II, p. 354). But he is unable to see the crucial importance of the material reality underlying the economy, viz. the relation of men to each other; it remains for him no more than an ‘arbitrary chaos’ and its laws are thought to be ‘similar to those of the planetary system’. *Ibid.* §. 189.

29. Engels, [Letter to J. Bloch, 21 September 1890](#).

30. [Nachlass I](#), p. 381. [Correspondence with Ruge (1843)].

31. [The Philosophy of History](#).

32. [Theses on Feuerbach](#).

33. See the essay [Class Consciousness](#) for an explanation of this situation.

34. [The Philosophy of Right](#), § 346-7.

35. *Nachlass II*, p. 133. [[The Holy Family](#), Chapter 4].

36. Hilferding, *Finanzkapital*, pp. VIII-IX.

37. [Capital III](#).

38. Cf. Zinoviev's polemics against Guesde and his attitude to the war in Stuttgart. *Gegen den Strom*, pp. 470-1. Likewise Lenin's book, ["Left-Wing" Communism – an Infantile Disorder](#).

Lukács, *H&CC*, "Class Consciousness" (1920), 50-51.

Of course bourgeois historians also attempt such concrete analyses; indeed they reproach historical materialists with violating the concrete uniqueness of historical events. Where they go wrong is in their belief that the concrete can be located in the empirical individual of history ('individual' here can refer to an individual man, class or people) and in his empirically given (and hence psychological or mass-psychological) consciousness. And just when they imagine that they have discovered the most concrete thing of all: *society as a concrete totality*, the system of production at a given point in history and the resulting division of society into classes – they are in fact at the furthest remove from it. In missing the mark they mistake something wholly abstract for the concrete. "These relations," Marx states, "are not those between one individual and another, but between worker and capitalist, tenant and landlord, etc. Eliminate these relations and you abolish the whole of society; your Prometheus will then be nothing more than a spectre without arms or legs. ..." ^[10]

Concrete analysis means then: the relation to society *as a whole*. For only when this relation is established does the consciousness of their existence that men have at any given time emerge in all its essential characteristics. It appears, on the one hand, as something which is *subjectively* justified in the social and historical situation, as something which can and should be understood, i.e. as 'right'. At the same time, *objectively*, it bypasses the essence of the evolution of society and fails to pinpoint it and express it adequately. That is to say, objectively, it appears as a 'false consciousness'. On the other hand, we may see the same consciousness as something which fails *subjectively* to reach its self-appointed goals, while furthering and realising the *objective* aims of society of which it is ignorant and which it did not choose.

This twofold dialectical determination of 'false consciousness' constitutes an analysis far removed from the naive description of what men in *fact* thought, felt and wanted at any moment in history and from any given point in the class structure. I do not wish to deny the great importance of this, but it remains after all merely the *material* of genuine historical analysis. The relation with concrete totality and the dialectical determinants arising from it transcend pure description and yield the category of objective possibility. By relating consciousness to the whole of society it becomes possible to infer the thoughts and feelings which men would have in a particular situation if they were *able* to assess both it and the interests arising from it in their impact on immediate action and on the whole structure of society. That is to say, it would be possible to infer the thoughts and feelings appropriate to their objective situation. The number of such situations is not unlimited in any society. However much detailed researches are able to refine social typologies there will always be a number of clearly distinguished basic types whose characteristics are determined by the types of position available in the process of production. Now class consciousness consists in fact of the appropriate and rational reactions 'imputed' [*zugerechnet*] to a particular typical position in the process of production. ^[11] This consciousness is, therefore, neither the sum nor the average of what is thought or felt by the single individuals who make up the class. And yet the historically significant actions of the class as a whole are determined in the last resort by this consciousness and not by the thought of the individual – and these actions can be understood only by reference to this consciousness.

Notes:

¹⁰. [The Poverty of Philosophy](#), p. 112.

¹¹. In this context it is unfortunately not possible to discuss in greater detail some of the ramifications of these ideas in Marxism, e.g. the very important category of the 'economic persona'. Even less can we pause to glance at the relation of historical materialism to comparable trends in bourgeois thought (such as Max Weber's ideal types).

Lukács, *H&CC*, “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat” (1923), 204-206.

But when the truth of becoming is the future that is to be created but has not yet been born, when it is the new that resides in the tendencies that (with our conscious aid) will be realised, then the question whether thought is a reflection appears quite senseless. It is true that reality is the criterion for the correctness of thought. But reality is not, it becomes – and to become the participation of thought is needed. We see here the fulfilment of the programme of classical philosophy: the principle of genesis means in fact that dogmatism is overcome (above all in its most important historical incarnation: the Platonic theory of reflection). But only concrete (historical) becoming can perform the function of such a genesis. And consciousness (the practical class consciousness of the proletariat) is a necessary, indispensable, integral part of that process of becoming.

Thus thought and existence are not identical in the sense that they ‘correspond’ to each other, or ‘reflect’ each other, that they ‘run parallel’ to each other or ‘coincide’ with each other (all expressions that conceal a rigid duality). Their identity is that they are aspects of one and the same real historical and dialectical process. What is ‘reflected’ in the consciousness of the proletariat is the new positive reality arising out of the dialectical contradictions of capitalism. And this is by no means the invention of the proletariat, nor was it ‘created’ out of the void. It is rather the inevitable consequence of the process in its totality; one which changed from being an abstract possibility to a concrete reality only after it had become part of the consciousness of the proletariat and had been made practical by it. And this is no mere formal transformation. For a possibility to be realised, for a tendency to become actual, what is required is that the objective components of a society should be transformed; their functions must be changed and with them the structure and content of every individual object.

But it must never be forgotten: *only the practical class consciousness of the proletariat* possesses this ability to transform things. Every contemplative, purely cognitive stance leads ultimately to a divided relationship to its object. Simply to transplant the structure we have discerned here into any stance other than that of proletarian action – for only the class can be practical in its relation to the total process – would mean the creation of a new conceptual mythology and a regression to the standpoint of classical philosophy refuted by Marx. For every purely cognitive stance bears the stigma of immediacy. That is to say, it never ceases to be confronted by a whole series of ready-made objects that cannot be dissolved into processes. Its dialectical nature can survive only in the tendency towards praxis and in its orientation towards the actions of the proletariat. It can survive only if it remains critically aware of its own tendency to immediacy inherent in every non-practical stance and if it constantly strives to explain critically the mediations, the relations to the totality as a process, to the actions of the proletariat as a class.

The practical character of the thought of the proletariat is born and becomes real as the result of an equally dialectical process. In this thought self-criticism is more than the self-criticism of its object, i.e. the self-criticism of bourgeois society. It is also a critical awareness of how much of its own practical nature has really become manifest, which stage of the genuinely practicable is objectively possible and how much of what is objectively possible has been made real. For it is evident that however clearly we may have grasped the fact that society consists of processes, however thoroughly we may have unmasked the fiction of its rigid reification, this does not mean that we are able to annul the ‘reality’ of this fiction in capitalist society *in practice*. The moments in which this insight *can* really be converted into practice are determined by developments in society. Thus proletarian thought is in the first place merely a *theory of praxis* which only gradually (and indeed often spasmodically) transforms itself into a *practical theory* that overturns the real world. The individual stages of this process cannot be sketched in here. They alone would be able to show how proletarian class consciousness evolves dialectically (i.e. how the proletariat becomes a class). Only then would it be possible to throw light on the intimate dialectical process of interaction between the socio-historical situation and the class consciousness of the proletariat. Only then would the statement that the proletariat is the identical subject-object of the history of society become truly concrete.^[70]

Even the proletariat can only overcome reification as long as it is oriented towards practice. And this means that there can be no single act that will eliminate reification in all its forms at one blow; it means that there will be a whole host of objects that at least in appearance remain more or less unaffected by the process. This is true in the first instance of nature. But it is also illuminating to observe how a whole set of social phenomena

become dialecticised by a different path than the one we have traced out to show the nature of the dialectics of history and the process by which the barriers of reification can be shattered. We have observed, for instance, how certain works of art are extraordinarily sensitive to the qualitative nature of dialectical changes without their becoming conscious of the antagonisms which they lay bare and to which they give artistic form.

At the same time we observed other societal phenomena which contain inner antagonisms but only in an abstract form, i.e. their inner contradictions are merely the secondary effects of the inner contradictions of other, more primary phenomena. This means that these last contradictions can only become visible if mediated by the former and can only become dialectical when they do. (This is true of interest as opposed to profit.) It would be necessary to set forth the whole system of these qualitative gradations in the dialectical character of the different kinds of phenomena before we should be in a position to arrive at the concrete totality of the categories with which alone true knowledge of the present is possible. The hierarchy of these categories would determine at the same time the point where system and history meet, thus fulfilling Marx's postulate (already cited) concerning the categories that "their sequence is determined by the relations they have to each other in modern bourgeois society."

Notes:

70. On the relationship between a theory of praxis to a practical theory, see the interesting essay by Josef Révai in *Kommunismus* 1, Nos. 46-9, "The Problem of Tactics," even though I am not in agreement with all his conclusions.

Karl Marx, *Capital I*: 75-6.

Man's reflections on the forms of social life, and consequently, also, his scientific analysis of those forms, take a course directly opposite to that of their actual historical development. He begins, *post festum*, with the results of the process of development ready to hand before him. The characters that stamp products as commodities, and whose establishment is a necessary preliminary to the circulation of commodities, have already acquired the stability of natural, self-understood forms of social life, before man seeks to decipher, not their historical character, for in his eyes they are immutable, but their meaning. Consequently it was the analysis of the prices of commodities that alone led to the determination of the magnitude of value, and it was the common expression of all commodities in money that alone led to the establishment of their characters as values. It is, however, just this ultimate money form of the world of commodities that actually conceals, instead of disclosing, the social character of private labour, and the social relations between the individual producers. When I state that coats or boots stand in a relation to linen, because it is the universal incarnation of abstract human labour, the absurdity of the statement is self-evident. Nevertheless, when the producers of coats and boots compare those articles with linen, or, what is the same thing, with gold or silver, as the universal equivalent, they express the relation between their own private labour and the collective labour of society in the same absurd form.

The categories of bourgeois economy consist of such like forms. They are forms of thought expressing with social validity the conditions and relations of a definite, historically determined mode of production, viz., the production of commodities. The whole mystery of commodities, all the magic and necromancy that surrounds the products of labour as long as they take the form of commodities, vanishes therefore, so soon as we come to other forms of production.

Marx, *Capital*; III: 817.

Vulgar economy actually does no more than interpret, systematise and defend in doctrinaire fashion the conceptions of the agents of bourgeois production who are entrapped in bourgeois production relations. It should not astonish us, then, that vulgar economy feels particularly at home in the estranged outward appearances of economic relations in which these *prima facie* absurd and perfect contradictions appear and that these relations seem the more self-evident the more their internal relationships are concealed from it, although they are understandable to the popular mind. But all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided. Thus, vulgar economy has not the slightest suspicion that the trinity which it takes as its point of departure, namely, land — rent, capital — interest, labour — wages or the price of labour, are *prima facie* three impossible combinations. First we have the use-value *land*, which has no value, and the exchange-value *rent*: so that a social relation conceived as a thing is made proportional to Nature, i.e., two incommensurable magnitudes are supposed to stand in a given ratio to one another. Then *capital — interest*. If capital is conceived as a certain sum of values represented independently by money, then it is *prima facie* nonsense to say that a certain value should be worth more than it is worth. It is precisely in the form: capital — interest that all intermediate links are eliminated, and capital is reduced to its most general formula, which therefore in itself is also inexplicable and absurd.

Hook, Sidney
Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx

PREFACE

THIS BOOK, written to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Karl Marx, offers an interpretation of the activity and thought of one of the outstanding thinkers of the nineteenth century. It is written in the hope that it may clarify some of the fundamental problems and issues of Marx's philosophy around which controversy has raged for decades. To those who are already acquainted with the writings of Marx and his followers, it is hoped that this book will suggest a fresh point of view. To those who are not acquainted with Marx, it is offered as a guide to further study.

The occasion for which this book has been written and the unhomogeneous nature of the reading public to which it is addressed have determined the content and method of its presentation, and have compelled the author to forego a systematic historical exposition and a detailed critical analysis of the themes treated. These will be given in subsequent studies. But it is hoped that Marx's leading ideas have been here presented with suffi-

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cient clarity to produce a lively appreciation of their meaning and impact in the world to-day. If in addition the reader is led to independent reflection upon the material submitted and the point of view from which it has been interpreted in the following pages, the objectives of the author will have been attained.

Experience has shown that no book on Marx can expect to be received with anywhere near the same detachment as a book on the Ammassalik Eskimo or a treatise on the internal constitution of the stars. Marx's ideas are so much a part of what people fear or welcome to-day, his doctrines so intimately connected with the living faith and hate of different classes and so often invoked by groups with conflicting political allegiances that the very sight of his name arouses a mind-set on the part of the reader of which he is largely unconscious. Every critical student of Marx—as of any disputed text or epoch—must, however, make the effort to distinguish between the meaning disclosed by analysis and his own evaluation of that meaning. Such an effort in Marx's case is singularly difficult, for even when we become aware of our prejudices we do not thereby transcend them; but it is an effort which must be made if we would do justice to both Marx and ourselves.

In order to facilitate this process of discrimination, the author believes it may be helpful to state explicitly certain methodological cautions that are generally taken for granted in subjects less heatedly controversial. He also hopes that by making his own position clear at the outset, much misunderstanding will be avoided.

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This book is not written by an "orthodox" Marxist. Indeed the author regards orthodox Marxism, in the form in which it flourished from 1895 to 1917, as an emasculation of Marx's thought. He holds that Marx himself was not an orthodox Marxist. Orthodoxy is not only fatal to honest thinking; it involves the abandonment of the revolutionary standpoint which was central to Marx's life and thought. This has been amply demonstrated by the historic experience of the German Social Democracy, the leaders of whose center and right wing regarded themselves as orthodox Marxists *par excellence*, and who were quick with the epithet of heretic against all who sought to interpret Marxism as a philosophy of action.

The very use of the term "orthodoxy" is an anomaly in any revolutionary movement. Its derivation is notoriously religious. Its meaning was fashioned in the controversies between Roman and Byzantine Christianity. Its associations more naturally suggest a church and the vested privileges of a church than an organization of enlightened and disciplined men and women fighting for the emancipation of society. Wherever there are people who insist upon calling themselves orthodox, there will be found dogma; and wherever dogma, substitution of a blind faith or a general formula for concrete analysis and specific action.

One cannot be orthodox at any price and a lover of the truth at the same time. This was clearly demonstrated by the tenacity with which "orthodox" Marxists, who in practice had long abandoned Marx and Engels,

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clung to the latter's anthropology in the face of the most conclusive findings of modern anthropologists. If the acceptance of Morgan's outmoded anthropology is necessary to orthodox Marxism, the author must be damned as an heretic on this point as well. Morgan was a great pioneer anthropologist. But no one to-day can accept his universal schema of social development for the family and other institutions, without intellectual stultification.

This book is not an attempt to revise Marx or to bring him up to date. Such a procedure is impermissible in what presumes to be a critical, expository account of Marx's own theories. The fact that the neglected aspects of Marx's thought, to which this book calls attention, have impressive contemporary implications, explains, perhaps, why this study was undertaken, but it does not constitute an introduction of a foreign point of view into the doctrines discussed.

No author can guard himself from the will to misunderstand. But he can diminish the dangers of distortion by inviting the reader to follow the argument in its own terms and to judge it in the context of the views opposed. The emphasis upon the rôle of activity in Marxism, as contrasted with the mechanical and fatalistic conceptions of the social process which prevail in orthodox circles, lays the author open to the charge of smuggling in philosophical idealism. But Marx's *dialectical* materialism has always appeared to be idealistic to those who, having reduced all reality to matter in motion, find themselves incapable of explaining the

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interaction between things and thought except on the assumption that the mind produces what it acts upon. This last assumption is frankly idealistic but it is not involved in dialectical materialism.

Due to the limitations of space, a great deal of material bearing upon the central issues of the discussion has been omitted. Some important philosophical problems have not even been mentioned. It should be borne in mind, however, that what is left unsaid on these matters as well as on others—relevant or irrelevant—is not thereby denied, unless it is logically incompatible with the implications of what *is* said. No form of criticism is more unconscionable than that which proceeds on the assumption that an author intends to exhaust his subject-matter and then urges against the position taken that it implicitly denies views, which, in virtue of necessary selection, it has no opportunity to treat. This caution is added, not to prevent the reader from raising difficulties, but rather to insure that the difficulties which are raised bear relevantly upon the issues discussed. The author is quite aware that the position sketched in this book is not free from difficulties. He even states some of them. A position which has no difficulties is too easy to be true, or if true, too trivial to be of practical import in this world. On the other hand, because all positions have difficulties is no reason for refusing to take one. On some subjects—especially the subjects treated in this book—no one can escape taking a position. For every position towards the question of social change—including the dead point of indifference—has social conse-

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quences. The intelligent thing to do—so it seems to the author—is to take a position, recognize the difficulties and participate cooperatively, with all those who share the position, in their solution.

The author wishes to state his indebtedness to two contemporary writers: Georg Lukács, whose *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* stresses the significance of the dialectic element in Marx's thought and links Marx up—unfortunately much too closely—with the stream of German classical philosophy; and to Karl Korsch whose *Marxismus und Philosophie* confirms the author's own hypothesis of the practical-historical axis of Marx's thought, but which underestimates the difficulties involved in treating the formal aspect of Marx's thought from this point of view. The text and footnotes carry acknowledgments to non-contemporary writers.

Some of the material in the early chapters was originally printed as an article in 'the *Symposium* of July, 1931; thanks are due to the editors for permission to reprint it here. The *Symposium* article together with an earlier article on "Dialectical Materialism" in the *Journal of Philosophy* for 1928 contained material whose phrasing has given rise to serious misinterpretation. This has been corrected in the body of the book.

New York

SIMNEY HOOK

January 1, 1933.

I

INTRODUCTION

THE world to-day stands in the shadow of the doctrines of a man dead barely fifty years. The social philosophy of Karl Marx, comparatively unknown and ignored in his own lifetime, exercises a stronger influence upon the present age than the social theories of any of our contemporaries. History is being made in its name. A new philosophy of life, avowedly Marxist in inspiration, is slowly emerging to challenge the dominant attitudes and values of Western and Oriental cultures.

And yet, as soon as one devotes oneself to the study of Marxian doctrine, one discovers that there exists no canonic formulation of its position. Marx's literary activity, extending over a period of forty years, is for the most part extremely controversial. None of his writings contains a definitive and finished expression of doctrine. He himself lived to say, "*Je ne suis pas un marxiste.*" Various conflicting interpretations of his philosophy have split the ranks of his professed followers as well as those of his critics. There has been a greater eager-

ness to discuss the truth of his doctrines than to establish their meaning.

The situation is no different to-day than it was when Marx was first discovered by "bourgeois" thinkers. The academic German professors, after the conspiracy of silence against Marx had been broken in the nineties, charged that Marx's conclusions were vitiated by the presence of irrelevant moral considerations. Later, neo-Kantians as well as religious socialists made the contrary charge that Marx's conclusions were vitiated by the absence of such judgments. Some said that Marx was overemphasizing the importance of revolutionary will; others, that he was paralyzing human effort in a monstrous economic fatalism. Both were agreed that his thought was a contradictory mess of analyses, prediction, faith, and passion. Each critic had his counter-critic; and every attempt at synthesis brought forth another campaign of polemics. Add to these academic lucubrations not only the denunciatory defence of the "orthodox" Marxists, but the shrill outcries of preachers, publicists and minor literati, who rushed to refute Marx without stopping even to read him, and the atmosphere of the discussion is set. To some it appeared to be an intellectual circus; to others, another illustration of the class war.

Of itself, however, this diversity of interpretation is not an unusual thing in the history of thought. There has been hardly a single thinker of historical importance who has not paid a price for having disciples; who has not been many things to many men. There is no can-

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onic life of Christ as there is no canonic interpretation of Plato. But in Marx's case, the natural diversity of interpretation was reinforced by the introduction of an explicit political axis into the discussion. In addition, a peculiar way of arriving at those interpretations complicated matters. The unity of his thought was sought solely in his conclusions and not in his method of arriving at them. The systematic results were examined and not the systematic method. It was uncritically assumed that unity and simplicity were synonymous; so that in the face of complex findings, often apparently contradictory, it was concluded that his thought lacked unity. Simplicity, however, is an attribute of content; unity, of organization. If Marx's thought possesses unity, it is to be found not in his specific conclusions but in his method of analysis directed by the revolutionary purposes and needs of the international working class. The method, to be sure, is to be checked in the light of his conclusions; but the latter are derivative, not central. They are tentative and contingent. They may be impugned without necessarily calling the method into question, especially when the new results are won by a fresh application of the method. Just as it is possible to dissociate the Hegelian method from the Hegelian system (as Marx and Engels repeatedly insist), so it is possible to dissociate the Marxian method from any specific set of conclusions, or any particular political tactic advocated in its name. This is another way of saying that there is nothing *a priori* in Marx's philoso-

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phy; it is naturalistic, historical and empirical throughout.

To distinguish between Marx's method and his results is *not* to separate the two any more than to distinguish between the essence of scientific method and the scientific findings of any particular day—which are sure to be faulty and incomplete—is to deny any organic connection between them. Ultimately the validity of scientific method depends upon its power to predict, and wherever possible, to control the succession of natural phenomena. It is this progressive power of prediction and control which justifies us in retaining scientific method even when we have discarded or modified the physics of Ptolemy, Copernicus and Newton. Similarly the validity of Marx's method depends upon whether it enables us to realize the class purposes in whose behalf it was formulated.

But here the similarity between "science" and "Marxism" ends. This does not mean that Marxism is not a "scientific" method, that is, adequate and efficient to secure its goals. The distinction sought flows from the recognition that the natural sciences and the "social sciences" are concerned with two irreducibly different subject-matters. This difference in subject-matter compels the further recognition that values—class values—are essentially involved in every attempt to develop a methodology and program of social action. The distinction therefore means that in so far as Marxism is a method of thought and action designed to achieve a class goal, it is something more than science, or less; for science,

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as such, although it may be used in behalf of class purposes, has no class character. The truth or falsity of its propositions have nothing to do with the class struggle even when the class struggle is the objective reference of its propositions. It is not denied that the direction scientific research has taken has often been determined, to a not inconsiderable extent, by the economic, political and "moral" interests of the classes which have endowed laboratories and subsidized scientists. But since this applies to the false theories which have arisen as well as the true, the difference between the true and false cannot be explained by class or social considerations. To affirm the contrary is to confuse categories.

In Marx's theories, on the other hand, a class bias and a class goal are presupposed. His doctrines do not merely describe the phenomena of class society and class struggle. They are offered as instruments in waging that struggle, as guides to a mode of action which he believed would forever eliminate class struggles from social life. As instruments they can function effectively only in so far as they approximate objective truths; but as objective truths, they cannot be effective instruments without reference to subjective class purposes. Marx's philosophy is a dialectical synthesis of these objective and subjective moments. By subjective is meant not unreal or uncaused—for obviously class purposes are conditioned by the socio-economic environment—but a mode of response which is directed by *conscious* will or desire. The *range* of possible class goals which can be willed at any moment in history is determined by objec-

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tive social factors, but neither the willing nor the *specific* choice at any definite moment of time can be explained without introducing other factors. These latter we call subjective in relation to the first set; but in relation, say, to what a particular member of a class wills, they are objective. To overlook this distinction and to speak of Marxism as an "objective science," is, therefore, to emasculate its class character. The disastrous consequences of such a procedure both in logic and historic fact will be examined in subsequent chapters.

Ken Lawrence, excerpt from internal memorandum to members of the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), January 25th 1973.

The differences to be found within SCEF seem to be on two different levels. They are related, not by similarity, but by tension. Those levels, or needs, or views, or outlooks, are embraced by asking two questions:

1. What should SCEF do?
2. What kind of an organization should SCEF be?

To ask these questions is to ask what the organization is externally, for the South, and what it is internally for itself. This formulation makes it obvious that the internal, organizational form of SCEF must necessarily reflect the outside reality, the political needs of the times. Yet the problem is never faced that way, but always on its head. This is unavoidable, because the organizational apparatus existed before the current political situation in the South. So the organization says, without thinking too much about itself, let's decide what to do. The problem of the organization's internal life only arises when it is too late, when one or another aspect of its existence becomes a fetter on its political needs. This is the origin of bureaucracy.

It is necessary to say all this because several people have incorrectly presumed that bureaucracy is born as a monster, the full-blown antithesis of democracy, rather than something that necessarily grows and develops within any more or less permanent democratic structure. Another tendency is to presume that there is a certain type of person with a "bureaucratic mentality." Actually, any political activist tied to the structural needs of the past and not immersed in the struggles of the present operates bureaucratically, regardless of personality or intent, and the corollary of that is that the worst bastards will of necessity be revolutionized to the extent that they immerse themselves in the mass struggles of the present.

One notable aspect of this is that the fixed establishment of democratic forms is almost certain to ensure their opposite, precisely because form and structure are the required ingredients of bureaucracy, while the substance of democracy is its content, which can assume a variety of very unlikely forms. This accounts for the fact that organizations (and countries) that vigorously proclaim their democratic virtue usually aren't, while truly democratic situations rarely take note of their forms.

Nonetheless it is necessary to acquire political stability, and that requires forms and structures. (This is distinct from the looseness of form required in action, where consensus suffices as the democratic method. In an ongoing organization, consensus rule is the least democratic and most conservative form possible). So we adopt one or another variety of Roberts Rules, we elect officers, we divide labor, we delegate authority. Some organizations on the left, though not SCEF, go further than this, imposing discipline on members, enforcing monolithic unity. At times this can be the most democratic method in practice, though its appearance is the opposite.

PART VII: LOUIS ALTHUSSER'S PHILOSOPHY

Questions:

1. What do you think of Althusser's statement that in order to identify the "real, mature" Marxist concepts which are to be found in Marx's writing one must activate "provisional Marxist theoretical concepts"?
2. Compare Althusser's "dialectical circle" with Hegel's explanation of the concept.
3. What is the difference between Althusser's and Gramsci's interpretations of the Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach? Who seems more correct?
4. Define Althusser's Generalities I, II, and III. Define "concrete" as used by Marx in the *Grundrisse* passage.
5. "How is it possible, theoretically, to sustain the validity of this basic Marxist proposition: '*the class struggle is the motor of history*' . . . when we know very well that it is not politics but the economy that is determinant in the last instance?" [Althusser, page 215] Althusser regards these statements as inconsistent. Do you? Explain your answer.
6. Criticize Althusser's proposition (2) stated on page 185. In doing so, compare Althusser's quote from Marx, "this concrete-real 'survives in its independence after as before, outside thought'," with the same statement as it appears in the *Grundrisse* selection.
7. Lukacs summarized his outlook by saying, "Rightly or wrongly, I had always treated Marx's works as having an essential unity." Althusser argues the opposite, yet both Marxists have similar followings among purely academic Marxists. Why?

- **Reread: Marx, *Grundrisse* (100-2); Hegel, *Phenomenology* (80-84); Engels, *Letter to Bloch* (September 21, 1890); C. L. R. James, excerpt from *Notes on Dialectics*; Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach"**

Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), Introduction (1965), 38-39.

I have permitted myself these remarks so as to clarify the meaning of the pages devoted to Feuerbach and the Young Marx, and so as to reveal the unity of the problem dominating these Notes, since the essays on contradiction and on the dialectic equally concern a definition of the irreducible specificity of Marxist theory.

That this definition cannot be *read* directly in Marx's writings, that a complete prior critique is indispensable to an identification of the location of the real concepts of Marx's maturity; that the identification of these concepts is the same thing as the identification of their location; that all this critical effort, the absolute precondition of any interpretation, in itself presupposes activating a minimum of provisional Marxist theoretical concepts bearing on the nature of theoretical formations and their history; that the precondition of a reading of Marx is a Marxist theory of the differential nature of theoretical formations and their history, that is, a theory of epistemological history, which is Marxist philosophy itself; that this operation in itself constitutes an indispensable circle in which the application of Marxist theory to Marx himself appears to be the absolute precondition of an understanding of Marx and at the same time as the precondition even of the constitution and development of Marxist philosophy, so much is clear. But the circle implied by this operation is, like all circles of this kind, simply the dialectical circle of the question asked of an object as to its nature, on the basis of a theoretical problematic which in putting its object to the test puts itself to the test of its object. That Marxism can and must itself be the object of the epistemological question, that this epistemological question can only be asked as a function of the Marxist theoretical problematic, that is necessity itself for a theory which defines itself dialectically, not merely as a science of history (historical materialism) but also and simultaneously as a philosophy, a philosophy that is capable of accounting for the nature of theoretical formations and their history, and therefore *capable of accounting for itself*, by taking itself as its own object. Marxism is the only philosophy that theoretically faces up to this test.

All this critical effort is indispensable, not only to a reading of Marx which is not just an immediate reading, deceived either by the false transparency of his youthful ideological conceptions, or by the perhaps still

more dangerous false transparency of the apparently familiar concepts of the works of the break. This work which is essential to a *reading* of Marx is, in the strict sense, simultaneously the work of theoretical elaboration of Marxist philosophy. A theory which enables us to see clearly in Marx, to distinguish science from ideology, to deal with the difference between them within the historical relation between them and to deal with the discontinuity of the epistemological break within the continuity of a historical process, a theory which makes it possible to distinguish a word from a concept, to distinguish the existence or non-existence of a concept behind a word, to discern the existence of a concept by a word's function in the theoretical discourse, to define the nature of a concept by its function in the problematic, and thus by the location it occupies in the system of the 'theory'; this theory which alone makes possible an authentic reading of Marx's writings, a reading which is both epistemological and historical, this theory is in fact simply Marxist philosophy itself.

We set out in search of it. And here it begins to emerge, along with its own first, most elementary demand: the demand for a simple definition of the preconditions of this search.

March, 1965

Althusser, *For Marx*, "Contradiction and Overdetermination" (1962), 89-90.

In an article devoted to the Young Marx, I have already stressed the ambiguity of the idea of 'inverting Hegel'. It seemed to me that strictly speaking this expression suited Feuerbach perfectly; the latter did, indeed, 'turn speculative philosophy back on to its feet', but the only result was to arrive with implacable logic at an idealist *anthropology*. But the expression cannot be applied to Marx, at least not to the Marx who had grown out of this 'anthropological' phase. I could go further, and suggest that in the well-known passage: '*With (Hegel, the dialectic) is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell*', this 'turning right side up again' is merely gestural, even metaphorical, and it raises as many questions as it answers.

How should we really understand its use in this quotation? It is no longer a matter of a general '*inversion*' of Hegel, that is, the inversion of speculative philosophy as such. From *The German Ideology* onwards we know that such an undertaking would be meaningless. Anyone who claims purely and simply to have inverted speculative philosophy (to derive, for example, materialism) can never be more than philosophy's Proudhon, its unconscious prisoner, just as Proudhon was the prisoner of bourgeois economics. We are now concerned with the *dialectic*, and the dialectic alone. It might be thought that when Marx writes that we must '*discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell*' he means that the '*rational kernel*' is *the dialectic itself*, while the '*mystical shell*' is *speculative philosophy*. Engels's time-honoured distinction between method and system implies precisely this. The shell, the mystical wrapping (speculative philosophy), should be tossed aside and the precious kernel, the dialectic, retained. But in the same sentence Marx claims that this shelling of the kernel and the inversion of the dialectic are one and the same thing, How can an extraction be an inversion? or in other words, what is 'inverted' during this extraction?

Althusser, *For Marx*, "Contradiction and Overdetermination," 111-113.

But it is not just *the terms* which change, it is also *their relations themselves*.

We should not think that this means a new technical distribution of roles imposed by the multiplication of new terms. How are these new terms arranged? On the one hand, the *structure* (the economic base: the forces of production and the relations of production); on the other, the *superstructure* (the State and all the legal, political and ideological forms). We have seen that one could nevertheless attempt to maintain *a Hegelian relation* (the relation Hegel imposed between civil society and the State) between these two groups of categories: *the relation between an essence and its phenomena*. sublimated in the concept of the '*truth of ...*'. For Hegel, the State is the '*truth of*' civil society, which, thanks to the action of the Ruse of Reason, is merely its own phenomenon consummated in it. For a Marx thus relegated to the rank of a Hobbes or a Locke, civil society would be nothing but the '*truth of*' its phenomenon, the State, nothing but a Ruse which Economic Reason would then put at the service of a class: the ruling class. Unfortunately for this neat schema, this is not Marx. For him, this tacit identity (phenomenon-essence-truth-of ...) of the economic and the political disappears in favour of *a new conception* of

the relation between *determinant instances* in the superstructure complex which constitutes the essence of any social formation. Of course, these specific *relations* between structure and superstructure still deserve theoretical elaboration and investigation. However, Marx has at least given us the ‘two ends of the chain’, and has told us to find out what goes on between them: on the one hand, *determination in the last instance by the (economic) mode of production; on the other, the relative autonomy of the superstructures and their specific effectivity*. This clearly breaks with the Hegelian principle of explanation by consciousness of self (ideology), but also with the Hegelian theme of *phenomenon-essence-truth-of*. We really are dealing with *a new relationship between new terms*.

Listen to the old Engels in 1890, taking the young ‘economists’ to task for not having understood that this was a *new relationship*. Production is the determinant factor, but only ‘*in the last instance*’: “*More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted*”. Anyone who ‘*twists this*’ so that it says that the economic factor is *the only* determinant factor. ‘*transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, empty phrase*’. And as explanation: “*The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure the political forms of the class struggle and its results: to wit constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas – also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles. and in m-any cases preponderate in determining their form . . .*” The word ‘*form*’ should be understood in its stronger sense, designating something quite different from the formal. As Engels also says: “*The Prussian State also arose and developed from historical, ultimately economic causes. But it could scarcely be maintained without pedantry that among the many small states of North Germany, Brandenburg was specifically determined by economic necessity to become the great power embodying the economic, linguistic and, after the Reformation, also the religious difference between North and South, and not by other elements as well (above all by the entanglement with Poland, owing to the possession of Prussia, and hence with international political relations which were indeed also decisive in the formation of the Austrian dynastic power)*”.

Here, then are the two ends of the chain: the economy is determinant, but *in the last instance*, Engels is prepared to say, in the long run, the run of History. But History ‘asserts itself’ through the multiform world of the superstructures. from local tradition to international circumstance. Leaving aside the *theoretical solution* Engels proposes for the problem of the relation between determination *in the last instance* – the economic – and those determinations imposed by the superstructures – national traditions and international events – it is sufficient to retain from him what should be called the *accumulation of effective determinations* (deriving from the superstructures and from special national and international circumstances) *on the determination in the last instance by the economic*. It seems to me that this clarifies the expression *overdetermined contradiction*, which I have put forward, *this* specifically because the existence of overdetermination is no longer *a fact* pure and simple, for in its essentials we have related it *to its bases*, even if our exposition has so far been merely gestural. This *overdetermination* is inevitable and thinkable as soon as the real existence of the forms of the superstructure and of the national and international conjuncture has been recognised – an existence largely specific and autonomous, and therefore irreducible to a pure *phenomenon*. We must carry this through to its conclusion and say that this overdetermination does not just refer to apparently unique and aberrant historical situations (Germany, for example), but is universal; the economic dialectic is never active *in the pure state*; in History, these instances, the superstructures, etc. – are never seen to step respectfully aside when their work is done or, when the Time comes, as his pure phenomena, to scatter before His Majesty the Economy as he strides along the royal road of the Dialectic. From the first moment to the last, the lonely hour of the ‘last instance’ never comes.

Althusser, *For Marx*, “On the Materialist Dialectic” (1963), 164-173.

Practical Solution and Theoretical Problem. Why Theory?

The problem posed by my last study – what constitutes Marx’s ‘inversion’ of the Hegelian dialectic, what is the specific difference that distinguishes the Marxist dialectic from the Hegelian dialectic? – is a theoretical problem. To say that it is a *theoretical* problem implies that its theoretical solution should give us a new

knowledge, organically linked to the other knowledges of Marxist theory. To say that it is a theoretical *problem* implies that we are not dealing merely with an imaginary difficulty, but with a really existing difficulty posed us in the form of a *problem*, that is, in a form governed by imperative conditions: definition of the field of (theoretical) knowledges in which the problem is posed (situated), of the exact *location* of its posing, and of the concepts required to pose it. Only the position, examination and resolution of the problem, that is, the *theoretical practice* we are about to embark on, can provide the *proof* that these conditions have been respected.

Now, in this particular case, what has to be expressed in the form of a theoretical problem and its solution *already exists in Marxist practice*. Not only has Marxist practice come up against this ‘difficulty’, confirmed that it was indeed real rather than imaginary, but what is more, it has, within its own limits, ‘settled’ it and surmounted it in fact. In the practical state, the solution to our theoretical problem has already existed for a long time in Marxist practice. So to pose and resolve our theoretical problem ultimately means to express theoretically the ‘*solution*’ existing in the practical state, that Marxist practice has found for a real difficulty it has encountered in its development, whose existence it has noted, and, according to its own submission, settled.^[3]

So we are merely concerned with filling in a ‘gap’ between theory and practice on a particular point. We are not setting Marxism any imaginary or subjective problem, asking it to ‘resolve’ the ‘problems’ of ‘hyperempiricism’, nor even what Marx called the difficulties a philosopher has in his *personal* relations with a concept. No. The problem posed^[4] exists (and has existed) in the form of a difficulty signalled by Marxist practice. Its solution exists in Marxist practice. So we only have to express it theoretically. But this simple theoretical *expression* of a solution that exists in the practical state cannot be taken for granted: it requires a real theoretical labour, not only to work out the specific *concept* or *knowledge* of this practical resolution – but also for the real destruction of the ideological confusions, illusions or inaccuracies that may exist, by a radical critique (a critique which takes them by the root). So this *simple* theoretical ‘expression’ implies both the *production* of a knowledge and the *critique* of an illusion, in one movement.

And if I am asked: but why take all this trouble to express a ‘truth’ ‘known’ for such a long time?^[5] – my answer is that, if we are still using the term in its strictest sense, the existence of this truth has been *signalled*, *recognized* for a long time, but it has not been *known*. For the (practical) *recognition* of an existence cannot pass for a *knowledge* (that is, for *theory*) except in the imprecision of a confused thought. And if I am then asked: but what use is there in posing this problem *in theory* if its solution has already existed for a long time in the practical state? why give a theoretical expression to this practical solution, a theoretical expression it has so far done quite well without? what do we gain by this ‘speculative’ investigation that we do not possess already? One sentence is enough to answer this question: Lenin’s ‘Without revolutionary theory, no revolutionary practice’. Generalizing it: theory is essential to practice, to the forms of practice that it helps bring to birth or to grow, as well as to the practice it is the theory of. But the transparency of this sentence is not enough; we must also know its *titles to validity*, so we must pose the question: what are we to understand by *theory*, if it is to be essential to *practice*? I shall only discuss the aspects of this theme that are indispensable to our investigation. I propose to use the following definitions, as essential preliminary hypotheses.

By *practice* in general I shall mean any process of *transformation* of determinate given raw material into a determinate *product*, a transformation effected by a determinate human labour, using determinate means (of ‘production’). In any practice thus conceived, the *determinant* moment (or element) is neither the raw material nor the product, but the practice in the narrow sense: the moment of the *labour of transformation* itself, which sets to work, in a specific structure, men, means and a technical method of utilizing the means. This general definition of practice covers the possibility of particularity: there are different practices which are really distinct, even though they belong organically to the same complex totality. Thus, ‘social practice’, the complex unity of the practices existing in a determinate society, contains a large number of distinct practices. This complex unity of ‘social practice’ is structured, we shall soon see how, in such a way that in the last resort the determinant practice in it is the practice of transformation of a given nature (raw material) into useful *products* by the activity of living men working through the *methodically organized* employment of determinate *means of production* within the framework of determinate relations of production. As well as production social practice includes other essential levels: political practice – which in Marxist parties is no longer spontaneous but organized on the basis of the

scientific theory of historical materialism, and which transforms its raw materials: social relations, into a determinate product (new social relations); ideological practice (ideology, whether religious, political, moral, legal or artistic, also transforms its object: men's 'consciousness'); and finally, *theoretical practice*. Ideology is not always taken seriously as an existing practice: but to recognize this is the indispensable prior condition for any theory of ideology. The existence of a *theoretical practice* is taken seriously even more rarely: but this prior condition is indispensable to an understanding of what theory itself, and its relation to 'social practice' are for Marxism.

Here we need a second definition. By theory, in this respect, I shall mean a *specific form of practice*, itself belonging to the complex unity of the 'social practice' of a determinate human society. Theoretical practice falls within the general definition of practice. It works on a raw material (representations, concepts, facts) which is given by other practices, whether 'empirical', 'technical' or 'ideological'. In its most general form theoretical practice does not only include *scientific* theoretical practice, but also pre-scientific theoretical practice, that is, 'ideological' theoretical practice (the forms of 'knowledge' that make up the prehistory of a science, and their 'philosophies'). The theoretical practice of a science is always completely distinct from the ideological theoretical practice of its prehistory: this distinction takes the form of a 'qualitative' theoretical and historical discontinuity which I shall follow Bachelard in calling an 'epistemological break'. This is not the place to discuss the dialectic in action in the advent of this 'break': that is, the labour of specific theoretical transformation which installs it in each case, which establishes a science by detaching it from the ideology of its past and by revealing this past as ideological. Restricting myself to the essential point as far as our analysis is concerned, I shall take up a position beyond the 'break' within the constituted science, and use the following nomenclature: I shall call *theory* any theoretical practice of a *scientific* character. I shall call 'theory' (in inverted commas) the determinate *theoretical system* of a real science (its basic concepts in their more or less contradictory unity at a given time): for example, the theory of universal attraction, wave mechanics, etc, ... or again, the '*theory*' of historical materialism. In its 'theory' any determinate science reflects within the complex unity of its concepts (a unity which, I should add, is more or less problematic) the results, which will henceforth be the conditions and means, of its own theoretical practice. I shall call Theory (with a capital T), general theory, that is, the Theory of practice in general, itself elaborated on the basis of the Theory of existing theoretical practices (of the sciences), which transforms into 'knowledges' (scientific truths) the ideological product of existing 'empirical' practices (the concrete activity of men). This Theory is the materialist *dialectic* which is none other than dialectical materialism. These definitions are necessary for us to be able to give an answer to this question: what is the use of a theoretical expression of a solution which already exists in the practical state? – an answer with a theoretical basis.

When Lenin said 'without theory, no revolutionary action', he meant one particular theory, the theory of the Marxist science of the development of social formations (historical materialism). The proposition is to be found in *What is to be Done?*, where Lenin examined the organizational methods and objectives of the Russian Social-Democratic Party in 1902. At that time he was struggling against an opportunist policy that tagged along behind the 'spontaneity' of the masses; his aim was to transform it into a revolutionary practice based on 'theory', that is, on the (Marxist) science of the development of the social formation concerned (Russian society at that time). But in expressing this thesis, Lenin was doing more than he said: by reminding Marxist political practice of the necessity for the 'theory' which is its basis, he was in fact expressing a thesis of relevance to Theory, that is, to the Theory of practice in general – the materialist dialectic. So theory is important to practice in a double sense: for 'theory' is important to its own practice, directly. But the *relation* of a 'theory' to its practice, in so far as it is at issue, on condition that it is reflected and expressed, is also relevant to the general Theory (the dialectic) in which is theoretically expressed the essence of theoretical practice in general, through it the essence of practice in general, and through it the essence of the transformations, of the 'development' of things in general.

To return to our original problem: we find that the theoretical expression of a practical solution involves Theory, that is, the dialectic. The exact theoretical expression of the dialectic is relevant first of all to those practices in which the Marxist dialectic is active; for these practices (Marxist 'theory' and politics) need the concept of their practice (of the dialectic) in their development, if they are not to find themselves defenceless in the face of qualitatively new forms of this development (new situations, new 'problems') – or to lapse, or relapse,

into the various forms of opportunism, theoretical or practical. These ‘surprises’ and deviations, attributable in the last resort to ‘ideological errors’, that is, to a *theoretical* deficiency, are always costly, and may be very costly.

But Theory is also essential for the transformation of domains in which a Marxist theoretical practice does not yet really exist. In most of these domains the question has not yet been ‘settled’ as it has in *Capital*. The Marxist theoretical practice of *epistemology*, of the history of science, of the history of ideology, of the history of philosophy, of the history of art, has yet in large part to be constituted. Not that there are not Marxists who are working in these domains and have acquired much real experience there, but they do not have behind them the equivalent of *Capital* or of the revolutionary practice of a century of Marxists. Their practice is largely *in front of them*, it still has to be developed, or even founded, that is, it has to be set on correct theoretical bases so that it corresponds to a *real* object, not to a presumed or ideological object, and so that it is a truly theoretical practice, not a technical practice. It is for this purpose that they need Theory, that is, the materialist dialectic, as the sole method that can anticipate their theoretical practice by drawing up its formal conditions. In this case, the utilization of Theory is not a matter of *applying* its formulae (the formulae of the dialectic, of materialism) to a pre-existing content. Lenin himself criticized Engels and Plekhanov for having *applied* the dialectic externally to ‘examples’ from the natural sciences.^[6] The external application of a concept is never equivalent to a *theoretical practice*. The application changes nothing in the externally derived truth but its *name*, a re-baptism incapable of producing any real transformation of the truths that receive it. The application of the ‘laws’ of the dialectic to such and such a result of physics, for example, makes not one iota of difference to the structure or development of the theoretical *practice* of physics; worse, it may turn into an ideological fetter.

However, and this is a thesis essential to Marxism, it is not enough to reject the dogmatism of the *application* of the forms of the dialectic in favour of the *spontaneity* of existing theoretical practices, for we know that there is no *pure* theoretical practice, no perfectly transparent science which throughout its history as a science will always be preserved, by I know not what Grace, from the threats and taints of idealism, that is, of the *ideologies* which besiege it; we know that a ‘pure’ science only exists on condition that it continually frees itself from the ideology which occupies it, haunts it, or lies in wait for it. The inevitable price of this purification and liberation is a continuous struggle against ideology itself, that is, against idealism, a struggle whose reasons and aims can be clarified by Theory (dialectical materialism) and guided by it as by no other method in the world. What, then, should we say for the *spontaneity* of those triumphant *avant-garde* disciplines devoted to precise pragmatic interests; which are not strictly sciences but claim to be since they use methods which are ‘scientific’ (but defined independently of the specificity of their presumed objects); which think, like every true science, that they have an *object*, when they are merely dealing with a certain given reality that is anyway disputed and torn between several competing ‘sciences’: a certain domain of phenomena not yet constituted into scientific facts and therefore not *unified*; disciplines which in their present form cannot constitute true theoretical practices because most often they only have the unity of a *technical practice* (examples: social psychology, and sociology and psychology in many of their branches)?^[7]

The only Theory able to raise, if not to pose, the essential question of the status of these disciplines, to criticize ideology in all its guises, including the disguises of technical practice as sciences, is the Theory of theoretical practice (as distinct from ideological practice): the materialist dialectic or dialectical materialism, the conception of the Marxist dialectic in its *specificity*. For we are all agreed that where a really existing science has to be defended against an encroaching ideology, where what is truly science’s and what is ideology’s has to be discerned without a really scientific element being taken by chance for ideology, as occasionally happens, or, as often happens, an ideological element being taken for a scientific element ... , where (and this is very important politically) the claims of the ruling technical practices have to be criticized and the true theoretical practices that socialism, communism and our age will need more and more established, where these tasks which all demand the intervention of the *Marxist* dialectic are concerned, it is very obvious that there can be no question of making do with a formulation of Theory, that is, of the materialist dialectic, which has the disadvantage of being *inexact*, in fact of being very inexact, as inexact as the Hegelian dialectic. Of course, even this imprecision may correspond to a certain degree of reality and as such be endowed with a certain *practical* meaning, serving as a reference point or index (as Lenin says, ‘The same is true of Engels. But it is “in the interests of popularization,”’

Philosophical Notebooks, p. 359), not only in education, but also in struggle. But if a practice is to be able to make use of imprecise formulations, it is absolutely essential that this practice should at least be ‘true’, that on occasion it should be able to do without the expression of Theory and recognize itself globally in an imprecise Theory. But if a practice *does not really exist*, if it must be *constituted*, then imprecision becomes an obstacle in itself. Those Marxist investigators working in *avant-garde* domains such as the theory of ideologies (law, ethics, religion, art, philosophy), the theory of the history of the sciences and of their ideological prehistory, epistemology (theory of the theoretical practice of mathematics and other natural sciences), etc... , these risky but existing *avant-garde* domains; those who pose themselves difficult problems even in the domain of Marxist theoretical practice (the domain of history); not to speak of those other revolutionary ‘investigators’ who are confronted by political difficulties in radically new forms (Africa, Latin America, the transition to communism, etc.); if all these investigators had only the Hegelian dialectic instead of the Marxist dialectic, even if the former were purged of Hegel’s ideological *system*, even if it were declared to have been ‘inverted’ (if this inversion amounts to applying the Hegelian dialectic to the real instead of to the Idea), they would certainly not get very far in its company! So, whether we are dealing with a confrontation with something new in the domain of a real practice, or with the foundation of a real practice we all need the materialist dialectic as such.

Notes:

3. *Settled*: this is the very word Marx used in the Preface to the *Contribution* (1858) when, reviewing his past and evoking his meeting with Engels in Brussels, spring 1845 and the drafting of *The German Ideology* he speaks of *settling accounts* (*Abrechnung*) with ‘our erstwhile philosophical conscience’. The Afterword to the second edition of *Capital* openly records this settlement, which, in good accounting style, includes the acknowledgement of a debt: the acknowledgement of the ‘rational side’ of the Hegelian dialectic.

4. Of course, this is not the first time this problem has been posed! It is at the moment the object of important works by Marxist investigators in the U.S.S.R and, to my knowledge, in Rumania, Hungary and Democratic Germany, as well as in Italy, where it has inspired historical and theoretical studies of great scientific interest (Della Volpe, Rossi, Colletti, Merker, etc.).

5. G. Mury quite correctly says: ‘... it would hardly be reasonable to suppose that he [L. A.] should have introduced ... a new concept to express a truth known since Marx and Engels’ (*op. cit.*).

6. V. I. Lenin, ‘Philosophical Notebooks’ (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXXVIII), p 266: ‘Hegel’s Logic cannot be *applied* in its given form, it cannot be *taken* as given. One *must separate out* from it the logical (epistemological) nuances, after purifying them from *Ideenmystik*: that is still a big job.’

Ibid., p. 359: ‘The correctness of this aspect of the content of dialectics (the “identity of opposites,” L. A.) must be tested by the history of science. This aspect of dialectics (e.g. in Plekhanov) usually receives inadequate attention: the identity of opposites is taken as the sum-total of *examples* (“for example, a seed,” “for example, primitive communism.” The same is true of Engels. But it is “in the interests of popularisation...”) and not as a *law of cognition* (and as a law of the objective world).’ (Lenin’s emphasis.)

7. Theoretical practice produces knowledges which can then figure as *means* that will serve the ends of a technical practice. Any technical practice is defined by its ends: such and such effects to be produced in such and such an object in such and such a situation. The means depend on the ends. Any theoretical practice uses among other means knowledges which intervene as procedures: either knowledges borrowed from outside, from existing sciences, or ‘knowledges’ produced by the technical practice itself in pursuance of its ends. In every case, the relation between technique and knowledge is an *external*, unreflected relation, radically different from the internal, reflected relation between a science and its knowledges. It is this exteriority which justifies Lenin’s thesis of the necessity to *import* Marxist theory into the spontaneous political practice of the working class. Left to itself, a spontaneous (technical) practice produces only the ‘theory’ it needs as a means to produce the ends assigned to it: this ‘theory’ is never more than the reflection of this end, uncriticized, unknown, in its means of realization, that is, it is a *by-product* of the reflection of the technical practice’s end on its means. A ‘theory’ which does not question the end whose *by-product* it is remains a prisoner of this end and of the ‘realities’ which have imposed it as an end. Examples of this are many of the branches of psychology and sociology, and of Economics, of Politics, of Art, etc... . This point is crucial if we are to identify the most dangerous ideological menace: the creation and success of so-called theories which have nothing to do with real theory but are mere *by-products* of technical activity. A belief in the ‘spontaneous’ theoretical virtue of technique lies at the root of this ideology, the ideology constituting the essence of Technocratic Thought.

Althusser, *For Marx*, “On the Materialist Dialectic, 182-193.

The Process of Theoretical Practice

‘The concrete totality as a totality of thought, as a thought concretum, is in fact a product of thought and conception; but in no sense a product of the concept thinking and engendering itself outside or over intuitions or conceptions, but on the contrary, a product of the elaboration of intuitions and conceptions into concepts.’

- Karl Marx; Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy, 1859.

Mao Tse-tung begins with contradiction in its ‘universality’, but his only serious discussion centres around the contradiction in the practice of the class struggle, by virtue of another ‘universal’ principle, the principle that the universal only exists in the particular, a principle which Mao reflects, *vis-à-vis* contradiction, in the following universal form: contradiction is always specific and specificity universally appertains to its essence. We may be tempted to smile at this preliminary ‘labour’ of the universal, which seems to need a supplement of universality if it is to give birth to specificity, and to regard this ‘labour’ as the labour of the Hegelian ‘negativity’. But a real understanding of materialism reveals that this ‘labour’ is not a labour of the universal, but a labour *on* a pre-existing universal, a labour whose aim and achievement is precisely to refuse this universal the abstractions or the temptations of ‘philosophy’ (ideology), and to bring it back to its condition by force; to the condition of a scientifically specified universality. If the universal has to be this specificity, we have no right to invoke a universal which is not the universal of this specificity.

This point is essential to dialectical materialism, and Marx discusses an illustration of it in the *Introduction* when he demonstrates that although the use of general concepts – for example, ‘production’, ‘labour’, ‘exchange’, etc. – is indispensable to a scientific theoretical practice, this first generality does not coincide with the product of the scientific labour: it is not its achievement, it is its prior condition. This first generality (which I shall call *Generality I*) constitutes the raw material that the science’s theoretical practice will transform into specified ‘concepts’, that is, into that other ‘concrete’ generality (which I shall call *Generality III*) which is a knowledge. But what, then, is Generality I, that is, the raw material on which the labour of science is expended? Contrary to the ideological illusions – illusions which are not ‘naïve’, not mere ‘aberrations’, but necessary and well-founded as ideologies – of empiricism or sensualism, a science never works on an existence whose essence is pure immediacy and singularity (‘sensations’ or ‘individuals’). It always works on something ‘general’, even if this has the form of a ‘fact’. At its moment of constitution, as for physics with Galileo and for the science of the evolution of social formations (historical materialism) with Marx, a science always works on existing concepts, ‘*Vorstellungen*’, that is, a preliminary Generality I of an ideological nature. It does not ‘work’ on a purely objective ‘given’, that of pure and absolute ‘facts’. On the contrary, its particular labour consists of *elaborating its own scientific facts* through a critique of the *ideological ‘facts’* elaborated by an earlier ideological theoretical practice. To elaborate its own specific ‘facts’ is simultaneously to elaborate its own ‘theory’, since a scientific fact – and not the self-styled pure phenomenon – can only be identified in the field of a theoretical practice. In the development of an already constituted science, the latter works on a raw material (Generality I) constituted either of still ideological concepts, or of scientific ‘facts’, or of already scientifically elaborated concepts which belong nevertheless to an earlier phase of the science (an ex-Generality III). So it is by transforming this Generality I into a Generality III (knowledge) that the science works and produces.

But *who* or *what* is it that works? What should we understand by the expression: the science works? As we have seen, every transformation (every practice) presupposes the transformation of a raw material into products by setting in motion determinate means of production. What is the moment, the level or the instance which corresponds to the means of production, in the theoretical practice of science? If we abstract from men in these means of production for the time being, it is what I shall call the *Generality II*, constituted by the corpus of concepts whose more or less contradictory unity constitutes the ‘theory’ of the science at the (historical) moment under consideration,^[21] the ‘theory’ that defines the field in which all the problems of the science must necessarily be posed (that is, where the ‘difficulties’ met by the science in its object, in the confrontation of its ‘facts’ and its ‘theory’, of its previous ‘knowledges’ and its ‘theory’, or of its ‘theory’ and its new knowledges, will be posed in the form of a problem by and in this field). We must rest content with these schematic gestures

and not enter into the dialectic of this theoretical labour. They will suffice for an understanding of the fact that theoretical practice produces *Generalities III* by the work of *Generality II* on *Generality I*.

So they will suffice for an understanding of the two following important propositions:

(1) There is never an identity of essence between Generality I and Generality III, but always a real transformation, either by the transformation of an ideological generality into a scientific generality (a mutation which is reflected in the form Bachelard, for example, calls an ‘epistemological break’); or by the production of a new scientific generality which rejects the old one even as it ‘englobes’ it, that is, defines its ‘relativity’ and the (subordinate) limits of its validity.

(2) The work whereby Generality I becomes Generality III, that is – abstracting from the essential differences that distinguish Generality I and Generality III – whereby the ‘abstract’ becomes the ‘concrete’, only involves the process of theoretical practice, that is, it all takes place ‘within knowledge’.

Marx is expressing this second proposition when he declares that ‘the correct scientific method’ is to start with the abstract to produce the concrete in thought.^[22] We must grasp the precise meaning of this thesis if we are not to slide into the ideological illusions with which these very words are only too often associated, that is, if we are not to believe that the *abstract* designates theory itself (science) while the *concrete* designates the real, the ‘concrete’ realities, knowledge of which is produced by theoretical practice; if we are to confuse *two different concretes*: the *concrete-in-thought* which is a knowledge, and the *concrete-reality* which is its object. The process that produces the concrete-knowledge takes place wholly in the theoretical practice: of course, it does concern the concrete-real, but this concrete-real ‘survives in its independence after as before, outside thought’ (Marx), without it ever being possible to confuse it with that other ‘concrete’ which is the knowledge of it. That the concrete-in-thought (Generality III) under consideration is the knowledge of its object (the concrete-real) is only a ‘difficulty’ for the ideology which transforms this reality into a so-called ‘problem’ (the Problem of Knowledge), and which therefore thinks as problematic what has been produced precisely as a non-problematic solution to a real problem by scientific practice itself: the non-problematicity of the relation between an object and the knowledge of it. So it is essential that we do not confuse the real distinction between the abstract (Generality I and the concrete (Generality III) which affects theoretical practice only, with another, ideological, distinction which opposes abstraction (which constitutes the essence of thought, science and theory) to the concrete (which constitutes the essence of the real).

This is precisely Feuerbach’s confusion; a confusion shared by Marx in his Feuerbachian period: not only does it provide ammunition for a mass-produced ideology popular today, but it also threatens to lead astray those taken in by the ‘transparency’ of its often considerable virtues as a protest, into hopeless theoretical blind-alleys. The critique which, in the last instance, counterposes the abstraction it attributes to theory and to science and the concrete it regards as the real itself, remains an ideological critique, since it denies the reality of scientific practice, the validity of its abstractions and ultimately the reality of that theoretical ‘concrete’ which is a knowledge. Hoping to be ‘concrete’ and hoping for the ‘concrete’, this conception hopes to be ‘true’ *qua* conception, so it hopes to be knowledge, but it starts by denying the reality of precisely the practice that produces knowledge! It remains in the very ideology that it claims to ‘invert’, that is, not in abstraction in general, but in a determinate ideological abstraction.^[23]

It was absolutely necessary to come this far if we were to recognize that even within the process of knowledge, the ‘abstract’ generality with which the process starts and the ‘concrete’ generality it finishes with, Generality I and Generality III respectively, are not in essence the same generality, and, in consequence, the ‘appearance’ of the Hegelian conception of the autogenesis of the concept, of the ‘dialectical’ movement whereby the abstract universal produces itself as concrete, depends on a confusion of the kinds of ‘abstraction’ or ‘generality’ in action in theoretical practice. Thus, when Hegel, as Marx puts it,^[24] conceives ‘the real as the result of self-synthesizing, self-deepening and self-moving thought’ he is the victim of a *double* confusion:

(1) First, he takes the labour of production of scientific knowledge for ‘the genetic process of the concrete (the real) itself’. But Hegel could not fall into this ‘illusion’ without opening himself: to a second confusion.

(2) He takes the universal concept that figures at the beginning of the process of knowledge (for example, the concept of universality itself, the concept of ‘Being’ in the *Logic*) for the essence and motor of the process, for

‘the self-engendering concept’,^[25] he takes the Generality I which theoretical practice is to transform into a knowledge (Generality III) for the essence and motor of the transformation process itself! Legitimately borrowing an analogy from another practice,^[26] we might just as well claim that it is the fuel that by its dialectical auto-development produces the steam-engine, the factories and all the extraordinary technical, mechanical, physical, chemical and electrical apparatus which makes its extraction and its innumerable transformations possible today! So Hegel only falls victim to this ‘illusion’ because he imposes on the reality of theoretical practice an ideological conception of the universal, of its function and meaning. But in the dialectic of practice, the abstract generality at the beginning (Generality I), that is, the generality worked on, is not the same as the generality that does the work (Generality II) and even less is it the specific generality (Generality III) produced by this labour: a knowledge (the ‘concrete-theoretical’). Generality II (which works) is not at all the simple development of Generality I, its passage (however complex) from the in-itself to the for-itself, for Generality II is the ‘theory’ of the science under consideration, and as such it is the result of a whole process (the history of the science from its foundation), which is a process of real transformations in the strongest sense of the word, that is, a process whose form is not the form of a simple development (according to the Hegelian model – the development of the in-itself into the for-itself), but of mutations and reconstructions that induce real qualitative discontinuities. So when Generality II works on Generality I it is never working on itself, neither at the moment of the science’s foundation nor later in its history. That is why Generality I always emerges from this labour really transformed. It may retain the general ‘form’ of generality, but this form tells us nothing about it, for it has become a quite different generality – it is no longer an ideological generality, nor one belonging to an earlier phase of the science, but in every case a qualitatively new specified scientific generality.

Hegel denies this reality of theoretical practice, this concrete dialectic of theoretical practice, that is, the qualitative discontinuity that intervenes or appears between the different generalities (I, II and III) even in the continuity of the production process of knowledges, or rather, he does not think of it, and if he should happen to think of it, he makes it the phenomenon of another reality, the reality he regards as essential, but which is really ideological through and through: the movement of the Idea. He projects this movement on to the reality of scientific labour, ultimately conceiving the unity of the process from the abstract to the concrete as the auto-genesis of the concept, that is, as a simple development via the very forms of alienation of the original in-itself in the emergence of its end-result, an end-result which is no more than its beginning. That is why Hegel fails to see the real, qualitative differences and transformations, the essential discontinuities which constitute the very process of theoretical practice. He imposes an ideological model on them, the model of the development of a simple interiority. That is to say, Hegel decrees that the ideological generality he imposes on them shall be the sole constitutive essence of the three types of generality – I, II and III – in action in theoretical practice.

Only now does the profound meaning of the Marxist critique of Hegel begin to appear in all its implications. Hegel’s basic flaw is not just a matter of the ‘speculative’ illusion. This speculative illusion had already been denounced by Feuerbach and it consists of the identification of thought and being, of the process of thought and the process of being, of the concrete ‘in thought’ and the ‘real’ concrete. This is the speculative *sin par excellence*: the sin of abstraction which inverts the order of things and puts the process of the auto-genesis of the concept (the abstract) in the place of the process of the auto-genesis of the concrete (the real). Marx explains this to us quite clearly in *The Holy Family*^[27] where we see, in Hegelian speculative philosophy, the abstraction ‘Fruit’ produce the apple, the pear and the almond by its own movement of auto-determinant auto-genesis... . Feuerbach gave what was if possible an even better exposition and criticism of it in his admirable 1839 analysis of the Hegelian ‘concrete universal’. Thus, there is a *bad* use of abstraction (the speculative and idealist use) which reveals to us the contrasting *good* use of abstraction (the materialist use). We understand, it is all quite clear and straightforward! And we prepare to put things straight, that is, to put abstraction in its right place by a liberating ‘inversion’ – for, of course, it is not the (general) concept of fruit which produces (concrete) fruits by auto-development, but, on the contrary, (concrete) fruits which produce the (abstract) concept of fruit. Is that all right?

No, strictly speaking, it is not all right. We cannot accept the ideological confusions which are implicit in this ‘inversion’ and which allow us to talk about it in the first place. There is no rigour in the inversion in question, unless we presuppose a basic ideological confusion, the confusion Marx had to reject when he really

renounced Feuerbach and stopped invoking his vocabulary, when he had consciously abandoned the empiricist ideology which had allowed him to maintain that a scientific concept is produced exactly as the general concept of fruit ‘should be’ produced, by an abstraction acting on concrete fruits. When Marx says in the *Introduction* that any process of scientific knowledge begins from the abstract, from a generality, and not from the real concrete, he demonstrates the fact that he has actually broken with ideology and with the mere denunciation of speculative abstraction, that is, with its presuppositions. When Marx declares that the raw material of a science always exists in the form of a given generality (Generality I), in this thesis with the simplicity of a fact he is putting before us a new model which no longer has any relation to the empiricist model of the production of a concept by good abstraction, starting from real fruits and disengaging their essence by ‘abstracting from their individuality’. This is now clear as far as the scientific labour is concerned; its starting-point is not ‘concrete subjects’ but Generalities I. But is this also true of this *Generality I*? Surely the latter is a preliminary stage of knowledge produced precisely by the *good abstraction* that Hegelian speculation merely uses in a bad way? Unfortunately, this thesis cannot be an organic part of dialectical materialism, but only of an empiricist and sensualist ideology. This is the thesis Marx rejects when he condemns Feuerbach for conceiving ‘sensuousness ... only in the form of the object’, that is, only in the form of an intuition without practice. Generality I, for example, the concept of ‘fruit’, is not the product of an ‘operation of abstraction’ performed by a ‘subject’ (consciousness, or even that mythological subject ‘practice’) – but the result of a complex process of elaboration which involves several distinct concrete practices on different levels, empirical, technical and ideological. (To return to our rudimentary example, the concept of fruit is itself the product of distinct practices, dietary, agricultural or even magical, religious and ideological practices – in its origins.) So as long as knowledge has not broken with ideology, every Generality I will be deeply impregnated by ideology, which is one of the basic practices essential to the existence of the social whole. The act of *abstraction* whereby the pure essence is extracted from concrete individuals is *an ideological myth*. In essence, Generality I is inadequate to the essence of the objects from which abstraction should extract it. It is this inadequacy that theoretical practice reveals and removes by the transformation of Generality I into Generality III. So Generality I itself is a rejection of the model from empiricist ideology presupposed by the ‘inversion’.

To sum up: if we recognize that scientific practice starts with the abstract and produces a (concrete) knowledge, we must also recognize that Generality I, the raw material of theoretical practice, is qualitatively different from Generality II, which transforms it into ‘concrete-in-thought’, that is, into knowledge (Generality III). Denial of the difference distinguishing these two types of Generality and ignorance of the priority of Generality II (which works) over Generality I (which is worked on), are *the very bases of the Hegelian idealism* that Marx rejected: behind the still ideological semblance of the ‘inversion’ of abstract speculation to give concrete reality or science, this is the decisive point in which the fate of Hegelian ideology and Marxist theory is decided. The fate of Marxist theory, because we all know that the deep reasons for a rupture – not the reasons we admit, but those that act – will decide for ever whether the deliverance we expect from it will be only the expectation of freedom, that is, the absence of freedom, or freedom itself.

So that is why to maintain that the concept of ‘inversion’ is a *knowledge* is to endorse the ideology that underlies it, that is, to endorse a conception that denies even the reality of theoretical practice. The ‘settlement’ pointed out to us by the concept of ‘inversion’ cannot then consist merely of an inversion of the theory which conceives the auto-genesis of the concept as ‘the genesis of the (real) concrete’ itself, to give the opposite theory, the theory which conceives the auto-genesis of the real as the genesis of the concept (it is this opposition that, if it really had any basis, would authorize the term ‘inversion’): this settlement consists (and this is the decisive point) of the rejection of an ideological theory foreign to the reality of scientific practice, to substitute for it a qualitatively different theory which, for its part, recognizes the essence of scientific practice, distinguishes it from the ideology that some have wanted to impose on it, takes seriously its particular characteristics, thinks them, expresses them, and thinks and expresses the practical conditions even of this recognition.^[28] On reaching this point, we can see that in the last resort there can be no question of an ‘inversion’. For a science is not obtained by inverting an ideology. A science is obtained on condition that the domain in which ideology believes that it is dealing with the real is abandoned, that is, by abandoning its ideological *problematic* (the organic presupposition

of its basic concepts, and with this system, the majority of these concepts as well) and going on to establish the activity of the new theory ‘in another element’,^[29] in the field of a new, scientific, problematic. I use these terms quite seriously, and, as a simple test, I defy anyone ever to produce an example of a true science which was constituted by inverting the problematic of an ideology, that is, on the basis of the very problematic of the ideology.^[30] I only set one condition on this challenge: all words must be used in their strict sense, not metaphorically.

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21. This Generality II, designated by the concept of ‘theory’, obviously deserves a much more serious examination than I can embark on here. Let us simply say that the unity I am calling ‘theory’ rarely exists in a science in the reflected form of a unified theoretical system. In the experimental sciences at least, besides concepts in their purely theoretical existence, it includes the whole field of technique, in which the theoretical concepts are in large part invested. The explicitly theoretical part proper is very rarely unified in a non-contradictory form. Usually it is made up of regions locally unified in regional theories that coexist in a complex and contradictory whole with a theoretically unreflected unity. This is the extremely complex and contradictory unity which is in action, in each case according to a specific mode, in the labour of theoretical production of each science. For example, in the experimental sciences, this is what constitutes the ‘phenomena’ into ‘facts’, this is what poses an existing difficulty in the form of problem, and ‘resolves’ this problem by locating the theoretico-technical dispositions which make up the real corpus of what an idealist tradition calls ‘hypotheses’, etc. etc.

22. Cf. Marx, *Introduction*: ‘It would appear to be correct to start with the real and concrete... . However, a closer look reveals that this is false... . The latter (the method of those economic systems which move from general notions to concrete ones) is decidedly the correct scientific method. The concrete is concrete because it is the synthesis of many determinations, and therefore a unity of diversity. That is why it appears in thought as a process of synthesis, as a result, not as a point of departure ... (in scientific method) abstract determinations lead to the reproduction of the concrete via the path of thought ... the method which consists of rising from the abstract to the concrete is merely the way thought appropriates the concrete and reproduces it as a concrete in thought’ (Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Berlin, Vol. XIII, pp. 631-2).

23. Feuerbach himself is an example. That is why his ‘declarations of materialism’ should be handled with great care. I have already drawn attention to this point (cf. *La Pensée*, March-April 1961, p. 8), in an article on the Young Marx in which I even used *certain notions that remained ideological*, notions that would fall under the ban of this present criticism. For example, the concept of a ‘retreat’ which acted as a reply to Hegel’s ‘supersession’ and was intended to illustrate Marx’s effort to get out of ideology to free himself from myth and make contact with the *original* which Hegel had deformed – even used polemically, this concept of a ‘retreat’, by suggesting a return to the ‘real’, to the ‘concrete’ *anterior* to ideology, came within a handsbreadth of ‘positivism’. Or again, the polemical refutation of even the *possibility* of a history of philosophy. The authority for this thesis came from a quotation from *The German Ideology* which does declare that philosophy (like religion, art, etc.) has no history. There also I was on the edge of positivism, only a step from reducing all ideology (and therefore philosophy) to a simple (temporary) phenomenon of a social formation (as *The German Ideology* is constantly tempted to do).

24. Marx, *Introduction* (*Werke*, XIII, p 632).

25. Ibid.

26. This comparison is well-founded: these two distinct practices have in common the general essence of practice.

27. The Holy Family was written in 1844. The same theme recurs in *The German Ideology* (1845) and *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847).

28. This work of rupture was the result of one man’s theoretical practice; that man was Karl Marx. This is not the place to return to a question I merely outlined in my article *On the Young Marx*. I should have to show why it is that Marx’s theoretical practice, itself also a labour of transformation, should necessarily have taken on in theory the preponderant form of a rupture, of an epistemological break.

Althusser, *For Marx*, “Marxism and Humanism” (1963), 227-31.

III

In 1845, Marx broke radically with every theory that based history and politics on an essence of man. This unique rupture contained three indissociable elements.

- (1) The formation of a theory of history and politics based on radically new concepts: the concepts of social formation, productive forces, relations of production, superstructure, ideologies, determination in the last instance by the economy, specific determination of the other levels, etc.

(2) A radical critique of the *theoretical* pretensions of every philosophical humanism.

(3) The definition of humanism as an *ideology*.

This new conception is completely rigorous as well, but it is a new rigour: the essence criticized (2) is defined as an ideology (3), a category belonging to the new theory of society and history (1). This rupture with every *philosophical* anthropology or humanism is no secondary detail; it is Marx's scientific discovery. It means that Marx rejected the problematic of the earlier philosophy and adopted a new problematic in one and the same act. The earlier idealist ('bourgeois') philosophy depended in all its domains and arguments (its 'theory of knowledge', its conception of history, its political economy, its ethics, its aesthetics, etc.) on a problematic of *human nature* (or the essence of man). For centuries, this problematic had been transparency itself, and no one had thought of questioning it even in its internal modifications. This problematic was neither vague nor loose; on the contrary, it was constituted by a coherent system of precise concepts tightly articulated together. When Marx confronted it, it implied the two complementary postulates he defined in the Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach:

(1) that there is a universal essence of man;

(2) that this essence is the attribute of '*each single individual*' who is its real subject.

These two postulates are complementary and indissociable. But their existence and their unity presuppose a whole empiricist-idealist world outlook. If the essence of man is to be a universal attribute, it is essential that *concrete subjects* exist as absolute givens; this implies an *empiricism of the subject*. If these empirical individuals are to be men, it is essential that each carries in himself the whole human essence, if not in fact, at least in principle; this implies an *idealism of the essence*. So empiricism of the subject implies idealism of the essence and vice versa. This relation can be inverted into its 'opposite' – empiricism of the concept/idealism of the subject. But the inversion respects the basic structure of the problematic, which remains fixed.

In this type-structure it is possible to recognize not only the principle of theories of society (from Hobbes to Rousseau), of political economy (from Petty to Ricardo), of ethics (from Descartes to Kant), but also the very principle of the (pre-Marxist) idealist and materialist 'theory of knowledge' (from Locke to Feuerbach, via Kant). The content of the human essence or of the empirical subjects may vary (as can be seen from Descartes to Feuerbach); the subject may change from empiricism to idealism (as can be seen from Locke to Kant): the terms presented and their relations only vary within the invariant type-structure which constitutes this very problematic: *an empiricism of the subject always corresponds to an idealism of the essence (or an empiricism of the essence to an idealism of the subject)*.

By rejecting the essence of man as his theoretical basis, Marx rejected the whole of this organic system of postulates. He drove the philosophical categories of the *subject*, of *empiricism*, of the *ideal essence*, etc., from all the domains in which they had been supreme. Not only from political economy (rejection of the myth of *homo economicus*, that is, of the individual with definite faculties and needs as the *subject* of the classical economy); not just from history (rejection of social atomism and ethico-political idealism); not just from ethics (rejection of the Kantian ethical idea); but also from philosophy itself: for Marx's materialism excludes the empiricism of the subject (and its inverse: the transcendental subject) and the idealism of the concept (and its inverse: the empiricism of the concept).

This total theoretical revolution was only empowered to reject the old concepts because it replaced them by new concepts. In fact Marx established a new problematic, a new systematic way of asking questions of the world, new principles and a new method. This discovery is immediately contained in the theory of historical materialism, in which Marx did not only propose a new theory of the history of societies, but at the same time implicitly, but necessarily, a new 'philosophy', infinite in its implications. Thus, when Marx replaced the old couple individuals/human essence in the theory of history by new concepts (forces of production, relations of production, etc.), he was, in fact, simultaneously proposing a new conception of 'philosophy'. He replaced the old postulates (empiricism/idealism of the subject, empiricism/idealism of the essence) which were the basis not only for idealism but also for pre-Marxist materialism, by a historico-dialectical materialism of *praxis*: that is, by a theory of the different specific *levels* of *human practice* (economic practice, political practice, ideological practice, scientific practice) in their characteristic articulations, based on the specific articulations of the unity of human society. In a word, Marx substituted for the 'ideological' and universal concept of Feuerbachian 'practice'

a concrete conception of the specific differences that enables us to situate each particular practice in the specific differences of the social structure.

So, to understand what was radically new in Marx's contribution, we must become aware not only of the novelty of the concepts of historical materialism, but also of the depth of the theoretical revolution they imply and inaugurate. On this condition it is possible to define humanism's status, and reject its *theoretical* pretensions while recognizing its practical function as an ideology. Strictly in respect to theory, therefore, one can and must speak openly of *Marx's theoretical anti-humanism*, and see in this *theoretical anti-humanism* the absolute (negative) precondition of the (positive) knowledge of the human world itself, and of its practical transformation. It is impossible to *know* anything about men except on the absolute precondition that the philosophical (theoretical) myth of man is reduced to ashes. So any thought that appeals to Marx for any kind of restoration of a theoretical anthropology or humanism is no more than ashes, *theoretically*. But in practice it could pile up a monument of pre-Marxist ideology that would weigh down on real history and threaten to lead it into blind alleys.

For the corollary of theoretical Marxist anti-humanism is the recognition and knowledge of humanism itself: as an *ideology*. Marx never fell into the idealist illusion of believing that the knowledge of an object might ultimately replace the object or dissipate its existence. Cartesians, knowing that the sun was two thousand leagues away, were astonished that this distance only looked like two hundred paces: they could not even find enough of God to fill in this gap. Marx never believed that a knowledge of the nature of *money* (a social relation) could destroy its *appearance*, its form of existence – a thing, for this appearance was its very being, as necessary as the existing mode of production.^[7] Marx never believed that an ideology might be dissipated by a knowledge of it: for the knowledge of this ideology, as the knowledge of its conditions of possibility, of its structure, of its specific logic and of its practical role, within a given society, is simultaneously knowledge of the conditions of its necessity. So Marx's theoretical *anti-humanism* does not suppress anything in the historical *existence* of humanism. In the real world philosophies of man are found after Marx as often as before, and today even some Marxists are tempted to develop the themes of a new theoretical humanism. Furthermore, Marx's theoretical anti-humanism, by relating it to its conditions of existence, recognizes a necessity for humanism as an *ideology*, a conditional necessity. The recognition of this necessity is not purely speculative. On it alone can Marxism base a policy in relation to the existing ideological forms, of every kind: religion, ethics, art, philosophy, law – and in the very front rank, humanism. When (eventually) a Marxist policy of humanist ideology, that is, a political attitude to humanism, is achieved – a policy which may be either a rejection or a critique, or a use, or a support, or a development, or a humanist renewal of contemporary forms of ideology in the *ethico-political* domain – this policy will only have been possible on the absolute condition that it is based on Marxist philosophy, and a precondition for this is theoretical *anti-humanism*.

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7. The whole, fashionable, theory of 'reification' depends on a projection of the theory of alienation found in the early texts, particularly the *1844 Manuscripts*, on to the theory of 'fetishism' in *Capital*. In the *1844 Manuscripts*, the objectification of the human essence is claimed as the indispensable preliminary to the reappropriation of the human essence by man. Throughout the process of objectification, man only exists in the form of an objectivity in which he meets his own essence in the appearance of a foreign, non-human, essence. This 'objectification' is not called 'reification' even though it is called *inhuman*. Inhumanity is not represented *par excellence* by the model of a 'thing': but sometimes by the model of animality (or even of pre-animality – the man who no longer even has simple animal relations with nature), sometimes by the model of the omnipotence and fascination of transcendence (God, the State) and of money, which is, of course, a 'thing'. In *Capital* the only social relation that is presented in the form of a *thing* (this piece of metal) is *money*. But the conception of money as a *thing* (that is, the confusion of value with use-value in money) does not correspond to the reality of this 'thing': it is not the brutality of a simple 'thing' that man is faced with when he is in direct relation with money; it is a *power* (or a *lack* of it) over things and men. An ideology of reification that sees 'things' everywhere in human relations confuses in this category 'thing' (a category more foreign to Marx cannot be imagined) every social relation, conceived according to the model of a money-thing ideology.

G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*: 141-2.

The essential fact, however, to be borne in mind throughout the whole inquiry is that both these moments, notion and object, “being for another” and “being in itself”, themselves fall within that knowledge which we are examining. Consequently we do not require to bring standards with us, nor to apply our fancies and thoughts in the inquire; and just by our leaving these aside we are enabled to treat and discuss the subject as it actually is in itself and for itself, as it is in its complete reality.

But not only in this respect, that notion and object, the criterion and what is to be tested, are ready to hand in consciousness itself, is any addition of ours superfluous, but we are also spared the trouble of comparing these two and of making an examination in the strict sense of the term; so that in this respect, too, since consciousness tests and examines itself, all we are left to do is simply and solely to look on. For consciousness is, on the one hand, consciousness of the object, on the other, consciousness of itself; consciousness of what to it is true, and consciousness of its knowledge of that truth. Since both are for the same consciousness, it is itself their comparison; it is the same consciousness that decides and knows whether its knowledge of the object corresponds with this object or not. The object, it is true, appears only to be in such wise for consciousness as consciousness knows it. Consciousness does not seem able to get, so to say, behind it as it is, not for consciousness, but in itself, and consequently seems also unable to test knowledge by it. But just because consciousness has, in general, knowledge of an object, there is already present the distinction that the inherent nature, what the object is in itself, is one thing to consciousness, while knowledge, or the being of the object *for* consciousness, is another moment. Upon this distinction, which is present as a fact, the examination turns. Should both, when thus compared, not correspond, consciousness seems bound to alter its knowledge, in order to make it fit the object. But in the alteration of the knowledge, the object itself also, in point of fact, is altered; for the knowledge which existed was essentially a knowledge of the object; with change in the knowledge, the object also becomes different, since it belonged essentially to this knowledge. Hence consciousness comes to find that what formerly to it was the essence is not what is *per se*, or what was *per se* was only *per se for consciousness*. Since, then, in the case of its object consciousness finds its knowledge not corresponding with this object, the object likewise fails to hold out; or the standard for examining is altered when that, whose criterion this standard was to be, does not hold its ground in the course of the examination; and the examination is not only an examination of knowledge, but also of the criterion used in the process.

This dialectic process which consciousness executes on itself — on its knowledge as well as on its object — in the sense that out of it the new and true object arises, is precisely, what is termed Experience.

Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, (351-357), "What is Man?"

This is the primary and principal question that philosophy asks. How is it to be answered? The definition can be found in man himself, that is, in each individual man. But is it correct? In every individual man one can discover what every "individual man" is. But we are not interested in what every individual man is, which then comes to mean what every individual man is at every individual moment. Reflecting on it, we can see that in putting the question "what is man?" what we mean is: what can man become? That is, can man dominate his own destiny, can he "make himself," can he create his own life? We maintain therefore that man is a process, and, more exactly, the process of his actions. If you think about it, the question itself "what is man?" is not an abstract or "objective" question. It is born of our reflection about ourselves and about others, and we want to know, in relation to what we have thought and seen, what we are and what we can become; whether we really are, and if so to what extent, "makers of our own selves," of our life and of our destiny. And we want to know this "today," in the given conditions of today, the conditions of our daily life, not of any life or any man.

The question is born and receives its content from special, that is, specific ways of considering life and man. The most important of these is religion, and a specific religion, which is Catholicism. In reality, when we ask ourselves "what is man?," what importance do his will and his concrete activity have in creating himself and the life he lives? what we mean is: is Catholicism a correct conception of the world and of life? As Catholics, making Catholicism a norm of life, are we making a mistake or are we right? Everyone has a vague intuitive feeling that when they make Catholicism a norm of life they are making a mistake, to such an extent that nobody attaches himself to Catholicism as a norm of life, even when calling himself a Catholic. An integral Catholic, one, that is, who applied the Catholic norms in every act of his life, would seem a monster. Which, when you come to think about it, is the severest and most peremptory criticism of Catholicism itself.

Catholics would say that no other conception is followed punctiliously either, and they would be right. But all this shows is that there does not exist, historically, a way of seeing things and of acting which is equal for all men, no more no less. It is not a reason in favour of Catholicism, although for centuries the Catholic way of seeing things and of acting has been organised around this very end, which has not been the case with any other religion possessed of the same means, of the same systematic spirit, of the same continuity and centralisation. From the "philosophical" point of view, what is unsatisfactory in Catholicism is the fact that, in spite of everything, it insists on putting the cause of evil in the individual man himself, or in other words that it conceives of man as a defined and limited individual. It could be said of all hitherto existing philosophies that they reproduce this position of Catholicism, that they conceive of man as an individual limited to his own individuality and of the spirit as being this individuality. It is on this point that it is necessary to reform the concept of man. I mean that one must conceive of man as a series of active relationships (a process) in which individuality, though perhaps the most important, is not, however, the only element to be taken into account. The humanity which is reflected in each individuality is composed of various elements: 1. the individual; 2. other men; 3- the natural world. But the latter two elements are not as simple as they might appear. The individual does not enter into relations with other men by juxtaposition, but organically, in as much, that is, as he belongs to organic entities which range from the simplest to the most complex. Thus Man does not enter into relations with the natural world just by being himself part of the natural world, but actively, by means of work and technique. Further: these relations are not mechanical. They are active and conscious. They correspond to the greater or lesser degree of understanding that each man has of them. So one could say that each one of us changes himself, modifies himself to the extent that he changes and modifies the complex relations of which he is the hub. In this sense the real philosopher is, and cannot be other than, the politician, the active man who modifies the environment, understanding by environment the ensemble of relations which each of us enters to take part in. If one's own individuality is the ensemble of these relations,[\[37\]](#) to create one's personality means to acquire consciousness of them and to modify one's own personality means to modify the ensemble of these relations.

But these relations, as we have said, are not simple. Some are necessary, others are voluntary. Further, to be conscious of them, to whatever degree of profundity (that is, to know, in varying degrees, how to modify them) already modifies them. Even the necessary relations, in so far as they are known to be necessary, take on a different aspect and importance. In this sense, knowledge is power. But the problem is complex in another way as

well. It is not enough to know the ensemble of relations as they exist at any given time as a given system. They must be known genetically, in the movement of their formation. For each individual is the synthesis not only of existing relations, but of the history of these relations. He is a precis of all the past. It will be said that what each individual can change is very little, considering his strength. This is true up to a point. But when the individual can associate himself with all the other individuals who want the same changes, and if the changes wanted are rational, the individual can be multiplied an impressive number of times and can obtain a change which is far more radical than at first sight ever seemed possible.

The "societies" in which a single individual can take part are very numerous, more than would appear. It is through these "societies" that the individual belongs to the human race. Thus the ways in which the single individual enters into relation with nature are many and complex, since by technique one should understand not only the ensemble of scientific ideas applied industrially (which is the normal meaning of the word) but also the "mental" instruments, philosophical knowledge.

That man cannot be conceived other than as living in society is a commonplace.[\[38\]](#) But not all the necessary consequences have been drawn from this, even on an individual level. That a specific human society presupposes a specific "society of things," and that human society is possible only in so far as there exists a specific society of things, is also a commonplace. It is true that up to now the significance attributed to these supra-individual organisms (both the *societas hominum* and the *societas rerum*)[\[39\]](#) has been mechanistic and determinist: hence the reaction against it. It is necessary to elaborate a doctrine in which these relations are seen as active and in movement, establishing quite clearly that the source of this activity is the consciousness of the individual man who knows, wishes, admires, creates (in so far as he does know, wish, admire, create, etc.) and conceives of himself not as isolated but rich in the possibilities offered him by other men and by the society of things of which he cannot help having a certain knowledge. Just as every man is a philosopher, every man is a man of science (etc.). Taken in itself, Feuerbach's assertion "Man is what he eats" can be interpreted in various ways. Crude and stupid interpretation: man is at any time what he eats materially, i.e. food has an immediate and determining influence on the way of thinking. Recall Amadeo [Bordiga]'s remark to the effect that if one knew what a man had eaten before making a speech, for example, one would be in a better position to interpret the speech itself. A childish remark, and not even in conformity with positive scientific data, because the brain is not nourished on beans and truffles but rather the food manages to reconstitute the molecules of the brain once it has been turned into homogeneous and assimilable substances, which have potentially the "same nature," as the molecules of the brain. If this assertion were true, then the determining matrix of history would be the kitchen and revolutions would coincide with radical changes in the diet of the masses. Historically the contrary is true. It is revolutions and the complex development of history which have modified diet and created the successive "tastes" in the choice of food. It wasn't the regular solving of wheat that brought nomadism to an end, but vice versa. The emergence of conditions hostile to nomadism provided an impetus to regular sowing.

On the other hand it is also true that "man is what he eats," in so far as diet is one of the expressions of social relations taken as a whole, and every social group has its own basic form of diet. But one might equally well say that "man is his clothing," "man is his housing" or "man is his particular way of reproducing himself, that is, his family." For, together with diet, housing, clothing and reproduction are among the elements of social life in which social relations as a whole are manifested in the most evident and widespread (i.e. mass) fashion.

The problem of what is man is always therefore the so-called problem of "human nature" or that of so-called "man in general." It is thus an attempt to create a science of man (a philosophy) which starts from an initially "unitary"[\[42\]](#) concept, from an abstraction in which everything that is "human" can be contained. But is the "human" a starting-point or a point of arrival, as a concept and as a unitary fact? Or might not the whole attempt, in so far as it posits the human as a starting-point, be a "theological" or "metaphysical" residue? Philosophy cannot be reduced to a naturalistic "anthropology": the nature of the human species is not given by the "biological" nature of man.

The differences in man which count in history are not the biological-race, shape of the cranium, colour of skin, etc. (For it is to these that the affirmation "man is what he eats" can be reduced—he eats wheat in Europe, rice in Asia, etc.—and it could indeed be further reduced to the affirmation "man is the country where he lives," since

most of diet is in general connected with the land inhabited.) Nor has "biological unity" ever counted for very much in history: man is the animal which has eaten himself precisely when he was nearest to the "state of nature" and when he could not artificially multiply the production of natural goods. Nor yet have the "faculty of reason" or "the mind" created unity, and they cannot be recognised as a "unitary" fact as they represent a purely formal and categorical concept.[43] It is not "thought" but what people really think that unites or differentiates mankind.

That "human nature" is the "complex of social relations" is the most satisfactory answer, because it includes the idea of becoming (man "becomes," he changes continuously with the changing of social relations) and because it denies "man in general." Indeed social relations are expressed by various groups of men which each presuppose the others and whose unity is dialectical, not formal. Man is aristocratic in so far as man is a serf, etc.[45] One could also say that the nature of man is "history" (and, in this sense, given history as equal to spirit, that the nature of man is spirit if one gives to history precisely this significance of "becoming" which takes place in a "Concordia discors" [discordant concord] which does not start from unity, but contains in itself the reasons for a possible unity. For this reason "human nature" cannot be located in any particular man but in the entire history of the human species (and the fact that we use the word "species," which is a naturalistic word, 'is itself significant)[46] while in each single individual there are to be found characteristics which are put in relief by being in contradiction with the characteristics of others. Both the conception of "spirit" found in traditional philosophy and that of "human nature" found in biology should be explained as "scientific utopias" which took the place of the greater utopia of a human nature to be sought for in God (and in men as sons of God) and they serve to indicate the continual travail of history, an aspiration of a rational and sentimental kind, etc. It is also true that both the religions which affirm the quality of man as the sons of God and the philosophies which affirm the equality of man as participants in the faculty of reason have been expressions of complex revolutionary movements (respectively the transformation of the classical world and the transformation of the medieval world) which laid the most powerful links of the chain of historical development.

The idea that the Hegelian dialectic has been the last reflection of these great historical nexuses, and that the dialectic, from being the expression of social contradictions, should become, with the disappearance of these contradictions, a pure conceptual dialectic, would appear to be at the root of those recent philosophies, like that of Croce, which have a utopistic basis.

In history real "equality," that is the degree of "spirituality" reached by the historical process of "human nature" is to be identified in the system of "private and public" "explicit and implicit" associations whose threads are knotted together in the "State" and in the world political system. We are dealing here with "equalities" experienced as such between the members of an association, and "inequalities" experienced between one association and another. These are equalities and inequalities which are valid in so far as people, individually or as a group, are conscious of them. In this way we arrive also at the equality of, or equation between, "philosophy and politics," thought and action, that is, at a philosophy of praxis. Everything is political, even philosophy or philosophies (cf. the notes on the character of ideologies) and the only "philosophy" is history in action, that is, life itself. It is in this sense that one can interpret the thesis of the German proletariat as the heir of classical German philosophy-and one can affirm that the theorisation and realisation of hegemony carried out by Ilyich [Lenin] was also a great "metaphysical" event.

Notes:

37. Cf. the sixth of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*: "The human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the *ensemble* of social relations..."

38. This notion derives from Aristotle's "Man is a political animal," taken up in scholastic philosophy and again in the Renaissance, and perhaps more deeply engrained in Italian philosophical culture than in that of any other country.

39. The society of men and the society of things: i.e. the human and natural worlds.

42. "unitary": in the sense of establishing a concrete principle of unity.

43. "categorical": i.e. non-historical and non-dialectical.

45. *servo della gleba*. The concept here is that of the unity of opposites. Aristocracy by definition presupposes the existence of another class, the serfs, in relation to which it acquires its particular defining characteristics.

46. Naturalistic in the sense of derived from natural history.

PART VIII: THE PHILOSOPHY OF MAO TSE-TUNG

Questions:

1. List everything that is inadequate or wrong in *On Practice*. Be ruthless, and as complete as possible.
2. How useful are Mao's concepts of "principal contradiction" and "principal aspect of a contradiction" to an understanding of Lenin's "Elements of Dialectics"?
3. Is Martin Glaberman correct to conclude that Mao's contributions have nothing to do with philosophy?
4. Where do correct ideas come from?

Mao, *On Practice* (July, 1937)

On the Relation Between Knowledge and Practice, Between Knowing and Doing

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

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

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

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

Marxists hold that in human society activity in production develops step by step from a lower to a higher level and that consequently man's knowledge, whether of nature or of society, also develops step by step from a lower to a higher level, that is, from the shallower to the deeper, from the one-sided to the many-sided. For a very long period in history, men were necessarily confined to a one-sided understanding of the history of society

because, for one thing, the bias of the exploiting classes always distorted history and, for another, the small scale of production limited man's outlook. It was not until the modern proletariat emerged along with immense forces of production (large-scale industry) that man was able to acquire a comprehensive, historical understanding of the development of society and turn this knowledge into a science, the science of Marxism.

Marxists hold that man's social practice alone is the criterion of the truth of his knowledge of the external world. What actually happens is that man's knowledge is verified only when he achieves the anticipated results in the process of social practice (material production, class struggle or scientific experiment). If a man wants to succeed in his work, that is, to achieve the anticipated results, he must bring his ideas into correspondence with the laws of the objective external world; if they do not correspond, he will fail in his practice. After he fails, he draws his lessons, corrects his ideas to make them correspond to the laws of the external world, and can thus turn failure into success; this is what is meant by "failure is the mother of success" and "a fall into the pit, a gain in your wit". The dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge places practice in the primary position, holding that human knowledge can in no way be separated from practice and repudiating all the erroneous theories which deny the importance of practice or separate knowledge from practice. Thus Lenin said, "*Practice is higher than (theoretical) knowledge*, for it has not only the dignity of universality, but also of immediate actuality." [1] The Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism has two outstanding characteristics. One is its class nature: it openly avows that dialectical materialism is in the service of the proletariat. The other is its practicality: it emphasizes the dependence of theory on practice, emphasizes that theory is based on practice and in turn serves practice. The truth of any knowledge or theory is determined not by subjective feelings, but by objective results in social practice. Only social practice can be the criterion of truth. The standpoint of practice is the primary and basic standpoint in the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge. [2]

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

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

As social practice continues, things that give rise to man's sense perceptions and impressions in the course of his practice are repeated many times; then a sudden change (leap) takes place in the brain in the process of cognition, and concepts are formed. Concepts are no longer the phenomena, the separate aspects and the external relations of things; they grasp the essence, the totality and the internal relations of things. Between concepts and sense perceptions there is not only a quantitative but also a qualitative difference. Proceeding further, by means of judgement and inference one is able to draw logical conclusions. The expression in *San Kuo Yen Yi*, [3] "knit the brows and a stratagem comes to mind", or in everyday language, "let me think it over", refers to man's use of concepts in the brain to form judgements and inferences. This is the second stage of cognition. When the members of the observation group have collected various data and, what is more, have "thought them over", they are able to arrive at the judgement that "the Communist Party's policy of the National United Front Against Japan is thorough, sincere and genuine". Having made this judgement, they can, if they too are genuine about uniting to save the nation, go a step further and draw the following conclusion, "The National United Front Against Japan can succeed." This stage of conception, judgement and inference is the more important stage in the entire process of knowing a thing; it is the stage of rational knowledge. The real task of knowing is, through perception, to arrive at thought, to arrive step by step at the comprehension of the internal contradictions of objective things, of their laws and of the internal relations between one process and another, that is, to arrive at logical knowledge. To repeat, logical knowledge differs from perceptual knowledge in that perceptual knowledge pertains to the separate

aspects, the phenomena and the external relations of things, whereas logical knowledge takes a big stride forward to reach the totality, the essence and the internal relations of things and discloses the inner contradictions in the surrounding world. Therefore, logical knowledge is capable of grasping the development of the surrounding world in its totality, in the internal relations of all its aspects.

This dialectical-materialist theory of the process of development of knowledge, basing itself on practice and proceeding from the shallower to the deeper, was never worked out by anybody before the rise of Marxism. Marxist materialism solved this problem correctly for the first time, pointing out both materialistically and dialectically the deepening movement of cognition, the movement by which man in society progresses from perceptual knowledge to logical knowledge in his complex, constantly recurring practice of production and class struggle. Lenin said, "The abstraction of *matter*, of a *law* of nature, the abstraction of *value*, etc., in short, *all* scientific (correct, serious, not absurd) abstractions reflect nature more deeply, truly and *completely*." [4]

Marxism-Leninism holds that each of the two stages in the process of cognition has its own characteristics, with knowledge manifesting itself as perceptual at the lower stage and logical at the higher stage, but that both are stages in an integrated process of cognition. The perceptual and the rational are qualitatively different, but are not divorced from each other; they are unified on the basis of practice. Our practice proves that what is perceived cannot at once be comprehended and that only what is comprehended can be more deeply perceived. Perception only solves the problem of phenomena; theory alone can solve the problem of essence. The solving of both these problems is not separable in the slightest degree from practice. Whoever wants to know a thing has no way of doing so except by coming into contact with it, that is, by living (practicing) in its environment. In feudal society it was impossible to know the laws of capitalist society in advance because capitalism had not yet emerged, the relevant practice was lacking. Marxism could be the product only of capitalist society. Marx, in the era of *laissez-faire* capitalism, could not concretely know certain laws peculiar to the era of imperialism beforehand, because imperialism, the last stage of capitalism, had not yet emerged and the relevant practice was lacking; only Lenin and Stalin could undertake this task. Leaving aside their genius, the reason why Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin could work out their theories was mainly that they personally took part in the practice of the class struggle and the scientific experimentation of their time; lacking this condition, no genius could have succeeded. The saying, "without stepping outside his gate the scholar knows all the wide world's affairs", was mere empty talk in past times when technology was undeveloped. Even though this saying can be valid in the present age of developed technology, the people with real personal knowledge are those engaged in practice the wide world over. And it is only when these people have come to "know" through their practice and when their knowledge has reached him through writing and technical media that the "scholar" can indirectly "know all the wide world's affairs". If you want to know a certain thing or a certain class of things directly, you must personally participate in the practical struggle to change reality, to change that thing or class of things, for only thus can you come into contact with them as phenomena; only through personal participation in the practical struggle to change reality can you uncover the essence of that thing or class of things and comprehend them. This is the path to knowledge which every man actually travels, though some people, deliberately distorting matters, argue to the contrary. The most ridiculous person in the world is the "know all" who picks up a smattering of hearsay knowledge and proclaims himself "the world's Number One authority"; this merely shows that he has not taken a proper measure of himself. Knowledge is a matter of science, and no dishonesty or conceit whatsoever is permissible. What is required is definitely the reverse--honesty and modesty. If you want knowledge, you must take part in the practice of changing reality. If you want to know the taste of a pear, you must change the pear by eating it yourself. If you want to know the structure and properties of the atom, you must make physical and chemical experiments to change the state of the atom. If you want to know the theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution. All genuine knowledge originates in direct experience. But one cannot have direct experience of everything; as a matter of fact, most of our knowledge comes from indirect experience, for example, all knowledge from past times and foreign lands. To our ancestors and to foreigners, such knowledge was--or is--a matter of direct experience, and this knowledge is reliable if in the course of their direct experience the requirement of "scientific abstraction", spoken of by Lenin, was--or is--fulfilled and objective reality scientifically reflected, otherwise it is not reliable. Hence a man's knowledge consists only of two parts, that which comes from

direct experience and that which comes from indirect experience. Moreover, what is indirect experience for me is direct experience for other people. Consequently, considered as a whole, knowledge of any kind is inseparable from direct experience. All knowledge originates in perception of the objective external world through man's physical sense organs. Anyone who denies such perception, denies direct experience, or denies personal participation in the practice that changes reality, is not a materialist. That is why the "know-all" is ridiculous. There is an old Chinese saying, "How can you catch tiger cubs without entering the tiger's lair?" This saying holds true for man's practice and it also holds true for the theory of knowledge. There can be no knowledge apart from practice.

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

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

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

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

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

Thus it can be seen that the first step in the process of cognition is contact with the objects of the external world; this belongs to the stage of perception. The second step is to synthesize the data of perception by arranging

and reconstructing them; this belongs to the stage of conception, judgement and inference. It is only when the data of perception are very rich (not fragmentary) and correspond to reality (are not illusory) that they can be the basis for forming correct concepts and theories.

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

The second point is that knowledge needs to be deepened, that the perceptual stage of knowledge needs to be developed to the rational stage--this is the dialectics of the theory of knowledge. [5] To think that knowledge can stop at the lower, perceptual stage and that perceptual knowledge alone is reliable while rational knowledge is not, would be to repeat the historical error of "empiricism". This theory errs in failing to understand that, although the data of perception reflect certain realities in the objective world (I am not speaking here of idealist empiricism which confines experience to so-called introspection), they are merely one-sided and superficial, reflecting things incompletely and not reflecting their essence. Fully to reflect a thing in its totality, to reflect its essence, to reflect its inherent laws, it is necessary through the exercise of thought to reconstruct the rich data of sense perception, discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true, proceeding from the one to the other and from the outside to the inside, in order to form a system of concepts and theories--it is necessary to make a leap from perceptual to rational knowledge. Such reconstructed knowledge is not more empty or more unreliable; on the contrary, whatever has been scientifically reconstructed in the process of cognition, on the basis of practice, reflects objective reality, as Lenin said, more deeply, more truly, more fully. As against this, vulgar "practical men" respect experience but despise theory, and therefore cannot have a comprehensive view of an entire objective process, lack clear direction and long-range perspective, and are complacent over occasional successes and glimpses of the truth. If such persons direct a revolution, they will lead it up a blind alley.

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

But the movement of knowledge does not end here. If the dialectical-materialist movement of knowledge were to stop at rational knowledge, only half the problem would be dealt with. And as far as Marxist philosophy is concerned, only the less important half at that. Marxist philosophy holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world. From the Marxist viewpoint, theory is important, and its importance is fully expressed in Lenin's statement, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." [6] But Marxism emphasizes the importance of theory precisely and only because it can guide action. If we have a correct theory but merely prate about it, pigeonhole it and do not put it into practice, then that theory, however good, is of no significance. Knowledge begins with practice, and theoretical knowledge is acquired through practice and must then return to practice. The active function of knowledge manifests itself not only in

the active leap from perceptual to rational knowledge, but--and this is more important--it must manifest itself in the leap from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice. The knowledge which grasps the laws of the world, must be redirected to the practice of changing the world, must be applied anew in the practice of production, in the practice of revolutionary class struggle and revolutionary national struggle and in the practice of scientific experiment. This is the process of testing and developing theory, the continuation of the whole process of cognition. The problem of whether theory corresponds to objective reality is not, and cannot be, completely solved in the movement of knowledge from the perceptual to the rational, mentioned above. The only way to solve this problem completely is to redirect rational knowledge to social practice, apply theory to practice and see whether it can achieve the objectives one has in mind. Many theories of natural science are held to be true not only because they were so considered when natural scientists originated them, but because they have been verified in subsequent scientific practice. Similarly, Marxism-Leninism is held to be true not only because it was so considered when it was scientifically formulated by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin but because it has been verified in the subsequent practice of revolutionary class struggle and revolutionary national struggle. Dialectical materialism is universally true because it is impossible for anyone to escape from its domain in his practice. The history of human knowledge tells us that the truth of many theories is incomplete and that this incompleteness is remedied through the test of practice. Many theories are erroneous and it is through the test of practice that their errors are corrected. That is why practice is the criterion of truth and why "the standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge". [7] Stalin has well said, "Theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory." [8]

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

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

However, so far as the progression of the process is concerned, the movement of human knowledge is not completed. Every process, whether in the realm of nature or of society, progresses and develops by reason of its internal contradiction and struggle, and the movement of human knowledge should also progress and develop

along with it. As far as social movements are concerned, true revolutionary leaders must not only be good at correcting their ideas, theories, plans or programmes when errors are discovered, as has been indicated above; but when a certain objective process has already progressed and changed from one stage of development to another, they must also be good at making themselves and all their fellow-revolutionaries progress and change in their subjective knowledge along with it, that is to say, they must ensure that the proposed new revolutionary tasks and new working programmes correspond to the new changes in the situation. In a revolutionary period the situation changes very rapidly; if the knowledge of revolutionaries does not change rapidly in accordance with the changed situation, they will be unable to lead the revolution to victory.

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

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

Idealism and mechanical materialism, opportunism and adventurism, are all characterized by the breach between the subjective and the objective, by the separation of knowledge from practice. The Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge, characterized as it is by scientific social practice, cannot but resolutely oppose these wrong ideologies. Marxists recognize that in the absolute and general process of development of the universe, the development of each particular process is relative, and that hence, in the endless flow of absolute truth, man's knowledge of a particular process at any given stage of development is only relative truth. The sum total of innumerable relative truths constitutes absolute truth. [9] The development of an objective process is full of contradictions and struggles, and so is the development of the movement of human knowledge. All the dialectical movements of the objective world can sooner or later be reflected in human knowledge. In social practice, the process of coming into being, developing and passing away is infinite, and so is the process of coming into being, developing and passing away in human knowledge. As man's practice which changes objective reality in accordance with given ideas, theories, plans or programmes, advances further and further, his knowledge of objective reality likewise becomes deeper and deeper. The movement of change in the world of objective reality is never-ending and so is man's cognition of truth through practice. Marxism-Leninism has in no way exhausted truth but ceaselessly opens up roads to the knowledge of truth in the course of practice. Our conclusion is the concrete, historical unity of the subjective and the objective, of theory and practice, of knowing and doing, and we are opposed to all erroneous ideologies, whether "Left" or Right, which depart from concrete history.

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

the stage of voluntary, conscious change. The epoch of world communism will be reached when all mankind voluntarily and consciously changes itself and the world.

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

Notes:

1. V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic*". *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 205.
2. See Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach". Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in two volumes, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1958, Vol. II, p. 403, and V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1952, pp. 136-4.
3. *San Kuo Yen Yi (Tales of the Three Kingdoms)* is a famous Chinese historical novel by Lo Kuan-chung (late 14th and early 15th century).
4. V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic*", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 161.
5. "In order to understand, it is necessary empirically to begin understanding, study, to rise from empiricism to the universal." (*Ibid.*, p. 197.)
6. V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1961, Vol. V, p. 369.
7. V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, p. 141.
8. J. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism", *Problems of Leninism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, p. 31.
9. See V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, pp. 129-36.

Mao, *On Contradiction* (August, 1937)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

When a revolutionary civil war develops to the point of threatening the very existence of imperialism and its running dogs, the domestic reactionaries, imperialism often adopts other methods in order to maintain its rule; it either tries to split the revolutionary front from within or sends armed forces to help the domestic reactionaries directly. At such a time, foreign imperialism and domestic reaction stand quite openly at one pole while the masses of the people stand at the other pole, thus forming the principal contradiction which determines or influences the development of the other contradictions. The assistance given by various capitalist countries to the Russian reactionaries after the October Revolution is an example of armed intervention. Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal in 1927 is an example of splitting the revolutionary front.

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

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

that, lost in a fog, they are unable to get to the heart of a problem and naturally cannot find a way to resolve its contradictions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At certain times in the revolutionary struggle, the difficulties outweigh the favourable conditions and so constitute the principal aspect of the contradiction and the favourable conditions constitute the secondary aspect. But through their efforts the revolutionaries can overcome the difficulties step by step and open up a favourable new situation; thus a difficult situation yields place to a favourable one. This- is what happened after the failure of the revolution in China in 1927 and during the Long March of the Chinese Red Army. In the present Sino-Japanese War, China is again in a difficult position, but we can change this and fundamentally transform the situation as between China and Japan. Conversely, favourable conditions can be transformed into difficulty if the revolutionaries make mistakes. Thus the victory of the revolution of 1924-27 turned into defeat. The revolutionary base areas which grew up in the southern provinces after 1927 had all suffered defeat by 1934.

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

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

In studying the particularity of contradiction, unless we examine these two facets--the principal and the non-principal contradictions in a process, and the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction--that is, unless we examine the distinctive character of these two facets of contradiction, we shall get bogged down in abstractions, be unable to understand contradiction concretely and consequently be unable to find the correct

method of resolving it. The distinctive character or particularity of these two facets of contradiction represents the unevenness of the forces that are in contradiction. Nothing in this world develops absolutely evenly; we must oppose the theory of even development or the theory of equilibrium. Moreover, it is these concrete features of a contradiction and the changes in the principal and non-principal aspects of a contradiction in the course of its development that manifest the force of the new superseding the old. The study of the various states of unevenness in contradictions, of the principal and non-principal contradictions and of the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction constitutes an essential method by which a revolutionary political party correctly determines its strategic and tactical policies both in political and in military affairs. All Communists must give it attention.

Mao, *Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?* (May, 1963)

Where do correct ideas come from? Do they drop from the skies? No. Are they innate in the mind? No. They come from social practice, and from it alone; they come from three kinds of social practice, the struggle for production, the class struggle and scientific experiment. It is man's social being that determines his thinking. Once the correct ideas characteristic of the advanced class are grasped by the masses, these ideas turn into a material force which changes society and changes the world. In their social practice, men engage in various kinds of struggle and gain rich experience, both from their successes and from their failures. Countless phenomena of the objective external world are reflected in a man's brain through his five sense organs — the organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. At first, knowledge is perceptual. The leap to conceptual knowledge, i.e., to ideas, occurs when sufficient perceptual knowledge is accumulated. This is one process in cognition. It is the first stage in the whole process of cognition, the stage leading from objective matter to subjective consciousness from existence to ideas. Whether or not one's consciousness or ideas (including theories, policies, plans or measures) do correctly reflect the laws of the objective external world is not yet proved at this stage, in which it is not yet possible to ascertain whether they are correct or not. Then comes the second stage in the process of cognition, the stage leading from consciousness back to matter, from ideas back to existence, in which the knowledge gained in the first stage is applied in social practice to ascertain whether the theories, policies, plans or measures meet with the anticipated success. Generally speaking, those that succeed are correct and those that fail are incorrect, and this is especially true of man's struggle with nature. In social struggle, the forces representing the advanced class sometimes suffer defeat not because their ideas are incorrect ! but because, in the balance of forces engaged in struggle, they are not as powerful for the time being as the forces of reaction; they are therefore temporarily defeated, but they are bound to triumph sooner or later. Man's knowledge makes another leap through the test of practice. This leap is more important than the previous one. For it is this leap alone that can prove the correctness or incorrectness of the first leap in cognition, i.e., of the ideas, theories, policies, plans or measures formulated in the course of reflecting the objective external world. There is no other way of testing truth. Furthermore, the one and only purpose of the proletariat in knowing the world is to change it. Often, correct knowledge can be arrived at only after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter, that is, leading from practice to knowledge and then back to practice. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge, the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge. Among our comrades there are many who do not yet understand this theory of knowledge. When asked the sources of their ideas, opinions, policies, methods, plans and conclusions, eloquent speeches and long articles they consider the questions strange and cannot answer it. Nor do they comprehend that matter, can be transformed into consciousness and consciousness into matter, although such leaps are phenomena of everyday life. It is therefore necessary to educate our comrades in the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge, so that they can orientate their thinking correctly, become good at investigation and study and at summing up experience, overcome difficulties, commit fewer mistakes, do their work better, and struggle hard so as to build China into a great and powerful socialist country and help the broad masses of the oppressed and exploited throughout the world in fulfillment of our great internationalist duty.

Martin Glaberman, "Mao as a Dialectician" (1968)

MAO TSE-TUNG'S reputation as a philosopher, as a materialist dialectician, stems primarily from his essays, "On Practice," "On Contradiction," and, in part, from "On the Correct Handling of Contradiction Among the People." This is an output, depending on the edition, of little over 100 pages and it would not ordinarily entitle its author to serious consideration as a philosopher. The case of Mao, however, is not an ordinary one. His importance as a political figure and his impact on history are unquestioned. The question of the nature of his philosophy, therefore, assumes a significance that cannot be dismissed on the basis of purely scholarly criteria.

To evaluate Mao as a dialectician poses certain problems. The first is the matter of the quality of his work. It would be fairly simple to make out a case for the view that Mao as a philosopher is crude and trivial. It is difficult to take seriously the suggestion of Prof. George Thomson that "Mao's treatment of contradiction is subtler and more profound" than Stalin's.[1] One would suspect that the comment was made with tongue in cheek, a kind of damning with faint praise, if the content of the article did not indicate that Thomson was quite serious. More accurate is the judgment of Arthur A. Cohen, in connection with a particular point of Mao's, that "This is crude dialectics. It is below the level of Marx, Engels and Lenin. It resembles Stalin's clumsy thinking and style." [2] The difficulty with this line of reasoning, however, is that it tempts one to dismiss Mao's philosophy as, on the whole, a crude, popularized paraphrase of Marx and Lenin. Mao's philosophizing becomes the self-indulgence of an all-powerful leader, plucking laurels for himself in fields in which he does not belong. "Mao's description of qualitative change," says Cohen, "seems to be the extent of his originality as a Marxist dialectical materialist." [3] The crudeness, however, conceals a complete departure from, and rejection of, dialectical materialism. These need to be examined in their own right. The specific philosophical views of Mao Tse-tung are of much greater significance than his technical qualifications as philosopher.

One further point needs to be noted. This discussion is limited to Mao as a dialectician and it is not intended that judgments about Mao's philosophical views or abilities be automatically transferred to other fields of theory or practice. Mao's practical abilities as a revolutionary leader are widely recognized. Apart from practical ability and success, I believe that Mao Tse-tung has made significant and original contributions to political theory. His theories of guerilla warfare and his development of a theory of national revolution based on the peasantry and on a peasant army are two examples of this. But these have to be discussed in their own right and in another context, although an analysis of Mao as a dialectician may contribute to that discussion ultimately. One of the purposes of this paper is to show that the relation between Mao's philosophical views and his political views cannot automatically be brought together under the heading of dialectical.

The second question is what standard of dialectical materialism is there to use as a basis for judging Mao's writings? The most literal answer is that there is none. I believe, however, that a reasonable standard can be deduced that can be fruitfully used. Lenin once noted that "It is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital*, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel's *Logic*. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!" [4] I have taken this as a guide. Marx used dialectical materialism but was unable to find the time to write an exposition of his philosophy, or, rather, his method. Engels' philosophical writing is of a very mixed quality. [5] There is a discernible leap in the quality of Lenin's philosophical and other writing after his studies of Hegel. His *Philosophical Notebooks*, fragmentary as they are, are more valuable than his book, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, [6] which is more materialist than dialectical. [7] His political writings in the period following his Hegelian studies, particularly *Imperialism* [8] and *State and Revolution*, [9] clearly reflect the philosophical advances he had made. I have attempted, therefore to use as a guide a kind of synthesis of Hegel and Marx and Lenin which seems to me to correspond with a reasonable view of dialectical materialism. This will have to stand or fall on the measure of fruitfulness it provides in the analysis of Mao.

"On Practice"

In the essay, "On Practice," it becomes evident that Mao's philosophy is not simply a popularization of Leninist views but something else. More than the other writings, it is full of the crude and the trivial, the commonplace platitudes presented as profound wisdom. The point to the article is that theory is derived from

practice and "that man's social practice alone is the criterion of the truth of his knowledge of the external world." [10] This is a simple enough point but it is some distance from being dialectical materialism. The same view can be contained in other and conflicting philosophies. The crucial question would be exactly how practice becomes theory and is then tested in practice. The entire emphasis of the article, despite the quotations from Lenin, is pragmatic and empirical.

"The Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism has two outstanding characteristics," says Mao. "One is its class nature: it openly avows that dialectical materialism is in the service of the proletariat. The other is practicality: it emphasizes that theory is based on practice and in turn serves practice.... The standpoint of practice is the primary and basic standpoint in the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge." This is valid enough in general, although very one-sided. But the validity is reduced by its concretization by example and by the claims made for it.

One example given is that visitors come to the Communist territories in Yen-an and observe visible phenomena. "When the members of the observation group have collected data and, what is more, have 'thought them over,' they are able to arrive at the judgment that 'the Communist Party's policy of the National United Front Against Japan is thorough, sincere and genuine.'" [12] This is the second stage of cognition and already we have to note that neither Marx nor Lenin would have tolerated anything as subjective as the nonsense about "sincere and genuine." "Having made this judgment, they can, if they too are genuine" (another purely subjective judgment) "about uniting to save the nation, go a step further and draw the following conclusion, 'The National United Front Against Japan can suc-ceed.'" [13] This is not merely a simple example. It is a purely em-pirical progression with nothing inherently dialectical contained in it. The judgment is subjective without any indication of an internal and necessary progression from one stage to the next.

Further examples are on the same level. Practice is interpreted as meaning that "If you want to know a certain thing or a certain class of things directly, you must personally participate in the practical struggle to change reality ... ; only through personal partici-pation ... can you uncover the essence of that thing or class of things and comprehend them." [14] Later on he says, "If you want to know the theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution." [15] Poor Karl Marx who never got the chance to do quite that! Matters are not helped by the addition of the comment that "most of our knowledge comes from indirect experience." [16] While this statement makes it possible to claim that Mao is formally correct, that one side is balanced against the other, in the context of this article it does not at all prevent the impression that a conception of social truth is reduced to an injunction to join the Communist Party and the "correction" of the last quotation is simply a statement that if you are in the Party you can allow the Party to make the experience for you.

Another example intensifies this impression: the example of a com-rade who hesitates to accept an assignment. "If he spends some time at the job and gains experience and if he is a person who is willing to look into matters with an open mind and not one who approaches problems subjectively, one-sidedly, and superficially, then he can draw conclusions for himself as to how to go about the job and do it with much more courage." [17] The moral of this little tale, on the level of bright sayings from *Poor Richard's Almanac*, is that comrades shouldn't hesitate, that with experience gained on the job they will become qualified and expert. This is as far from dialectics as you can get. Compare it with the following from Hegel:

It is now seen that the so-called explanation and proof of the concrete element which is brought into Propositions is partly a tautology and partly a confusion of the true relation; further it is seen that this confusion served to disguise the trick of Cognition, which took up empirical data one-sidedly (the only manner in which it could reach its simple definitions and formulae), and eludes empirical refutation by examining experience and allowing it validity not in its concrete totality but as example, and only in that direction which is serviceable for the hypothesis and the theory. Concrete experience being thus subordinated to the presupposed determinations, the foundation of the theory is obscured, and is exhibited only from that side which is in conformity with the theory [18]

Lenin quoted this passage in his *Notebooks* and added the comments, "remarkably correct and profound" and "against subjectivism and one sidedness." [19] It is as if it was written in reply to Mao's "On Practice." A further barb thrown at Mao's essay is the comment of Lenin's which follows: "Example: ridiculous pomposity over

trivialities, etc." Hegel categorizes Mao's type of philosophy as Synthetic Cognition, a subordinate level of thought that has not reached the heights available to the dialectic.

Mao's difficulty is compounded by the claim he makes for his article. The concluding sentence is: "Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing." [20] That makes it impossible to say that Mao was merely intending to redress the balance, to give to practice a little more emphasis because theory had had all the emphasis in the past. The balance is completely upset, and the editor of the *Selected Works of Mao* tells us why. "'On Practice' was written in order to expose the subjectivist errors of dogmatism and empiricism in the Party, and especially the error of dogmatism, from the standpoint of the Marxist theory of knowledge." "Dogmatism is the too-rigid adherence to the theories of Marx. In establishing his own leadership over Chinese Communism, Mao had to lay the theoretical groundwork for whatever departures from Marxist theory seemed necessary to him. If practice is primary, and the practice of the Party the most decisive of all practice, and the relation between practice and theory is nowhere made explicit, then it becomes quite clear that the 'Thought of Mao Tse-tung' becomes the embodiment of both practice and theory. The rank and file Communist is left with no theoretical method to examine reality for himself, for the Party's method is empirical and cannot be tested except in practice, that is, after it is too late. When Lenin says, 'the practice of man and of mankind is the test, the criterion of the objectivity of cognition,' [22] and when he repeats this idea in many ways and many places, it is quite clear from the total context that he is speaking on a historical scale in terms of major events and human experience. He is not joining Mao in practicing 'ridiculous pomposity over trivialities.'

There appears in "On Practice" an unusual reference to the class struggle. "Man's social practice is not confined to activity in production, but takes many other forms - class struggle, political life, scientific and artistic pursuits..." [23] Later in the same paragraph, class struggle is again listed as another type of social practice distinct from material life, that is, life in production. This is quite a departure from Marx and Lenin for whom class struggle, although pervading all aspects of society, was above all found in the process of production. It is difficult to understand this particular formulation except in relation to the needs of Chinese Communist society. Mao has put forward the theory that the class struggle will be a feature of Communist society for a long time to come. [24] This, however, cannot be permitted to become a *carte blanche* to workers to struggle for their rights in the factories. As a result it becomes necessary to amend Marx and Lenin to take the class struggle out of the process of production and put it in the sphere of politics, that is, in the sphere where the Party exercises full control and where independent and spontaneous activity by workers is excluded.

There also appears in "On Practice" the first sign of a view which achieves a fuller representation in "On Contradiction." "As man's practice which changes objective reality in accordance with given ideas, theories, plans or programmes, advances further and further, his knowledge of objective reality likewise becomes deeper and deeper." [25] Notice the phrase: "in accordance with given ideas, theories, plans or programmes," and compare it with the famous quotation from Marx: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness." [26] As I shall try to show below, this is not an accidental formulation, the result of crudeness or lack of sophistication. It is a link in an idealistic and intellectual view of history that is an integral part of the philosophy of Mao-Tse-tung.

"On Contradiction"

Contradiction brings us to the heart of the dialectic and it is necessary to begin with some indication of what the dialectic is about. Hegel says in the Preface to his *Phenomenology*, "the real subject-matter is not exhausted in its purpose, but in working the matter out; nor is the mere result attained the concrete whole itself, but the result along with the process of arriving at it." [27] He says the same thing in many places and in many ways, that dialectics is a totality and a process, not simply some rules or conclusions.

That Lenin was familiar with this integral character of dialectics is indicated by his notation of sixteen points as the "Elements of dialectics":

- 1) the *objectivity* of consideration (not examples, not divergences, but the Thing-in-itself) ...
- 2) the entire totality of the manifold *relations* of this thing to others.

- 3) the *development* of this thing, (phenomenon, respectively), its own move-ment, its own life.
- 4) the internally contradictory *tendencies* (and sides) in this thing.
- 5) the thing (phenomenon, etc.) as the sum *and unity of opposites*
- 6) the *struggle*, respectively unfolding, of these opposites, contradictory strivings, etc.
- 7) the union of analysis and synthesis - the break-down of the separate parts and the totality, the summation of these parts.
- 8) the relations of each thing (phenomenon, etc.) are not only manifold, but general, universal. Each thing (phenomenon, process, etc.) is connected with *every other*.
- 9) not only the unity of opposites, but the transition of EVERY determination, quality, feature, side, property into every other (into its opposite?).
- 10) the endless process of the discovery of *new sides*, relations, etc.
- 11) the endless process of the deepening of man's knowledge of the thing, of phenomena, processes, etc., from appearance to essence and from less profound to more profound essence.
- 12) from co-existence to causality and from one form of connection and reciprocal dependence to another, deeper, more general form.
- 13) the repetition at a higher stage of certain features, properties, etc. of the lower and
- 14) the apparent return to the old (negation of the negation).
- 15) the struggle of content with form and conversely. The throwing off of the form, the transformation of the content.
- 16) the transition of quantity into quality and *vice versa*. (15 and 16 are examples of 9).[28]

I quote this in full not because it succeeds in embodying the totality of dialectics but because it indicates Lenin's awareness of dialectics as a process of constant change, of relationships being constantly transformed, of ever newer and deeper insights and discoveries. Lenin surely understood the sense in which Hegel called his philosophy Speculative Logic. It is necessary to contrast this to Mao's "On Contradiction" as a whole to appreciate the rigidity, the fixed categories and concepts, the conception of truth as a finished product, with which Mao's essay abounds. It will become clear that this contrast is not the result of "popularization" or simplification, but something very different.

To Mao all cause and effect is simple and clear-cut. "Contradictoriness within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interrelations and interactions with other things are secondary causes. Thus materialist dialectics effectively combats the theory of external causes, or of an external motive force, advanced by metaphysical mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism." [29] All his examples reinforce the rigidity of this initial conception and, in addition, primary causality becomes the basic element of development. This is not merely an inadequate presentation of the dialectic; it is a false one. Lenin notes:

When one reads Hegel on causality, it appears strange at first glance that he dwells so relatively lightly on this theme, beloved of the Kantians. Why? Because, indeed, for him causality is only one of the determinations for universal connection, which he had already covered earlier, in his entire exposition, much more deeply and all-sidedly; always and from the very outset emphasizing this connection, the reciprocal transitions, etc. etc.[30]

Resolving Contradictions

In the first section of "On Contradiction," in "The Two World Outlooks," there already appears the philosophical idealism which was only indicated in "On Practice." Mao says that the "dialectical world outlook teaches us primarily how to observe and analyse the movement of opposites in different things and, on the basis of such analysis, to indicate the methods for resolving contradictions." [31] The theme of resolving contradictions continually reappears. "Qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods." [32] "The principle of using different methods to resolve different contradictions. . . ." [33] ". . . find a way to resolve its contradictions." [34] And so on. It reaches its fulfillment, of course, in the title of the essay, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People." Mao in this way contradicts his otherwise correct opposition to external causes and insistence on contradiction being the source of internal movement. The concept

of "solving" or "handling" contradictions, as used by Mao, is a purely external and manipulative one. It is not used in a historical or objective sense of a solution being drawn out of the dialectical process. This conception of "solving" is rejected completely by Hegel, and he is joined in this by Lenin.

It is the simple point of negative self-relation, the internal source of all activity, vital and spiritual self-movement, the dialectical soul which all truth has in it and through which it alone is truth; for the transcendence[35] of the opposition between the Notion and Reality, and that unity which is the truth, rest upon this subjectivity alone. The second negative, which we have reached, is this transcendence of the contradiction, but is no more the activity of an external reflection than the contradiction is; it is the *innermost* and *most objective* moment of Life and Spirit, by virtue of which a subject, the person, the free, has being.[36]

The emphasis is Lenin's, who also added the notes: "the kernel of dialectics" and "the criterion of truth (the unity of the concept and reality)."[37]

What is involved here is fundamental and relates to the kinds of historical examples used by Mao to illustrate his philosophical points. "This is the key to the Hegelian dialectic and therefore to Marxist thinking.... Thought is not an instrument you apply to a content. The content moves, develops, changes and creates new categories of thought, and gives them direction." [38] Hegel says "it is the nature of the content and that alone which lives and stirs in philosophic cognition, while it is the very reflection of the content, which itself originates and determines the nature of philosophy." [39] Lenin puts it, "Logic is the science not of external forms of thought, but of the laws of development 'of all material, natural and spiritual things,' etc., of the development of the entire concrete content of the world and of its cognition . . ."

Two things are involved here. The first is that contradictions are not problems that need to, or can, be "solved." They are a complex set or series of ever-changing relations, that are "transcended" in particular ways. The function of thought is not to solve them but to comprehend the way in which, objectively, the contradiction will be transcended. That is why the following statement is so alien to dialectics, rigid and formalistic. "Qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods. For instance, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is resolved by the method of socialist revolution." [41] As it stands, that is little more than a tautology. It conceals more than it reveals. The function of the dialectic begins to be displayed if you ask the question: How did the two poles of the contradiction (bourgeoisie and proletariat) change and develop to result in the socialist revolution taking the form of the Paris Commune in 1871, of soviets in 1905 and 1917, of workers councils in Hungary in 1956? [42] Above all, the development of this particular contradiction is studied to find an indication of the form of the next stage as the two sides of the contradiction move toward another confrontation. That is the kind of question Lenin attempted to answer in *State and Revolution*. Mao avoids it like the plague. [43]

The second point involved takes us to the question of Mao's examples. Dialectics is unlike formal logic in that it is integrally related to contents. Formal logic can be correct whether the facts used are right or wrong. Dialectic thinking cannot because it involves, above all the self-movement of objective categories. The categories of thought, therefore, cannot be assumed or given as fixed; they have to be derived from reality, they have to be shown in their objective self-movement, and they have to be shown developing inevitably toward the transcendence of their contradictions, that is, toward their destruction. This last is important and is why Marx called the Hegelian dialectic a critical philosophy. There is thus involved a complex range of problems in dealing with Mao's philosophical writings which take us far beyond the limits of philosophy and have to be excluded from this essay. Above all, the objective truth of the facts used by Mao in developing his argument become integral to the argument itself and if the facts are demonstrated to be false or distorted, the dialectical logic is also false or distorted. [44] However, certain elements or aspects of the facts presented are more directly relevant and have to be dealt with.

As an example of the primacy of "internal causes," Mao cites the defeat of the revolution of 1926 and attributes it to the opportunism then to be found within the Chinese proletariat itself (inside the Chinese Communist Party).... Later, the Chinese Revolution again suffered severe setbacks at the hands of the enemy,

because adventurism had risen within our Party.... Thus it can be seen that to lead the revolution to victory, a political party must depend on the correctness of its own political line and the solidity of its own organization.[45] Thus it can be seen that what is decisive to the success of a revolution is not the objective strength or weakness of the respective classes (size, relation to the means of production and communication, relative weight in the society, etc.) which can be reflected (accurately or inaccurately) in the ideologies of parties, but the purely ideal representation, the mental construct, of a political line and political solidarity. Not only has Mao given causes (even if true) which are external to the working class, not internal, and are therefore not dialectical; he has given causes which are ideal and not material. There are points in a revolutionary crisis, of course, at which a political line can be decisive. The political line, however, cannot come out of thin air. It can be analysed as correct only in relation to the actual circumstances of the proletariat and other classes, not in relation to the superior or inferior wisdom of political leaders. It is only necessary to contrast Mao's method with Lenin's. When he was confronted with the collapse of the anti-war program of the Second International in 1914 he was not satisfied to charge the socialist leaders with betrayal. He produced his study of *Imperialism* in order to find the class contradiction within the working class and concluded that a new stage of capitalism had produced a privileged section of the working class which benefited from colonial exploitation. He attributed what he believed to be the degeneration of the socialist parties to that. Subjective causes, such as betrayal or an incorrect political line were, at most, consequences of an objective historical development.

Another example further extends the idealistic departure from dialectical materialism. In discussing the particularities of contradictions, Mao gives as example of examining "the two aspects of each contradiction" a history of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party." Before 1927 the Kuomintang had certain policies and was revolutionary and vigorous. "After 1927, however, the Kuomintang changed into its opposite and became a reactionary bloc of the landlords and big bourgeoisie." After 1936 its policies changed again and it cooperated with the Communist Party. An "alliance of various classes for the democratic revolution" at one point "becomes a reactionary bloc of the landlords and big bourgeoisie" at another. I leave aside the question of whether the description is accurate.[47] What is essential in this connection is that nowhere is there any attempt to show or claim that the class composition of the Kuomintang changed in any way. Instead of policy being determined by material base, that is, by class character, the class character of the organization is determined by its policy. Once again, consciousness determines existence, instead of the other way around. It takes more than the ritual use of the language of dialectics, "changed into its opposite," to produce dialectical thought.

Why Mao so flagrantly violates a basic tenet of dialectical materialism becomes a little more evident in the second half of this example, the development of the Chinese Communist Party.[48] From 1924 to 1927 the CP "courageously" led the revolution but was immature, etc. After 1927 the CP "courageously" led . . . but committed adventurist errors. Since 1935 (that is to say, since Mao assumed the leadership) the Party has corrected its errors, etc., etc. Once again a completely idealistic interpretation. Absent, for example, is any consideration of the class base of the Party, the fact that before 1927 the Communist Party had great strength in the working class which it lost completely after the debacle of 1927. Again, I leave aside the question of whether Mao's description of the development of the Communist Party is historically accurate. It is very evidently incomplete and the particular incompleteness is crucial to dialectical materialism. It may have some significance that only by departing from dialectical materialism in this way can Mao call the Communist Party a proletarian party in any sense whatever. It is not class composition which helps to determine policy. It is policy which determines class "composition."

"The Principal Contradiction and the Principal Aspect of a Contradiction"

In order to free himself to make whatever alliances he deems necessary with organizations or states which would ordinarily be considered reactionary (as the Kuomintang), Mao places great emphasis on the particularity of contradiction. This simply means that the universal principle that all things contain contradiction does not relieve you of the responsibility of determining the specific nature of each concrete contradiction in each particular situation. After, having gone on at great length to demonstrate this generality, he goes on to the heart of the question. Not only does each thing or phenomenon have a principle contradiction; it also has a principal aspect of the contradiction. What this means to Mao is a thoroughly rigid, formalistic, undialectical construction within

which purely ideal and subjective judgments can be made.[49] When the Kuomintang cooperates with the Communist Party, the principal aspect of its contradiction is its progressive revolutionary side. When the Kuomintang turns on the Communist Party, its reactionary nature becomes the principal aspect. It must be repeated: this is completely divorced from any material base, in fact or in thought, and is completely empty of the element of necessity, that is, of inherent inner development, so critical to dialectical materialism.

The rigid formalism is extended to other questions. There is identity and struggle in contradiction. Example: You see, by means of revolution the proletariat, at one time the ruled, is transformed into the ruler, while the bourgeoisie, the erstwhile ruler, is transformed into the ruled and changes its position to that originally occupied by its opposite.... If there were no interconnection and identity of opposites in given conditions, how could such a change take place? [50]

It is difficult to conceive of a greater misuse of the concept of unity of opposites or interpenetration of opposites. Compare this rigid use of categories with Lenin's sixteen elements of dialectics cited above. A simple changing of places is the least of what is involved. Even at the very end, at the conclusion of the process in the overthrow of one class by another, the destruction of both classes is assumed, not a formal change of place. Relevant to this discussion is the way Marx used this same concept in *Capital*, particularly in Chapter I, but then, following that, throughout. The category Capital contains and is its opposite, Labor. Capital is divided into constant and variable capital. Constant capital is means of production variable capital is *labor*. Labor thus does not simply stand off somewhere in opposition to capital, waiting for its chance to overthrow it. It is part of capital. Itself and the relation between the two and within the totality is in constant flux and change as technical advances in constant capital change (and are changed by) the nature of work, the size of the working class, the nature of supervision, the organizations of workers, and so forth. To reduce this rich and complex process, which is here only hinted at, to a simple change of place is like determining which are the good guys and which are the bad guys according to who wears the white hats. And Mao, of course, is in charge of distributing the hats.

Criticism and Self-Criticism

The rejection of dialectics is not accidental. The blurring of concepts as motive forces in history, the rigid formalism, all have a point. That point is a theory of the Party and the role of the Party in Chinese society. ". . . Contradiction within the Communist Party is resolved by the method of criticism and self-criticism . . ." [51] This bears a striking resemblance to the philosophical views imposed by Zhdanov on Russian philosophers. In our Soviet society, where antagonistic classes have been liquidated, the struggle between the old and the new, and consequently the development from the lower to the higher, proceeds not in the form of struggle between antagonistic classes and of cataclysms, as is the case under capitalism, but in the form of criticism and self-criticism, which is the real motive force of our development, a powerful instrument in the hands of the Communist Party. This is incontestably a new aspect of movement, a new type of development, a new dialectical law.[52]

This was presented in a report to a conference on philosophy in June 1947 to impose a new line in the name of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.[53] To combat idealism there is introduced a new law, criticism and self-criticism, a purely idealistic construction. Mao duplicates this view in all essentials.[54] The result is an inverted criticism of Hegel. From believing that history was the history of the philosopher, of consciousness and self-consciousness, Hegel eventually finds himself supporting the state bureaucracy. Beginning with a state bureaucracy, the Stalinists (Chinese and Russian) find themselves putting forward the theory that history is now the history of consciousness and self-consciousness. This is an idealistic view required in order to keep the material instruments of power out of the hands of simple workers and peasants.

It is buttressed by Mao with a falsification of Lenin's views on antagonism and contradiction. Mao quotes Lenin as saying, "Antagonism and contradiction are not all one and the same. Under socialism, the first will disappear, the second will remain." [65] Mao interprets this to mean pure will: "if comrades who have committed mistakes can correct them, it will not develop into antagonism." [56] But Lenin meant something very different. It was his view that socialist society would see the disappearance of classes and therefore the end of class struggle. It is clear that he equated antagonism with class struggle, that is, an opposition that was rooted in objective reality

and set man against man. With the end of classes he thought that contradiction would be essentially in physical or scientific forms as men continued to transform the world. It had no relation whatever to the narrow concerns of Mao. It was also consistent with his philosophical views. For Mao, who postulates centuries of class struggle in Communist society, it becomes only another way of removing philosophy from any material objectivity.

"On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People"

This is overwhelmingly a political and not a philosophic work. If the title were changed to "On the Correct Handling of Disagreements Among the People," there would be a clear picture of what it is about and no misconception that anything like dialectical contradiction was involved. However, the title is deliberate in order to give the appearance of philosophical objectivity and add the weight of Marxist dialectical materialism to support Mao's arguments. The last shred of dialectical materialism is, in fact, abandoned. "The contradiction between exploiter and exploited, which exists between the national bourgeoisie and the working class, is an antagonistic one," says Mao. "But, in the concrete conditions existing in China, such an antagonistic contradiction, if properly handled, can be transformed into a non-antagonistic one and resolved in a peaceful way." [67]

It is all here in a nutshell: The role of the Communist Party as the maker of history instead of the masses of the people. The categories (working class, bourgeoisie) made so rigid and meaningless that they are juggled any way which pleases Mao. Classes without class struggle (or, if necessary, class struggle without classes). Dialectical materialism, or rather the shell of dialectical materialism, becomes simply the quotations researched by clerks and learned by rote to justify the next twist in the political line. The essence of my argument is contained here. It is impossible to say that Mao Tse-tung in any way continues dialectical materialism. The departures from the philosophical method of Marx and of Lenin are much too great to be accepted as incompetent popularization on the one hand, or striking originality on the other. It is, of course, true that Mao, like most people, has a philosophy. A positive presentation of what that philosophy is is beyond the scope of this paper. But what is most apparent is that his philosophy is servant to his politics. It is not the source of whatever contribution he has made to history. That Mao has made original contributions to the modern world cannot be denied. What must be denied is that they have anything to do with philosophy.

Notes:

1. George Thomson, "Marxism in China Today," *The Broadsheet* (London) Vol. 2, No. 5, p. 4.
2. Arthur A. Cohen, *The Communism of Mao Tse-tung* (Chicago, 1966), p. 21.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
4. V. I. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks (Collected Works, Vol. 38)* (Moscow, 1961), p. 180.
5. "The 'dialectical' materialism, or monism, put forward in the *Anti-Dühring*, and in the essays on natural philosophy eventually published in 1925 under the title *Dialectics of Nature*, has only the remotest connection with Marx's own viewpoint . . ." George Lichtheim, "On the Interpretation of Marx's Thought," *Survey*, No. 62 (Jan. 1967), p. 5. "The results (of Engels' work on the philosophy of Nature) were not perhaps such as to enhance Engels' reputation as a philosopher among those who do not accept his writings as part of a creed." Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy* (Garden City, 1965), Vol. 7, Part 11., p. 82.
6. *Collected Works*, Vol. 14 (Moscow, 1962).
7. "The embarrassment caused to his editors by the evident incompatibility of the rather simple-minded epistemological realism expounded in the earlier work with the more 'dialectical' approach of the *Notebooks* is among the minor charms of Soviet philosophical theorising." George Lichtheim, *op. cit.*, p. 6 (footnote).
8. *Collected Works*, Vol. 22 (Moscow, 1964), pp. 185-304.
9. *Collected Works*, Vol. 25 (Moscow, 1964), pp. 381-492.
10. Mao-Tse-tung, *Selected Works* (Peking, 1965), Vol. 1, p. 296.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 297. n
12. *Ibid.*, p. 298.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 300.
16. *Ibid.*

17. Ibid., p. 302.
18. G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic* (London and New York, 2nd impression, 1951), Vol. 2, pp. 456-57.
19. Collected Works, Vol. 38, p. 210. 2° Mao op. cit., p. 308.
21. Ibid., p. 296.
22. Collected Works, Vol. 38, p. 211.
23. Mao, op. cit., p. 296.
24. An editorial in *Liberation Army Daily* of May 4, 1966 credits him with the view that the class struggle will continue for "centuries." *The Great Socialist Cultural Revolution in China* (1) (Peking, 1966), p. 21.
25. Mao, op. cit., p. 307.
26. Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Chicago, 1904), pp. 11-12.
27. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, translated by J. B. Baillie (London and New York, revised 2nd edition, 1949), p. 69.
28. *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, pp. 221-22, emphasis in original.
29. *Op. cit.*, p. 313.
30. *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 162, emphasis in original.
31. *Op. cit.*, p. 315.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 321.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 322.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 332.
- 35 The discussion over the correct translation of *aufheben* (transcendence, sublation, sublimation), in itself points up how far this conception is from Mao's "solving." See, e.g., Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel Texts and Commentary* (Garden City, N. Y., 1966), p. 33.
36. Hegel, *Science of Logic* (London and New York, 1951), Vol. 2, pp. 477-78.
37. *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 229.
38. C. L. R. James, *Notes on Dialectics* (Detroit, ND), p. 3. (Written in 1948, this was published in draft form in 1966.)
39. *Science of Logic*, Vol. 2, p. 36.
40. *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, pp. 92-93.
41. Mao, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 321.
42. The last clause, of course, shows why the question is beyond Mao's dialectics.
43. In contrast with Mao's use of contradiction to place the Party above the historical process, C. L. R. James' *Notes on Dialectics* contains a valuable example of how the concept of contradiction can be used to illuminate the stages of development of the proletarian party. "The development of the antagonistic elements *in* the labor movement is clear. Constantly higher stages, sharper conflicts of development between it as object and it as consciousness. *Increasingly violent profound attempts by the masses to break through this...*"
- "It is obvious that the conflict of the proletariat is between itself as object and itself as consciousness, its party. The party has a dialectical development of its own. The solution of the conflict is the fundamental abolition of this division. The million in the CP in France, the 2 1/2 millions in Italy, their domination of the Union movement, all this shows that the prol(etariat) wants to abolish this distinction which is another form of the capitalistic division between intellectual and manual labor. The revolutionary party of this epoch will be organized labor itself and the revolutionary petty-bourgeoisie. The abolition of capital and the abolition of the distinction between the proletariat as object and proletariat as consciousness will be one and the same process. That is our *new notion* and it is with those eyes that we examine what the proletariat is in actuality." (pp. 46-47, emphasis in original)
- "Hegel had followed his system to the end and established the faculty of thought (through his World-Spirit) as the moving principle of the Universe. Under this banner he had linked being and knowing. And he had made thought free, creative, revolutionary (but only for a few philosophers). Marxism followed him and established human labor as the moving principle of human society. Under this banner Marx linked being and knowing, and made labor and therefore thought, free, creative, revolutionary, for all mankind. Both in their ways abolished the contradiction between being and knowing. Now if the party is the knowing of the proletariat, then the coming of age of the proletariat means the abolition of the party. That is our new Universal, stated in its baldest and most abstract form..." (p. 150)
- "We are beyond *State and Revolution*. I can summarize where we are in the phrase: *The Party and Revolution*. That is our leap. That is our new universal - the abolition of the distinction between party and mass. In the advanced countries we are not far from it in actuality." (p. 154, emphasis in original)
- This is the only place, to my knowledge, where eight years before the event, the form of the Hungarian Revolution is abstractly predicted.

44. It is this which makes it necessary to reject the interpretation of Stuart R. Schram: ". . . If Mao's performance in the domain of 'pure' dialectics is not so impressive as Mr. Holubnychy maintains, neither is his contribution to 'applied' dialectics as contemptible as Mr. Cohen would have it." "Mao Tse-tung as Marxist Dialectician," *China Quarterly*, No. 29 (Jan. - March 1957), p. 160. There can be no such separation of "pure" and "applied" dialectics since the only "pure" dialectics is, of necessity, an applied dialectics. If, however, for the term, "applied dialectics," there is substituted the word, "politics," so that the contrast is now between Mao's dialectics and Mao's politics, the meaning of the above statement becomes quite valid and, perhaps, does not do great harm to Mr. Schram's basic concept.

45. *Op. cit.*, p. 315.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 326-27.

47. There were, of course, very different views of the facts within the Communist movement. As an example see Leon Trotsky, *Problems of the Chinese Revolution* (New York, 1932).

48. *Op. cit.*, p. 327.

49. In a curious note the French Marxist, Louis Althusser, says, ". . . *On Contradiction* (1937) contains a whole series of analyses in which the Marxist conception of contradiction appears in a quite un-Hegelian light. Its essential concepts may be sought in vain in Hegel: principle (sic) and secondary contradiction; principle (sic) and secondary aspect of the contradiction; antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradiction; law of uneven development of the contradiction. However, Mao's essay, inspired by his struggle against dogmatism in the Chinese Party, remains generally on a descriptive level, and is consequently abstract in certain respects. Descriptive: his concepts correspond to concrete experience. In part abstract: the concepts, though new, and rich in promise, are presented as specifications of the dialectic in general, rather than as necessary implications of the Marxist conception of society and history." ("Contradiction and Overdetermination," *New Left Review*, No. 41 [Jan-Feb. 1967], p. 19, footnote 6.) Althusser seems unaware that by divorcing Mao's dialectics from Hegel he has completely separated it from Marx. Althusser's attraction to Mao is quite natural, for in his essay he attempts to do in a sophisticated way what Mao does crudely. By removing the Hegelian dialectic from Marxism, Althusser transforms "contradiction" into an abstraction so broad and universal as to be meaningless and transforms the Marxist dialectic into a close approximation of ordinary scientific empiricism.

50. Mao, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 322.

52. Andrei A. Zhdanov, *Essays on Literature, Philosophy, and Music* (New York, 1950), pp. 71-72.

53. An incisive analysis of this development appears in *State Capitalism and World Revolution*, 2nd edition (Welwyn Garden City, England, ND) (1956), pp. 41-42. Gustav A. Wetter, S.J., reviews this conference in *Dialectical Materialism* (New York, 1963), pp. 183-89, but does not seem to be aware of the significance of the "discovery" of a "new" dialectical law.

54. The question of whether Mao or Zhdanov first discovered this "new dialectical law" is not crucial to the theme being developed here. The point is simply that it was required by the political needs of both Russian and Chinese Communism. See Arthur A. Cohen, *The Communism of Mao-Tse-tung* (Chicago, 1966), pp. 22-28 for a discussion of the view that "On Practice" and "On Contradiction" were not written in 1937 as claimed but many years later in 1950 and 1952. Stuart R. Schram summarizes the opposing view in "Mao-Tse-tung as Marxist Dialectician," *China Quarterly*, 29 (Jan.-March 1967), 157-59.

55. Quoted in Mao, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 345.

57. "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" (6th ed.; Peking, 1964), p. 4.

58 For a discussion that places Stalinist (and Maoist) philosophy in historical context see *State Capitalism and World Revolution*, pp. 38-45.

PART IX: TOTALITY AND UNIVERSALITY

Questions:

1. What is art?
2. How does Plekhanov propose to prove the correctness of the materialist view of history? Does he succeed?
Is there a better way?
3. What determines what people find to be esthetically pleasing? How do you explain the esthetic pleasure that people in the 20th century gain from ancient Greek art?
4. Was Plekhanov a racist?
5. What does Plekhanov mean when he says that the increased division of social labor among different classes leads to a disappearance of the direct dependence of art on technology and mode of production? Is he right?
6. Whose assessment of ancient Greece seems more correct to you, James' or Ivins'? Is the difference between the two more than a question of fact?
7. Why were Griffith, Chaplin, Eisenstein and Picasso able to produce works of undying vision while the finest modern writers produced only a picture of gloom, degeneration and decay?
8. Do you agree with Ken Lawrence's thesis that changes in mass consciousness can be anticipated by expressions in popular culture?

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MODERN POLITICS

By C. L. R. JAMES

A SERIES OF LECTURES
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C.L.R. James

INTRODUCTION

When the lectures which make up this book were delivered, C.L.R. James was the editor of *The Nation*, the organ of the Peoples National Movement. The leader of PNM was Eric Williams, a student and old friend of James, who had come back to Trinidad to found the party that was to lead Trinidad to national independence. However, at what seemed to be the moment of victory, a split developed between Williams and James over the nature and future of independence. Williams began a massive retreat from the objectives of the PNM, especially in relation to concessions to American imperialism. The retreat was embodied in the dispute over the Chagauramas Naval Base, a piece of Trinidad territory which the British, with their usual generosity, had given to the United States on a long term lease. A major demand of the independence movement had been the return of Chagauramas to the people of Trinidad. When Eric Williams abandoned that demand it was a sign that his struggle against colonialism would not go beyond the acceptance of neo-colonialism and the trading of British for American imperialism. That was a direction which James refused to go and the break between the two old friends very quickly became complete.

In his preface to the printed edition of his lectures, James hinted at the seriousness of the dispute and the dangers involved. He wrote that "whoever, for whatever reason, puts barriers in the way of knowledge is thereby automatically convicted of reaction and enmity to human progress." As if to confirm his fears, Williams ordered the suppression of this book and for many years the printed volumes lay in a warehouse in Port of Spain under guard. Ultimately, Williams relented to the extent of letting a New York book dealer buy the lot and take it out of the country. That limited edition, long suppressed and then,

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briefly, available, is now being reprinted.

The interest in this book extends far beyond the West Indies. In explaining the meaning of socialism to an audience in an underdeveloped country, James has made the struggle for socialism universal. It is a book that I believe will in time become known throughout the world, a book that will make the meaning of socialism clear to millions.

Martin Glaberman
September 15, 1973

PREFACE

I want to say here the great gratitude and personal satisfaction that I feel, first at having had the opportunity to give these lectures and secondly to know that they have been printed for public circulation. If at the end of my three year stay in the West Indies this was all that I had to show, I would be amply satisfied.

First: we shall soon have at the United Nations a representative who will take part in the great debate (which is now shaking the world in theory and tomorrow may shake it in arms) as to the validity of the ideas which I have put forward here and their embodiment in life. The public cannot know too much of the premises on which these great decisions, in politics and elsewhere, are being and will be made.

Secondly: it is and has been for years my unshakable conviction that sooner or later the people of the West Indies, as people everywhere else, will be faced with practical choices and decisions on their attitude to Marxism. Marxism, as I have tried to show, covers a wide variety of theory and practice. It is my hope that these lectures will contribute to a wise choice, if and when the choice has to be made, to whatever extent and degree. A mistake could ruin our lives for at least a generation.

In the end it is practical life and its needs which will decide both the problems of social and political existence and the correctness of a theory. But mankind has today reached a stage where action is conditioned by thought and thought by action to a degree unprecedented in previous ages. That indeed is the problem of our twentieth century. Whatever helps to clarify this is valuable. And whoever, for whatever reason, puts barriers in the way of knowledge is thereby automatically convicted of reaction and enmity to human progress.

C. L. R. James

CHAPTER ONE

Monday, 8th August, 1960.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am about to speak on a subject which is as difficult as it is possible to be, particularly to be treated in a series of public lectures. Nevertheless, when the subject was first broached to me, I welcomed it, because whatever the difficulties—and those you will share with me, to some degree—the West Indies are, in the near future, going to enter into the great big world outside as an independent force. Despite the difficulties in the way, I think we should not miss any opportunity to investigate, from every possible point of view, the realities and probabilities of the world of which we shall soon be a constituent part. It is with that in view that I shall speak this evening and in the rest of the lectures.

I will not disguise from you that I have a particular point of view. I am a Marxist. However, my Marxism—there are always different styles of any particular doctrine that is so widespread as Marxism—is—my Marxism has little connection with the Marxism that people in Communist China and Communist Russia and various other territories profess. That you will see as I develop my ideas. But I want to make something quite clear: I am not here in order to propagandize you, that is to say, to make you accept or believe certain ideas. I am not here to agitate you, that is to say, to get you to take certain actions. I am speaking here from the point of view of exposition; I am explaining a point of view. It is inevitable, where serious matters as these are concerned, that I shall speak about people and things to whom I am opposed, if not with too much energy—I shall try to restrain that—but certainly with a certain amount of scorn and contempt which

l i s t e d o f d e r r h i r y

they, in their turn, in my position, would not hesitate to apply to me. (laughter) But inasmuch as this is a series of lectures—and it is knowledge rather than action which guides this forum here—I propose as far as possible (and some of the points on which I shall take a position are very difficult indeed, and I am aware of the strength of the opposing arguments), I shall try for the sake of a rounded position to let you know what are the solid arguments against the views that I am putting forward.

I do not propose to be impartial. Any public lecturer on politics who says he is impartial is either an idiot or a traitor. You cannot be impartial in matters of this kind; but you can present a rounded point of view, and at question time and discussion time, I will be quite willing, not only willing, but will welcome any fairly consistent point of view which is opposed to the point of view I hold.

You will have noticed that I have got five points, more or less, in every lecture. Now every lecture is to last for about seventy-five minutes, not more, and I hope less. Five points mean at best fifteen minutes on each, fifteen minutes or a little less, because there must be a little introduction, and there must be, perhaps, a little conclusion. So when I say point 1), Plato, Aristotle and the Greek City-State, it is clear that I intend no elaborate analysis either of the facts or any ideas which we can draw from them. I want to make that clear. I select the Greek City-State because I could not do without it; and I take Plato and Aristotle to make one or two references to establish certain fundamental premises; and from these premises I will draw as time goes on. But I mention these first because I say they are necessary; and secondly because after all what we are aiming at here is the expansion of ideas and the development of interest; and this will guide you to some of the things that I am saying and enable you, if you are students, either to refresh your memory, or if you are just beginning, to follow up when you leave here.

WHAT WE OWE TO ANCIENT GREECE

Now I begin with the Greek City-States. The Greek City-States were a group of states centered around the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean; they had some colonies further out, but those are not so important. The largest of them was certainly Athens; and the number of citizens in Athens was perhaps forty or fifty thousand. They had a number of slaves, but the legitimate citizens might be about forty or fifty thousand people. They were also quite poor; the land was not good. In an island like Barbados, I believe there is more wealth and material goods accumulated today than existed in all the Greek City-States added together. Yet these states, with Athens at the head, formed, in my opinion, the most remarkable of all the various civilizations of which we have record in history, including our own. In politics, in ethics, in science, in philosophy, in epic poetry, in tragic drama, in comic drama, in sculpture, in medicine, in science, they laid the foundations of Western civilization. And it is not only that we today rest upon their achievements. It is far more wonderful than that. If today you want to study politics, it is not because Aristotle and Plato began the great discussion, not at all; in order to tackle politics today, fundamentally, you have to read them for the questions that they pose and the way that they pose them; they are not superseded at all.

Now what were the reasons for the strength of this remarkable exhibition of civic, social and political organization? These questions are still disputed. I can select only two. They are, for me, the most important, and also they are the most important for this series of lectures. The first is that in the great days of the City-State of Athens in particular, the Athenians rejected representative government and followed a pattern of direct democracy.

I am going to make this as vivid as possible.

HOW DIRECT DEMOCRACY WORKED

Athens was divided into ten tribes or divisions, and every month they selected by lot a certain number of men from each division. (You put names in a hat and pull them out. I don't know the particular method by which they chose.) And these went into the government offices and governed the state for that month. They required two things of him: (1) that he had fought in the wars; and (2) that he had paid his taxes; also, I think, that his family, his old parents were properly seen after. They did not ask whether you could read or you could write. I would suspect that a great number of them were illiterate. At the end of that period they went out and another set came in, chosen in the same way. It wasn't that they didn't know about representative government; they had had representative government and they rejected it in favor of this system of direct democracy. Now if you went—I will not be local—but if you went to some foreign country and told the leaders there, the mayor and councillors, that their city could be governed by just taking any thirty people, by putting names in a hat and choosing these, our modern rulers would fall apart. They would consider that that was absolutely impossible, if they were not students; if they were, they would be a little bit more careful because they would have the Greeks in their minds; and I believe they would be quite right. I doubt if you could take thirty or forty people today from anywhere and put them into some government, however small it might be, and ask them to run it. It is not because government is so difficult. The idea that a little municipality, as we have them all over the world today, would have more difficult and complex problems than the city of Athens is quite absurd. *It is that people have lost the habit of looking at government and one another in that way.* It isn't in their minds at all. To the Greeks, after centuries of experiment with political methods, it was a natural procedure; it lasted for two hundred years, and that was the government which produced what we live on intellectually to this day.

THE RELATION OF THE GREEK TO HIS GOVERNMENT

The second point that I wish to make flows from that one, and it is this: In my opinion the greatest strength of the Greek government, the Greek ancient democracy, was that it achieved a balance between the individual and the community that was never achieved before or since. That is one of the fundamental problems of politics: what is the relation of the individual, his rights, his liberties, his freedom, his possibilities of progress to the community in which he lives as a part? And nowhere, as far as I know, was this so finely achieved, this balance so beautifully managed, as between the individual citizen and the City-State of ancient Greece.

Now, I mention Plato and Aristotle. They both detested the City-State. They were very learned men, and naturally they disapproved of government by all sorts of persons picked up by chance. Nevertheless, when Plato had the opportunity to live in Athens, when the reaction had established a dictatorship, he had the grace to say that, after all, he didn't like any of them, but the democracy was better than a dictatorship. And Aristotle said that there were governments of democracy and of oligarchy and aristocracy—and none of them was very good, was absolutely perfect—but on the whole the least bad of them was a bad democracy, and, therefore, he gave his support also to this extreme democracy.

Plato and Aristotle, however, owe their great reputations to the penetration that they showed in analyzing the problems of government. I will have to leave to you to work out the particular aspects you wish to tackle. But today it is recognized that if they were able to penetrate so deeply into fundamental problems and to write so freely and develop their ideas, it was not due only to their extraordinary ability. (Aristotle is perhaps one of the three ablest men I have any knowledge of.) It was because of the state which they analyzed, and in all their analyses they were constantly seeking how to improve the City-State; and the penetration of their work, its range, its vitality, up to today, is due to the

fact that the state that they lived in and that they examined was of this remarkable character. It was not perfect, but it was of such a type that it posed all the fundamental questions, and so solved them that it enabled these philosophers to write as they have written.

The next section that I propose to deal with this evening is Rome, and I have put next to Rome, St. John of Revelations. The devil can quote Scripture for his purpose but Scripture is Scripture, and I am prepared to use it. (laughter)

GREAT ROME AND LITTLE ATHENS

Rome is important for us for various reasons; one of them is the contrast with Athens. Athens at its best was small—you go down to the Oval and you watch cricket down there, about thirty thousand people—that was about the number of citizens in Athens in its best days. The Romans were different. That was the greatest empire the world has ever seen without a doubt, because it occupied the whole of the known world. Whatever the Romans didn't rule was barbarism—remote places; nobody could get there. They certainly have left a great influence in various parts of Europe, but, nevertheless, on the whole, their influence in the world is much less than that of little scrappy Athens. They left a great heritage of law. In any case the point I wish to make is that it is not size, it is not strength, it is not power; it is what you do with what you have that matters. And Greece showed that you can have very little and still achieve the things which stand out as among the greatest achievements of humanity. (applause)

Rome fell, collapsed, became a laughing stock among all the backward barbarians whom it had ruled. And I take St. John of Revelations for one reason: he was a colonial. He was a Jew whose country was ruled by the Romans; and he was anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist. If you want to read about anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, take the Bible and read the last Book, that is the *Revelations of St. John*.

John called them such a set of fornicators, whoremongers, Sodomites, corruptors—every conceivable piece of abuse that you could find—you will see there what he said about those Romans. He didn't like them. If he wrote like that today in any ordinary colony they would arrest him, not, perhaps, for sedition, but certainly for—what is the phrase?—disrespect or something? Violent and obscene language.

ST. JOHN'S VISION OF A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

He says that Rome is to be destroyed; and he means destroyed. He is not speaking metaphorically. He said that the Heavens are going to open and that Christ is going to come with mighty armies; and he even chose the place of the battle, Armageddon. There the great battle is going to be fought; and the Romans are going to be beaten, defeated, ruined, and there is going to be such a slaughter that before the armies of Christ come down, somebody is going to come out and call all the birds of the air, the vultures, corbeaux, and the rest of them, so that when the battle is over they can eat up all the dead bodies.

He says Babylon is fallen—that great city. He had some respect for his own hide. He wouldn't write Rome; he said it was Babylon, but everybody knew whom he meant.

What is important for us, however, is that two aspects of political life at critical moments appear in his work. Number one: he had a historical sweep. He said that there had been four monarchies. I cannot remember exactly. I think one was the Macedonians, another was the Egyptians, another one was the Assyrians and so forth. But he said the Romans were the last; and then would come the Kingdom of God on earth. You see, he had a sense of historical development. His was the fifth monarchy. There had been four monarchies, and the fifth monarchy would be the Kingdom of God on earth.

And then he said something else. In his own way he was concerned with the same problems that Plato and Aristotle and all the serious thinkers were concerned with. He said

there would be a new world after the Romans had been defeated, and everybody would be happy. He said there would be no sea. In other words, the problem of crossing the sea was giving that generation a lot of trouble, so the new world would have no sea—God would see about that—so you could move about as you please. He says, again, the fruits of the earth would bear every month; it is those that we have which bear every twelve months; his was to be every month. There would always be plenty to eat. And he says that the lion and the lamb would lie down in peace.

If I have said a few things about him which would give you an idea that he was not a very great writer, it is because I am trying to point out certain aspects of his works. I personally have, over the years, found that, as a religious poem—because that is what it is, though it was based on fact—it can stand comparison with Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and, by and large, if I had to choose one—which Heaven forbid I will ever have to do—I think I would take St. John; and not because he is anti-imperialist, but because of the strength of his vision, his grasp of fundamentals, and his kinship, despite the peculiar form that he used, with great philosophers like Plato and Aristotle. He was dominated by the vision of a peaceful and harmonious society.

THE CITY-STATES OF THE MIDDLE AGES

The next group I have chosen is the City-States of the Middle Ages, particularly in Italy and Flanders. Now again we have the extraordinary spectacle of City-States—Genoa, Florence, Siena, Pisa, Padua, Rome; a number of them in Spain; but the ones I want to speak about particularly are in Flanders: Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp, and various others of the kind—City-States.

They were of a type different from the City-States of Greece, whence their troubles began, but whence, also, arose their glory—those in Ghent and in Flanders. Those in northern Italy, particularly Florence, practiced a type of capitalism; that is to say, they assembled workers (who had

neither property nor land) in factories, and with a co-operative type of labor, produced goods, for the most part textiles. The wealth that they produced, particularly in comparison with the standards of wealth of the countries around them, was beyond belief. The moment you have this collection of men doing co-operative labor according to a fixed plan—which is essentially what capitalism is; a fixed plan inside the factory, at any rate—there you have possibilities of wealth that no previous type of economy was ever able to manage. Whereas the City-States of Greece were extremely poor in material wealth, the City States of the Middle Ages were extremely wealthy, particularly those in northern Italy and in Flanders. Antwerp was the port of the City-States of Flanders, and they say five hundred ships came in there every day; and however small they were, five hundred ships every day is a great number of ships indeed! The rulers in Ghent and in particular in Bruges were men so wealthy—the mayors of those cities—that they sent embassies to kings, received embassies; had fleets and armies of their own, and treated with the rulers of France and England and the rest on equal terms, although they lived and ruled only in a single city.

Their achievements were magnificent. Just as an example. In Florence, somewhere in the 16th century, when the municipality wanted to have a competition as to who should paint panels in the City Hall, the winners of the competition were two Florentine citizens—Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. That was greatness indeed.

At the same time in Florence there was Donatello, perhaps one of the greatest sculptors after Michelangelo. In the great cathedral there, Dante, the greatest of European writers, used to be sitting down, watching his friend, Giotto, the great painter, build the tremendous tower which is next to the cathedral; and walking on the banks of the Arno would be Dante's friend, Guido Cavalcanti. Dante is the great Catholic poet, but when Guido was walking all by himself there, with his face deep in thought, people used to say, "Look at him. He is there looking for arguments to prove that there is no God." But Dante was his good friend.

Two of the greatest painters that the world has ever known, the Van Eycks--they came to fruition in Flanders with many others around them. You go to Flanders and see those town halls and other buildings magnificent up to this day. But they collapsed like Rome. And the reason why they collapsed is of great importance to us. Employers and workers for centuries fought some of the bitterest struggles that you can think of in all the history of the labor movement. You see, the moment they got the workers together in one factory, and you had eight or ten factories, and they were all in one city, then that was trouble! In the last half of the 15th century, we have fifty years of continuous battles, and of attempts by the workers in those cities five hundred years ago to establish what we can legitimately call Workers' States. In a few places they did manage it. Sometimes only for a few weeks, sometimes for a few months, once for three or four years. The persistence and energy of those attempts is incredible. One of the names you might remember is Van Artevelde, a member of a family that took a great part in this business. At one time they had the idea of establishing a workers' government right through Flanders, Holland and Belgium, and had all the ruling groups and kings and the rest of them in Western Europe shivering in their shoes. They were beaten in the end--the clergy, the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, the artisans, not the wage laborers, you see, but the independent artisans, all joined together and with some knights in armor defeated them in a battle. That is how they were beaten.

I want to give you a certain episode and I want you to reflect on it, because it is very important in approaching history and political matters. At a certain stage under the leadership of Van Artevelde, who, by the way, was a bourgeois, but he joined the working class movement--they decided that the only thing that they could do to have peace in the city was to wipe away the employing class completely--men, women and children, everybody over the age of six. (laughter)

Now I bring that to your notice and I would like you to

reflect on it, because here is the central question of political theory and political philosophy. It is not only an unusual, but it is an extreme state of mind when, not one or two people, but a whole population--members of a class living a certain life--reach the stage of exasperation when they feel that they will have to rid themselves of a whole class. They must be no more than six years of age; if they are at all older than that, they grow up and give a lot of trouble. You see, they feel this stage of exasperation with something that has been going on for many years. But the employers also (you have got to look at their point of view--after all you can afford to be judicious, because this took place many hundred years ago), the employers also are obviously in face of what is for them an insoluble difficulty. It is a problem that cannot be solved, and was not solved. You know what happened? Those City-States collapsed from the violence of the internal struggles, which means that it is not evil, and malice, and cruelty that comes into play. It is an objective social and political situation that is beyond the solution of those who are taking part and they slash and fight and cut up one another until, finally, those states collapsed. For us, in this forum, it is important to remember what they were seeking--the weavers and these others in particular. They were seeking to establish what Plato and Aristotle had written about, and what St. John had in mind after the Roman Empire was overthrown. They were seeking to establish some sort of government in which there would be no extra privileges or extra authority except for those who actually labored. They failed, the regime collapsed and the national State superseded them. But (we are at an important part of the study of politics, to see to what extent an insoluble problem can tear to pieces and ruin those persons who are engaged in it.

You of course understand that we are engaged in much the same type of problem today.

I do not say it is insoluble, but it is good to have some sort of balance and to recognize the objective nature of problems and what they do to people; and it is not the evil in people that creates problems but the problems that create the

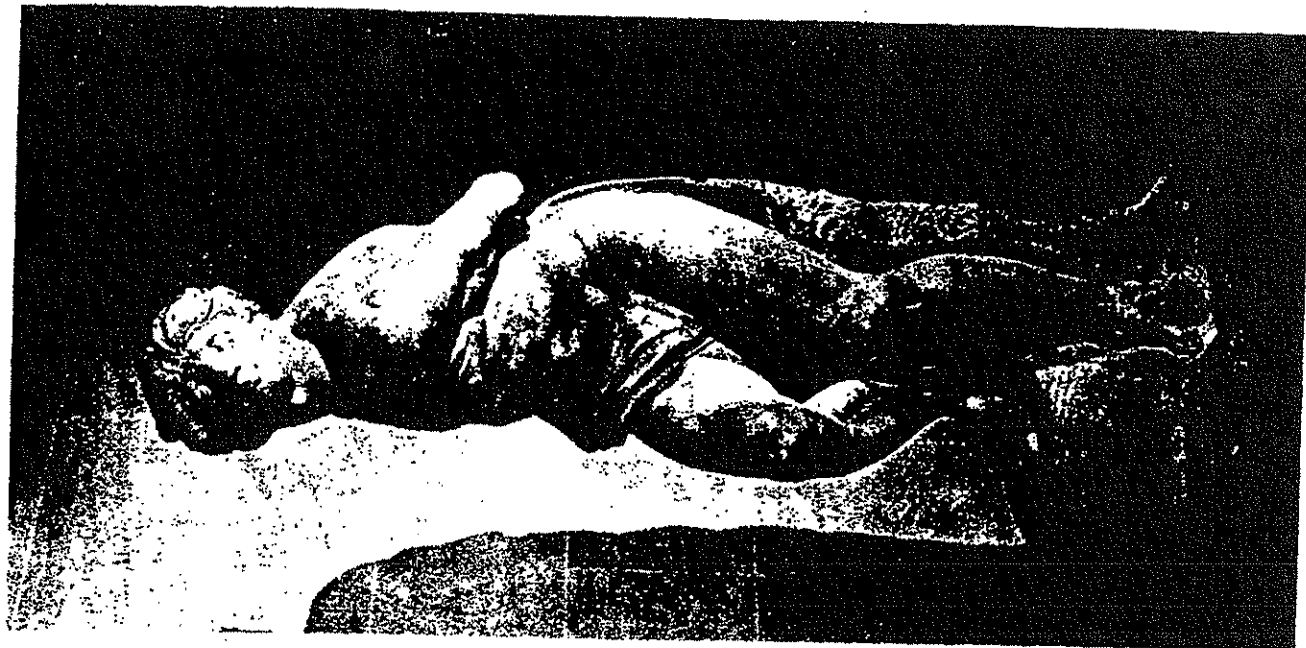
evil. In the course of a political struggle you throw bricks and call your opponent enemy and scoundrel and thief and rogue, but that cannot be helped because he is doing the same thing. But if you are studying politics seriously you have to see where the objective problems lie and what are the possibilities of solution. That is what I mean by some problems of method.

THE BIRTH OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

We now come to the modern world, we are a little closer—the 17th century—Great Britain. And we come to the establishment of the principles of parliamentary democracy. And these did not come from people who had studied Plato and Aristotle, nor by people who studied St. John, although St. John comes in a little later. The principles of democracy came in a way that is very instructive to us because my experience, limited as it has been, shows that, by and large, the great political discoveries, although heralded by great writers and in the speeches of politicians, the great political discoveries, the actual discoveries of actual policy, come as much by the instinctive actions of masses of people as by anything else. No scholars or philosophers work them out.

I will have to be very brief, very concise. I shall do a lot of injustice to some very excellent people and to some execrable people, but it cannot be helped. In England in the 17th century, you have a corrupt monarchy—corrupt in the sense that it was no longer suitable for the work that it had to do. You had a feudal aristocracy surrounding the monarchy, and that was Anglo-Catholic. They had broken away from the Roman Catholic Church but they still retained many of the practices and attitudes of the Roman Church. They were Episcopalian, but the King could marry Henrietta of France, who was a Catholic.

Opposed to the King were the gentry. They owned land on the countryside, but they were progressive farmers. And also opposed to the King more or less were the merchants in the towns.



Michelangelo, The Rebellious Slave

Now the frame of society in those days, the external and to some degree, the internal frame was religious, and these struggles were fought out over political and economic problems but, fundamentally, in a religious ideology and in religious terms. The King and those around him were Protestants, high church Episcopalians. The gentry, the progressive farmers, (and some of them were noblemen, by the way) and the merchants were Presbyterians. They were actually called that—the Presbyterian Party.

CROMWELL AND THE LEVELLERS

Now for thirty or forty years—longer perhaps—the Presbyterians carried on a steady attack against the Episcopalian Church through which the King held authority; and they wanted to substitute, not democracy, they wanted to substitute a Presbyterian Church. There were some elements of democracy, their priests, their presbyters, were to be chosen by their congregations; they did not want any bishops. It would be democratic, but a democratic church organization. But their aim and the aim of Cromwell and the Earl of Fairfax and the rest of them who started it, was to substitute a Presbyterian theocracy for the theocracy that ruled under Charles the First. There were other great issues at stake, commercial monopolies, parliamentary privileges, etc., but, nevertheless, they saw the thing fundamentally in theological terms. And they were not very strange in so doing, because two hundred years afterwards Gardner wrote a famous history of the Puritan Revolution in which he made it purely a religious affair. He has been discarded now, but he lasted quite a while.

The Civil War began between the gentry, the Presbyterian gentry, and the Monarchy and the supporters of the Monarchy, in 1640. By 1644 Charles was beaten. He kept his head on for five more years, but by 1644 he was militarily defeated. Why did he last so long? In order to defeat him the Presbyterians, the gentry, had had to call upon the common people, yeomen farmers and apprentices, to form Cromwell's famous Model Army. And when they had defeated the King



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Fight of the Money-bags and the Strong Boxes.

and were looking around as to how they would establish a new regime, they found that the Model Army and the people whom they represented had different ideas as to what this regime was going to be, ideas different from the ideas of the Presbyterians. Their political name tells us a lot. They were called Independents. Independents because they did not want to be guided by priests or presbyters. Each man was ready to interpret Scripture independently.

The Presbyterian gentlemen began to look upon the King with a different eye. He did not look so bad after all, when now they could look back and see these monsters behind them. Charles also was very shrewd. He believed that he had been divinely appointed King. The Archbishop had appointed his head and he said, "Well, that's what I am; and these people who are doing this are treasonable, atheists, scoundrels, and in addition, I see they are in trouble with those who are behind them." He started to intrigue and maneuver. This went on from 1644 to 1646, and finally some of the men—captains, sergeants and others in the army, not the leaders, formed the Leveller Party. It is the first modern political party in the world, and it was formed practically by chance. It was formed, not against the King, but it was formed to deal with Cromwell, whom Lilburne, one of the leaders, had worshipped. Suddenly, between 1644 and 1646, they were faced with the fact that Cromwell was hesitating and Fairfax and the others, these Presbyterian noblemen and gentry, were ready to betray them. Out of this crisis sprang, in 1646, the Leveller Party. It had no serious antecedents; you can read and pick up something here and something there, and say that these were leading to it. You could always do that with new historical formations. But the party, as a party, was new, born in 1646, and by 1649 they had laid down the principles of parliamentary democracy. These were annual parliaments, almost manhood suffrage, payment of Members of Parliament, vote by secret ballot, equal constituencies, abolition of the House of Lords, abolition of the Monarchy, and sovereignty—the sovereignty of the nation resting, not with the King, or with the Parliament, but with the people. In about two years they had it all worked out,

one of the greatest political achievements in the development of mankind. You see, they got it so clearly because they knew what they were fighting against. This and this and that and that had been going on and troubling them and they put up a proposition to meet each difficulty. That is how the people act when they do act. Yet the result was greater than anything you can find in Plato or Aristotle. Up to this day there are not many countries who are carrying out the parliamentary democracy that these fellows established between 1644 and 1646. They were so powerful that Cromwell had to compromise with them. But one day he was speaking in the House of Parliament, and Lilburne crept up to listen at the door and he heard Cromwell say: either we deal with these people or they are going to deal with us.

Cromwell used them to strike down the King's party. The King was executed, but shortly afterwards Cromwell destroyed the Leveller Party. He lasted for eleven years. Today, within the last fifteen or twenty years, some scholars—Haller, an American, and Davis, an Englishman—have been examining the works and writings of the period and general opinion is swinging to the view that if there had been any possibility of establishing a parliamentary republic in Britain around 1649 it was the way of the Levellers and not Cromwell's way. One cannot be sure of these things. I only give you an idea of what modern opinion is. The Levellers were very great men. They did a lot more than I am able to say here tonight. And one of them, Richard Overton, was the very prince of revolutionary journalists. To read him today is still a delight. And, most curious, many of the Levellers were known as Fifth Monarchy men. They said that the fifth monarchy St. John had written about, they were going to establish it.

By the way, I am told that some arrangements have been made for these lectures to be sold, or rather to be published for sale, which is rather different; so many of these references that I make I shall amplify when I correct the script.

So that is the way that the idea of parliamentary democracy came into the world. American teachers and writers preached for many generations that Jefferson and these had got their ideas from John Locke, an English philosopher, but I have noticed within recent years a great upsurge of interest in the Levellers, and recognition that they have more of the matter in them than Locke had.

Now just about this time, in the 17th century, when this is going on, we have one of the great discoveries in the intellectual development of mankind. You see, I put Shakespeare and the Levellers in that section. I put Shakespeare there for a particular reason. Shakespeare is the great dramatist of individual character. There is a great deal of debate as to what degree character really represents the essentials of his work. There is no need to go into that. The point was that individual characteristics, individual people in conflicts about individual problems, which they themselves were to settle, is what distinguishes Shakespeare's drama. It was symptomatic of the time.

THE BEGINNING OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY

And within that same period we have one of the great discoveries, the beginning of modern philosophy, in the work of Descartes, the Frenchman. There had been studies in astronomy and mechanics in particular going on for a number of years, and the old system of Ptolemy, the astronomical system of Ptolemy had been displaced by the system of Copernicus, not exactly displaced because in those days an astronomer, a scientist—it happened to Galileo, it happened to all of them—used to mix up his scientific discoveries with theological ideas. You were either proving that the church was right or proving that the church was wrong because it had not fully understood the greatness of God. Scientists would introduce moral values into the analysis of scientific matters.

This went on side by side with the development of astronomy, and investigation into mechanics and scientific

progress were impeded by matters irrelevant to it.

In 1632, after twelve years of study, Descartes, the Frenchman, made a world-shaking pronouncement. His conclusion was as follows: "Look, I am tired of all these astronomers and scientists quoting Aristotle, quoting the Bible, quoting everything and mixing up scientific knowledge, so that a man does not know where to begin and where to end." He said, "*Cogito ergo sum*"—"I think, and therefore, I am." I think and therefore I exist. I know nothing else. God exists, but I know nothing at all about the world except what my intellect teaches me when I examine a subject. This was taking place about the same time as the revolution in Great Britain. You see, these things move in a certain pattern. The 17th century is the beginning of the modern world. At the same time, as out of the religious conflicts there breaks out at the end the Levellers with a political program, just about the same time, historically speaking, Descartes pulls the intellect out of all the mass of alien matters which had been obscuring its development, and he brings the intellect out plain and simple; from now on we are going to go by the mind, and this is what more or less dominates in Europe for another 150 years.

The last ones that I have on the list here are Tom Paine, Rousseau and the American and the French Revolutions; and with them I will bring the whole of this part to a conclusion. Descartes in France clears up the idea of the intellect. You can, by the way, still read his book today; it is short and it is very easy to read, and very fascinating. He calls it *A Discourse on Method*. Now we have to make a jump. In France the French Monarchy, by the middle of the 18th century, was quite degenerate. In England, in the 17th century, we have seen how the idea of parliamentary democracy sprang out of a struggle against a backward monarchy, a corrupt aristocracy and a clergy that was not in sympathy with the general ideas of the people. We find a similar situation in 18th century France; and a group of Frenchmen, a good many of them followers of Descartes, decided that they would work against what existed in France.

The greatest of all propagandists was their leader, Voltaire. Voltaire called the whole thing, "l'infame." He gave it a name. You can translate it, "The Infamous." Today I think it will be better to translate it as, "The Mess." The whole lot of it—the Monarchy, the corrupt clergy, the aristocracy, "The Mess." "L'infame." He coined a slogan—"Ecrasez l'infame"—smash up The Mess. And wherever possible he ended what he wrote with "Ecrasez l'infame."

THE AGE OF REASON

These men, Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert, Grimm, believed that if you got rid of the superstition and the corruption and all the privileges which their corrupt rulers claimed, if you got rid of all that and used reason, just applied reason to human affairs, the result would be a happy, harmonious and progressive life for everybody. You see, the same problem—Plato and Aristotle, St. John of Revelations, the workers of the Middle Ages, and the men of the 16th century, the Englishmen of the 17th century. In the 18th century these Frenchmen were looking to reason to do it. They thought: "Well, in England they had a good constitution there, they have a king but he is reasonable; they have a government, a House of Commons and House of Lords; and we don't like the House of Lords too much, but by and large they seem very progressive. If we could only apply reason to our affairs and get rid of all this superstition and corruption, the prospects of a happy life would be with us." They did very well. They wrote remarkable books; they examined industry and science; they wrote philosophy; they analyzed and they preached. They published a great Encyclopedia, so that to this day they are called the Encyclopedists. They became world-famous. But trouble was ahead.

ROUSSEAU REJECTS PURE REASON

One of them was Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and after I recommend to you Aristotle—one or two books of his—in the whole of the period between Ancient Greece and the French Revolution, I certainly would recommend one writer, Rous-

seau, and one book of his, *The Social Contract*. Because Rousseau was an Encyclopedist with the others. He was a friend of Diderot and the rest. He studied with them, he worked with them, he wrote an article on music in the Encyclopedia; and then, suddenly, he said he was sitting down by the side of the road and he got a new idea which changed everything. Rousseau opened fire on the Encyclopedists. He said in effect: "You and your Age of Reason would be no better than all that is going on, that mess." Here was a crisis. Diderot, in particular, was cut to the heart, for after Voltaire, Rousseau was as sharp and as able a controversialist as any of them.

I am going to end this evening's session by giving you some idea of Rousseau's book, which is indispensable for modern political theory up to this very day. Rousseau had an original and independent mind and he set out to find the basis of government, a proper basis for government, and he says, "The first thing that we have to remember is that when we get together in society we do it upon the basis of a contract." Men got together and decided that they would pool their resources in order to have a type of society in which the liberty of each would become the liberty of all. "I, having given my liberty to a form of government, when I obey it, I am obeying myself. That is the social contract." But he went on to say that if at any time that government behaves in a manner contrary to our original agreement, then all allegiance to it ended, each man is on his own again. Now, that was a ferocious doctrine. Other men had written about the social contract before—Hume, Locke, Hobbes, but they had, most of them, made the contract in regard not only to the association of men but a contract in regard to government. Rousseau says the contract is not in regard to any government at all. He says the contract is between us, as people, to form a society; but we have no contract with any government; the contract is strictly between us, and the whole trend of this thought is that (any time a government does not do what is satisfactory, we are finished with it; the contract is broken; we have to start all over again.) That is a doctrine of profound revolutionary implications.

HE REPUDIATES REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

But Rousseau is going to startle you still more. To this day he startles me, and I have been reading him for some forty years. Every now and then you see a sentence and you pull up. The Encyclopedists and the men of the Age of Reason were all concerned with a constitution and representative government. Rousseau thought that representative government was an absolute farce. He says the moment you vote and give your power to some other people, they begin to represent themselves or other interests, not the interests of the people. (laughter)

Rousseau thought that representative government deceived the people. And political parties too deceived the people. He said that as soon as political parties get together and start to quarrel with one another, all sorts of private or special interests come into play and the interest of the population is lost.

What does Rousseau recommend? And here, in my opinion, is the real greatness of his book. He knew what he wanted but he didn't know exactly how it could be translated into concrete political terms. He went round and round and in and out and in the end he did not succeed. But as history has gone on and you look you will see what Rousseau was driving at. He said there is something called "the general will"—the general will of the population. What is the general will? Is it when the population votes and there is a majority? He says, "No, it is not mere majority." He and other profound students of his work believe that if a minority merely has to obey a majority, that is tyranny. But he says if the majority expresses the general will, then the minority can obey, and that is not tyranny. How to get the general will? Rousseau cannot explain. Finally he says, "I think we should have a legislator, a legislator—a man who is able from ability and sensitivity to divine the general will and express it."

Rousseau is not easy because he does not shrink from difficulties. But the more you study modern politics with a critical eye, the more you find in Rousseau.

People like Sir Ernest Barker and others say that Rousseau is totalitarian. It is an absurd statement altogether. No totalitarian has a social contract breathing down his neck which if it is not satisfied will burst the whole situation up. Rousseau is not a totalitarian; he is a revolutionary thinker, one of the greatest, and he was pointing his finger at the fundamental weaknesses of parliamentary and party government.

WHAT CAN REPLACE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT?

Now, what is it that Rousseau was really driving at? If you read *The Social Contract* you will see how often his references are to the Greek City-State. Rousseau, I am positive of this, is seeking a form of political organization in which the individual will feel himself in relation to a government in much the same way that the Greek citizen felt in relation to the City-State. And that is why he is not afraid of one man—a legislator—if that fellow will express the general will. But he is pretty sure that parliament and political parties as he has seen them will not express it. Once you put them there, they acquire, not through malice, not through vice—I am not speaking of the wickedness of men here at all, but from the objective circumstances—they acquire a life of their own which is separate from the life and the interests that they are supposed to serve. Most serious thinkers today will agree with him. The problem is to find a workable substitute. That is so difficult that many people who have no vested interest in representative government or party politics support them for want of a better.

I will end by this: much of our study of modern politics is going to be concerned with this tremendous battle to find a form of government which reproduces, on a more highly developed economic level, the relationship between the individual and the community, that was established so

wonderfully in the Greek City-State. That was Rousseau's problem; he did not know the answer, but he stated the question. When the French Revolution came, it took the form that Rousseau had had in mind, and not the form of the men of the Age of Reason; and in the same way that after three or four years of civil war in England there broke out from the religious ideologies the political ideology, so the French Revolution, starting with the political ideology of the Rights of Man, after five or six years of civil war broke out with the socialism of Babeuf.

I have mentioned Thomas Paine. Paine was an Englishman. He went to America, he helped them with the American Revolution; he went to France, he helped them with the French Revolution, and he wrote various books—*Common Sense*, *The Age of Reason*, and *The Rights of Man*. And Paine (he is a very witty man, by the way, very sarcastic) gives you a readable idea of how the men of the Age of Reason thought. He is not a man of Voltaire's quality but he writes in English and if you read his books you get the Age of Reason pure and simple. And if you read *The Social Contract*, you see where the Age of Reason, despite its virtues, fell short.

My last word is that the leaders of the American Revolution established the idea of national independence. The French Revolution established the Rights of Man. Most of the gentlemen, by the way, of the 18th century were men of the Age of Reason—Jefferson, Washington, Madison and the others. I am informed, I have no reason to doubt it, that the first five Presidents of the United States were not Christians at all. They were all men of Reason. They believed in some sort of abstract God but not in any church. That was characteristic of the 18th century. These ideas dominated educated men of the 18th century. This body of thought played a great role. It is called the Enlightenment and the Illumination, and fittingly so. But what has endured from the 18th century is the man who challenged it from top to bottom, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. We are going to meet a lot of his ideas as we proceed. (applause)

CHAPTER TWO

Thursday, 11th August, 1960.

Mr. "Mythical"*—Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

First of all, let me say how glad I am to see so many of the people who were present last time back again, and an audience quite comparable to the last one. My reason is this: I have no illusions at all as to the stiffness of the course that I am pursuing. I could have made it easier. It would have been less honest. Modern politics embraces all aspects of contemporary life. In order to understand the various ideas, the various solutions, it is my firm belief that we have to go back to where we began, and I am not going to back down. Last time I noticed at a certain stage that the strain of following what was, to some of you, a philosophical argument, was exercising a certain amount of pressure on you. It did you no harm, I am sure. It is true that I was taking a certain amount for granted, but what I am laying is a foundation and, as every lecture proceeds, I hope the foundation laid will become more and more part of the general movement forward. If I may venture a hint, I think by and large tonight would probably be the toughest of all. In the end we shall be in a better position to move faster because we shall have solid ground under our feet.

I would like to say a word, too, to those of the persuasion of my friend who raised the position of St. Thomas Aquinas and complained that I had not mentioned him. I am not doing a history of philosophy. If I were doing a history of philosophy, I would have to take up St. Thomas Aquinas and other Catholic theologians. I am trying to get at the foundations of modern politics and I am not aware that St. Thomas Aquinas and the doctrines that he preached are essential; in fact, I know they are not essential to my

*The Chairman was late.

conception of modern politics. There is a university in the United States, a very powerful university too—Chicago University—where there are many Thomists, and the doctrines of St. Thomas are the basis of their approach to modern politics. That is theirs, that is not mine.

I would like to say, finally, that although I may appear to be calling some names and making brief references to them which does not validate the fact that they should be mentioned in the syllabus, they all have significance for where we are going, what we shall have to keep and what we shall have to discard.

Now I will say a word or two about what we did last time and then move on. We took up the Greek City-State; then we took up the Roman Empire. We followed with the towns, the City-States of the Middle Ages. We went on to the English Revolutions and then to the American and French Revolutions. It was a tremendous span. Nevertheless each one of them showed at key moments in the history of the world the rise and decline of societies; what they contributed to the general stock of knowledge and learning and analysis about politics, and what were the ideas of the men who, at the time, made the records of those particular struggles and battles. So that at the end we were able to say that if we look at history in its key moments, there are many decades, and centuries, when nothing particular seems to have happened, and then a historical period stands up and strikes you as containing essential matter for further consideration.

THE DESIRE FOR EQUALITY

Whenever masses of people saw a road open that they thought they could follow they have sought to establish a society of equality; a society of democracy. The great writers were pre-occupied with it and it is noticeable that some of the greatest names in the history of political philosophy are precisely those writers who were seeking to establish, even if only in thought, a society of equality, harmony—all imbued with the idea of the progressive character of the life of

mankind. I think I gave you evidence of that and it is worth while to know that we have that; that cannot, must not be challenged. We ended up, however, with the Age of Reason—those brilliant Frenchmen of the 18th century, and the challenge which one of them—you will remember, Rousseau—made to the doctrines of the Age of Reason, and I tried to make it clear that these men—Diderot, Rousseau, Voltaire, and the rest of them—were so convinced of the validity of reason because opposed to them there was the superstition of what I call “the corrupt monarchy”; not the clergy—I have always been careful to say “the corrupt clergy”—the clergy in France was very corrupt; and the parasitic aristocracy. Voltaire and these others believed that if you got rid of them and their superstition and their privileges and their claims to all sorts of special benefits in society, and substituted instead reason, the harmonious society, the progressive society and a society of a reasonable equality could be established.

Rousseau attacked this view. He attacked it before the French Revolution, and when the French Revolution came you had a startling example of “the general will,” in that Robespierre carried the revolution through with extreme fierceness. In the end all reason and democracy and progress and equality and the Rights of Man—the French ruling classes, the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie—the capitalist class—said, “We have had enough of this. All this means nothing else but a lot of workers in the streets; strikes, making all sorts of impossible demands; we have had enough of it.” And they put Napoleon in. That is how Napoleon was made the military dictator of France: it was for the purpose of finishing up with this democratic orgy which the French Revolution seemed to have unloosed. Napoleon found the French people the tallest race in Europe, but when he was finished with them in 1815, they were the shortest. It has been calculated that the amount of dead from military battles alone during the period of Napoleon’s military career in Europe was some 3,700,000.

Now you can imagine all over Europe the progressive

Revolution and what has happened since.)

Now Rousseau had attacked the Age of Reason. He had said: that kind of reason will not get you anywhere. And the great student of Rousseau—Kant—one of the greatest names in the history of Western civilization, had attacked the philosophical ideas which lay at the basis of the Age of Reason. And I must call upon you now for your close co-operation so that you can get some rough idea of the development of the European mind which led to the establishment of Marxism.

You will remember last time we said, somewhere about 1632 Descartes had established the primacy of the intellect. He said, "I think, therefore I am. That is all I know." But Descartes had followed Plato and endowed the mind with certain ideas innate to it. You know it was a tremendous thing to start with nothing else but the absolute mind, the pure mind, and yet be betrayed into thinking that the mind had certain ideas—this he had picked up from Plato. John Locke, the philosopher, opened fire on Descartes. He said, "These ideas that you think you have in your mind don't exist there at all. The mind is nothing; it is a blank piece of paper." Locke said that all we know is from experience. There is the world out there and things happen—the objective world, that is to say, the moon and stars and rivers and trees and societies and buildings and architecture and agriculture; that is the objective world out there. The mind is blank, the objective world makes impressions on the mind; that is about all. He says, "We get impressions; from these impressions we build up ideas." Locke was a great philosopher, an eminent political economist with various other qualifications, but he was fired at from both sides. He was fired at by Bishop Berkeley, a confirmed religionist, and he was fired at from the other side by David Hume.

Bishop Berkeley said, "You don't know anything about what is going on outside; you have no knowledge of it at all. This object today will seem to us hot and another instrument will measure it and say it is cold, and therefore the only guide we have is what is in the mind."

Berkeley did not hesitate. He said these ideas that we have in the mind came from God. And as if that was not bad enough, Hume on the other side said, "Well, Berkeley is right

people, the intellectuals, the philosophers, the writers, the democrats—all looked upon the French Revolution as the time when the New World was beginning: reason would show itself as capable of solving the problems of mankind. Now it had ended in Napoleon and these desperate wars all over Europe. (That was not all there was to Napoleon, but as I say, we have to follow a certain discipline.)

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

At this same time, the beginning of the 19th century, some years after the French Revolution, capitalism was establishing itself; the industrial revolution, that is to say, the application of science to industry, had begun its tremendous modern course. Adam Smith, one of the men of the Age of Reason, had been one of the first political economists to deal with it and the men who followed him, chiefly Sismondi and Ricardo, were horrified at what they saw capitalism was producing in society. It was quite clear that here was a process of creating wealth which the world had previously never seen; but at the same time it was quite obvious that it was creating conditions of disorder and misery among peasantry and workers which were out of all comparison with the enormous wealth that was accumulating in the hands of the capitalists and the owners. That early political economists were very much concerned with; and they wrote about it, and the ideas of democracy, equality, etc., ended in Napoleon and the socialism that had burst out in the last years of the French Revolution. Most of the men who attempted it had been put in jail, and the whole prospect was extremely bleak. In addition, there was another prospect that was disturbing the thinkers, the philosophers, the intellectual democrats at the time. They had no foundation under their feet, no intellectual foundation for such social and political ideas as they might have. The political philosophy of the 18th century had been blown to pieces by Rousseau and the French Revolution; and philosophy, logic, that analysis of ideas on which the Age of Reason had rested, that also was now in pieces. What to do? (The situation, by the way, was not very different from what ours has been since the Russian

God; they come from custom." He said the outside world hits the mind with a strong impression. That is a fact. It hits it with a weak impression and a weak impression is an idea; that is about all. He says in effect: "You can't possibly prove that the sun will rise tomorrow morning; you can't do that." And he is right. You can't. All you can say is that it has risen for so many thousand years every morning, so we can go to bed tonight prepared to get up and find it there next morning. He says, beyond that you cannot prove anything; and, he says, we really know nothing about the outside world. We have ideas about it, but we see something happen (his great word was "custom") and when we see, we get accustomed to something. We say, "If so and so", and, therefore, "so and so"; but he says it is not any idea of the mind, a capacity of the mind, it is just custom! We have seen it so often that we are able to draw the conclusion more or less.

Thus by the time Berkeley and Hume had finished with Locke, this mind, this reason, this philosophy on which the men of France had laid so much emphasis, philosophically and logically, was in ruins; there was nothing left.

KANT

The man who made the first great attempt to solve the problem and give the mind some validity of its own in relation to the outside world was Kant, and the name of his book is very significant. It is *The Critique of Pure Reason*. He says this pure reason that all of you are working on wouldn't do. Kant says the mind has qualities of its own but they are not ideas at all. Every man is able to judge time and space; the time when a thing happened, what happened after that and the other thing that happened after. And space--where something is--he says that every human being born is able to judge time and space. Ask him, "Where did the mind get these qualities?" and he would probably have said, "Get out of my study. I cannot be bothered with you; the mind *must* have these two, time and space." He says the world is as difficult to understand as Hume and Berkeley said. We do not know anything exactly. All that we can know is what we get from our experience of it; we see something of the world. The world in itself. The thing in itself we don't know. Time

and space in the mind enable us to make experiences. We get hold of certain phenomena and these phenomena the mind is able, basing itself on time and space and experience, to work out by intelligence, understanding. The mind draws certain principles; it can make certain discoveries, undoubtedly, which is what the men of the Age of Reason have done. You see, he had based this very solidly, the intelligence and the working on what time and space had got from the outside world, and there they--the men of the Age of Reason--had stopped. But Kant says, "As I look at the discoveries of the intelligence, as I look at what understanding and intelligence have worked out, I see signs of a more profound, of a deeper, and more embracing logic; a more embracing body of ideas. In other words, the objective world, time and space, gets impressions; it works out, intelligence works out some ideas. "But when I examine those ideas," says Kant, "there is more in it than what came from outside." He says, "I seem to be expressing a tremendous body of deeper, more profound, more extensive, more complex ideas. So that Reason, as we saw it, was both the result of the examination of what we got by experience from the external world and also the trans-lation by the human intellect working on it, but also there is something else which is not connected with the external world at all, and this I call Reason." And if you had asked him, "What is this Reason, do you know it? Does it exist?" He would have said, "I don't know. But what I am doing here I need in order to make sense out of the mind. In addition to what I get from outside by experience there is something else. Pure Reason as you all have used it is not enough."

Kant had published *The Critique of Pure Reason* before the French Revolution. It is very noticeable that Kant had learned from Rousseau. It is too complicated to go into here, but Kant had learned from Rousseau. In the modern world, wherever you go and you find something striking, you trace it back and you find that Rousseau had something to do with it. Kant acknowledges his debt to Rousseau quite plainly.

HEGEL

After the French Revolution the great school of German philosophers, which begins with Kant, works at these problems and ends in the man who, in my opinion, and in the opinion of Marxists, brought philosophy to an end--Hegel. And his history is most dramatic.

Hegel had studied Christianity; he had studied the Greek City-State; he was reading Sismondi and particularly Ricardo. He was a great student of Kant. With all this in his mind he was working out a philosophy, and we have his early notes. How was he to solve the problem? What was this Reason that Kant had written about? The French Revolution, what had it attempted? The problems that Ricardo and Sismondi and these others were posing with regard to the new capitalist society; the equality of all men, which had been established by Christianity. He was a great student of Christian theology and the City-State of Greece, and he was working out a philosophy; and we have today, within recent years, his early manuscripts. In them we see that young Hegel reached a stage where, if he had gone on, he would have been compelled to say that the only solution to these problems was the proletariat establishing a new regime and laying the basis of human equality. What is most striking is that just as he reaches there, the manuscript breaks off and he does not write any more. He just couldn't do it. Later we will talk about why.

MARX

Instead he developed a tremendous philosophical method—dialectic. We cannot go into that now. We will go into that later, but what I want to make clear is that the step that Hegel reached, the stage that Hegel approached and could not achieve, thirty years afterwards, Marx, a great student of Hegel and a young Hegelian in his youth, student of Ricardo, student of Greek philosophy (his doctoral thesis was on a conflict between two different types of Greek philosophical writers), Marx made the step that Hegel had been unable to make thirty years before. Marx says that this Reason that Kant was talking about and Hegel had developed (he called it world-spirit) was the developing consciousness of mankind seeking to establish a harmonious society. He says, now, as I tried to show last time, men have always attempted but failed. Now, with capitalism, it is at last possible. The tremendous wealth of the capitalist society and with its combined organization and degradation of the proletariat, that offers the opportunity to do what men have been trying to do over these centuries. The new political doctrine of Marx was not the doctrine of the age of the men of Reason; it was not the doctrine of Rousseau either. It sprang from the

socialism which evolved at the last stage of the French Revolution (which was still the greatest event in European history). So that Marx claims (and we Marxists claim, and are very proud of this) that we did not come from a corner or some hole; that Marx was not somebody who suffering, as a psychoanalyst will tell you, from some neurosis, that he was a Jew and he hated society and that is why he wrote this theory. Not at all. Marx could claim in the year 1848, "I wrote *The Communist Manifesto* as a result of many years of study by which I solved the problems which had been posed by French socialism, which had been posed by the political economy of Adam Smith and Ricardo, and by the philosophical analysis of Kant and Hegel; (I carried to its conclusion, the work that had been begun by Descartes since the 17th century." He could claim that Marxism was the solution and the heir to the finest currents of thought and action of five hundred years of European history.

THE INHERITANCE OF MARXISM

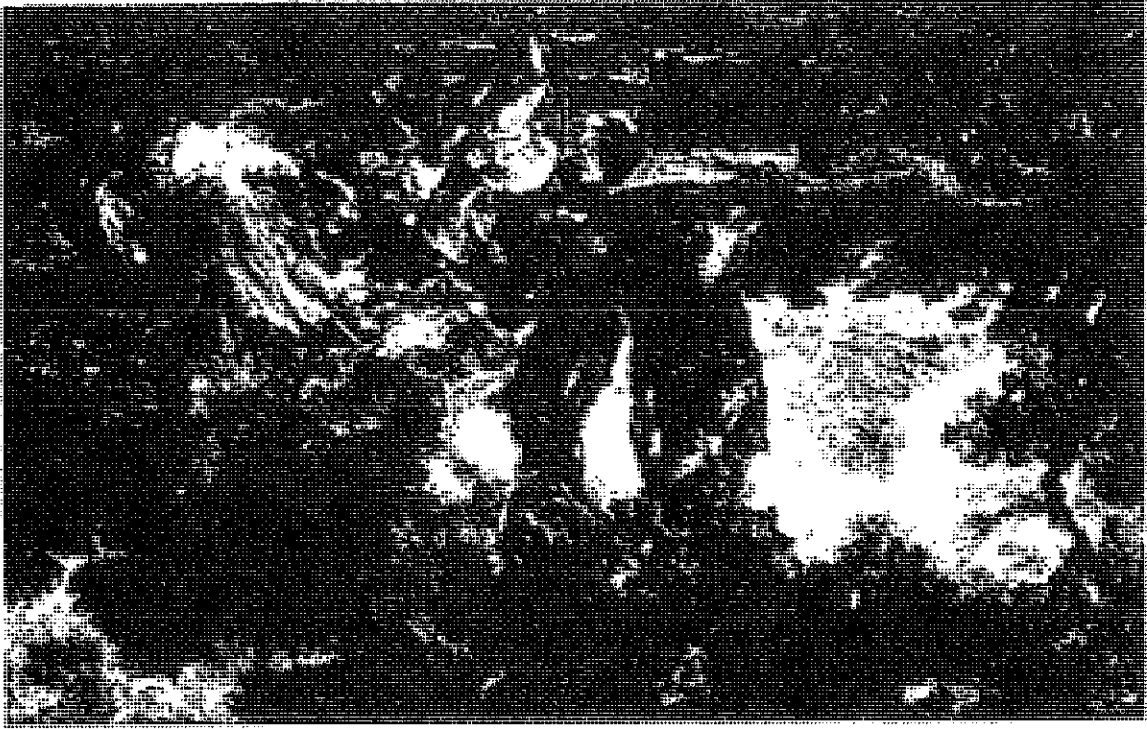
You know there are people who say, "I don't like the dictatorship of the Left and I don't like the dictatorship of the Right—Hitler and Stalin." Hitler's doctrine was based on the throwing back of Europe to the mentality of people before the Renaissance. He said that the abolition of slavery in the United States was a mistake; it should never have been done. His doctrines were the doctrines of blood and race, and as far as religion was concerned he tried to restore the worship of Odin, Thor and those other gods of the ancient Norse. How is it possible for a modern educated man who has studied Marxism at all and modern political philosophy, to speak of the dictatorship of the Right and the dictatorship of the Left as if they are both the same? In day-to-day controversy you have to deal with it because you have to deal with your opponents, but outside of that these people are beneath contempt. That is the first thing to establish. Marxism is the culmination of the most important currents of five hundred years since the Renaissance of European thought and social and political action. We have to remember Hume. That long ancestry does not prove that it is right. You cannot prove logically that Marxism is right. It will prove itself right when it shows what it is able to do. At any rate, anybody with any intellectual pretensions or ideas of

understanding politics has to make himself familiar with Marxism, to understand it and not be frightened by the shouts from reactionaries everywhere who, the moment you say "Marx", say "communism"... (words drowned out by applause)

Now, I have to go on further and show you what perhaps you are more familiar with. Marx wrote *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848 and established the First International in 1864. From that time up to 1917, the history of Western Europe is the history of the struggle between the supporters of a capitalist society on the one side, and on the other, supporters of Marxism. That is fact, and if we take it up to the present day, from 1917 to today, the history of the whole of modern society is the history of those who are mobilized under the banner of capitalism, welfare state or whatever it is, and those who are mobilized under the banner of Marxism. I am very hostile to the particular brand of Marxism that is dominant today. Nevertheless in the contemporary world today we have Russia with 200,000,000 people and carrying on a tyrannical rule over I don't know how many. We have China with 600,000,000 claiming to be Marxists. So that Marxism does not only claim that it sums up in itself centuries of historical, social and political philosophical developments. Today, in 1960, we go further; we say however weak, however disappointing, however reactionary, nevertheless this policy, this doctrine that was put forward in 1848 and made such claims for itself in the past as to its ancestry today, after 112 years, those claims objectively, in the historical development, in the actual state of politics and economics before us, that doctrine has justified a claim—I am going to be very modest—at least to be studied and be respected.

THE 1848 REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

It is really most exciting, the pursuit of thought, because Rousseau had challenged the age of Reason before the French Revolution showed up its weaknesses. Kant had challenged the basis of their thought before the French Revolution showed that the thought had no sound basis. Marx, early in 1848, had written *The Communist Manifesto* talking about socialism as the future society, but the great revolution had not yet taken place. I think Marx published in



Goya, Guerrilleros Making Shot.

February, and in April the revolution broke out in France; and this was a strange one. You see, the French workers had been out in 1789, in Paris in particular. They were out again in '91. In '92 they established the republic. They were out again in '93; twice in '95, and then Napoleon put an end to them; before he fought the enemy abroad he dealt with the enemy at home.

In 1830 there was another revolution in France.

After all these experiences the Parisian workers came to a general conclusion. They said, "You know this democratic republic for which we always made the revolution does not seem to suit us, because whenever we make it, while there is a lot of talk about freedom and liberty and equality for everybody, in the end we are very much where we were before. A new set of people are in, usually those who did not fight in the streets; they are sitting there and we, who shed our blood and took the risks, have got nothing from it."

So that they came to the conclusion that this 1848 revolution was to give them a new kind of republic. What kind of republic? Engels and Marx who followed the thing very closely said later, "When you asked them they did not know, but it was not to be the democratic republic, it was to be a socialist republic." What did they mean? They did not know exactly; it was very pathetic; they said, well, there must be workshops where the unemployed can go and get work. That is the only idea that they put forth, but they were quite clear that it was not a democratic republic they wanted but a socialist republic. They were serious. In June they took arms in hand to establish it. They were defeated and massacred and driven back into their homes, and the French bourgeoisie did exactly what it had done after the French Revolution. It put another Napoleon in power-- finished up with all this democracy; these monstrous workers were not only talking about democracy and freedom but they wanted a special republic of their own. That wouldn't do. Napoleon finished with all this.

Now I mentioned de Tocqueville, and for a particular reason I want you to remember de Tocqueville's name. De Tocqueville was a Frenchman who lived around the same time as Marx and he is famous for two books, one on the



J.M.W. Turner, An Iron Foundry.

French Revolution, and one on democracy in America, and you have to go to the United States and live there for some time to realize the extraordinary penetration that de Tocqueville showed in writing about America 130 years ago. Time and again he writes as if he is talking about people whom you have just met in the subway or somewhere else. De Tocqueville looked at 1848 and he came to *much the same conclusions as Marx did*, only he was on the opposite side; and it is worthwhile reading today—at least I and my friends find him instructive because he saw what took place in 1848.

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Marx studied the whole process of 1848 very closely, and in writing about it he used the phrase which is still the subject of bitter controversy to the present day. He said the socialist republic that these workers wished to establish is nothing more nor less than a dictatorship of the proletariat. When he was asked: what is this dictatorship of the proletariat, he would not answer. Now there is no need to be coy about it today. I am going to spend a few minutes on getting that phrase, which creates such passion when it is used, on getting it clear. Marx's point of view was that in an economic society like capitalism, although you might form labor parties, and win reforms, and at certain times you might even win electoral victories, at all critical moments the dominant economic class was certain to impose its will upon those who were fighting against it; and he said that capitalist society meant, in essence, fundamentally, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the domination of the capitalist class, as the ruling class in the particular type of economy. This rule might take the form of a brutal oppressive dictatorship such as was Napoleon's. It might take the form of a constitutional monarchy, as in Britain, and it might take the form, as it did for many years in the United States, of a democracy. "But," Marx says, "whether it was a near totalitarian government or a constitutional monarchy or free democracy, in the last analysis all represented the dictatorship of the bourgeois class."

"Now," Marx goes on to say, "if the proletariat established a socialist society, this society might take the

form of an extreme dictatorship; it might take the form of an extremely wide and far reaching democracy. That was not the point. The conception of a dictatorship of the proletariat means that at all critical moments the will of the class which dominates the economic system, i.e., the proletariat, will prevail. That is all."

Marx was firmly of the belief that a socialist society would be ushered into existence through the democratic republic. He did not believe that the establishment of a socialist society would have to pass through a stage of dictatorship in the usual sense of that term.

THE FIRST COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

What infuriated his political enemies is that he would not explain the term. In 1864 he formed the First International. It was a Marxist International. The organizer of it, the writer of its political documents, was Karl Marx. It gained rapid supporters in Britain, in France, in Italy, and many parts of Europe. And here is something to remember: for the first time in some five hundred years, Europe once more had a doctrine and a leader who commanded the allegiance, direct or indirect, of millions of Europeans. Marxism did not come from a corner; neither has it lived in holes and corners. The last time that had happened in Europe was in the Crusades when hundreds of thousands of people had gone off to save the Holy Land from the Saracens and to punish the Saracens for their sacrilege by taking as much of their land as possible. After the Crusades, that was over. Europe did not know another international social or political organization or doctrine organized around a single figure until Marx founded the First International in 1864 with the rapid response in Britain and the rest of Europe. Such was the First International. It came to an end with the Paris Commune in 1871 and we have to spend a little time on the Paris Commune because it will teach us a great deal about the Marxist doctrine and the Marxist method.

THE PARIS COMMUNE

There was war between France and Germany. France was defeated and in the confusion the Paris workers threw over Napoleon the Third and established a democratic

socialist republic. It lasted 71 days. (When the Russian Revolution of October 1917 reached the 72nd day, Lenin said: we have beaten them by one day--this is progress.) The importance of the Paris Commune is this: it was not a Soviet; it had no Workers Councils; it did not nationalize anything; it was elected by ordinary suffrage; it was a plain election and the result was the Paris Municipal Council, so to speak. But the workers had learned a great deal between 1848 and 1871.

In 1871 the Council that was elected at the Paris Commune made a tremendous political step forward, although it lasted for only 71 days. The leaders declared that the Council would be both executive and legislative in one. You see, all previous governments that practiced democracy had established legislation by means of the parliament and then handed it over to government--the executive--to carry it out. A whole lot of time had been spent in working out the various proportions between the legislative, the executive and the judiciary: how much power for each, who would control whom, etc. The Commune established a new principle: legislative and executive in one. Remember it. We shall meet it again.

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

In 1889 the Second International was formed with millions of members this time--Marxists--a Marxist International. Furthermore, the trade unions of Europe now joined together in a Trade Union International whose guiding ideas were also Marxist. The history of modern Europe is the history of the mobilization of the proletariat under the banner of Marxism to overthrow the capitalist society and establish socialism. These Internationals were not the work of a few people or a few politicians. You see, sometimes in a colonial country, a Communist is a strange fellow. He walks along the road and people point him out, "You see, he is one of them. . . ." (laughter) Whenever he goes to speak somewhere, the police go after him. "Tell the people, warn everybody; you had better not listen, you know! He may mean well but. . ." (words drowned out by applause)

Yet you cannot write the history of Western Europe, particularly from about 1889, without writing the history of

Marxism. There are two forces: the international socialist movement and the international trade union movement. [Lecturer removes his coat and comments: "It is extremely hot. I hope you don't mind. We are dealing with, after all, revolutionary politics!" (laughter)]

So that between 1889 and 1914 on the one hand you have various capitalist societies, and by 1914 you have millions of workers organized in the Second International and many more millions of trade unionists organized in the International Trade Union Movement, all dedicated to the overthrow of capitalist society, the establishment of socialism according to the ideals and principles of scientific socialism, the doctrines of Marx and Engels. These are the facts.

Now we have reached to 1914 and we can stop there and go over to the United States.

THE AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT

In this hall already I have spoken of why the Civil War was fought. The Civil War was fought, not to free slaves. There must be no misunderstanding about that. By the way, I do not blame people for not choosing to leave their comfortable homes in order to free slaves. People just don't do that sort of thing (laughter). If governments want to make a war, they will tell you they are defending gallant little Belgium or they have made a treaty with Poland and they must keep the treaty with Poland; or they have to defend the principles of democracy. They invent all these beautiful reasons because the masses of people on the whole are idealistically inclined and like to feel that if they have to go to war it is to make the world a better place than it was before; that is undoubtedly true. But the political leaders do not go in for war on those principles; and the North did not fight the South to free the slaves. What happened was that the South, owing to its climatic and regional structure had slavery and the North had not. There was a constant conflict between them, normal political conflict. Then about 1850, the modern world was beginning. It was clear that if you take this line to be the Mississippi, it was clear that the next stage in the development of the United States was the expansion and industrialization and population of the whole of the West. And the Civil War was fought over who was to do this.

Because if the southern states, with their slave economy, dominated the West, it meant that they would be more powerful in the Federal Government in Washington and they would develop the life and society of the United States in their own way. And the North said, "We are not going to sit down here and see you take all this territory and make it into slave states." And Lincoln said, "What you have down there, slavery, I don't like, but you can keep it. However, no more slavery over this way. This is going to be a territory for free states." The South seceded and the war began.

Take Ohio and Minnesota, those Scandinavian states. They did not want to see a Negro around there; they chased them out whenever they came. "We do not want negroes here. They only make a lot of trouble." They were against the South because their goods went down the Ohio and down the Mississippi to the sea, and they were not going to have an independent South in control of the mouth of the Mississippi and half of the United States. So that they were determined to see to it that the South was brought back in the Union and the whole country controlled by the Federal Government; but as for the Negroes, they did not want them up there.

But there is no doubt that as the war went on, popular sentiment grew, and Lincoln said, "We will fight it to the end." That is undoubtedly true. We need not exaggerate one side or the other. The Civil War was fought and America started to expand.

MELVILLE, WHITMAN AND MARK TWAIN

I have mentioned Herman Melville and Whitman, the two greatest writers of the United States; and Herman Melville's great book, *Moby Dick*, is the outline of society as he saw it in the future. For him, the future development of world society was the totalitarian society. There is, to my mind, no question about that. But he did not only write it in the form of fiction. Melville wrote in one of his books, "Look, America has democracy, it has freedom; it is not like that miserable continent, Europe. But," he adds, "the moment that the West has been built up and industrialized with a full population, and the whole of America is as full of people as Europe, all that is taking place in Europe is going to take place here."

Whitman's mind was not so penetrating. Everyone knows Whitman today as the man who wrote and spoke with great eloquence and poetic power of the grandeur of America, of the democracy of America, the future of humanity in American democracy, etc. But that was not the Whitman of about twenty years after. Walt Whitman died with the gloomiest perspectives of the future of democracy in the United States. (When I want to speak about the gloomy perspective of democracy in the United States, I am going to point out loudly and clearly, "I say so." But at the present time, I am pointing out what was the view of Walt Whitman.) (laughter) It was the view of Whitman; it was the view of Melville; it was the view of the great humorist, Mark Twain. Despite the great burst of industrial development, the finest minds in the United States were very doubtful of the future of democracy. They were not Marxists, but they saw below the surface and they stated their ideas and left them for us to ponder over. We will look at those ideas again.

PRELUDE TO WORLD WAR I

And now we come to what I call "Surplus capital" and "Made in Germany" and this is the last point that I have to make because the next one flows directly from it. The world today is dominated by the threat and the fear of war. It is the threat of war which dominates the economies of the great nations; it is the threat and fear of war which dominates their politics; it is the threat and the fear of war which dominates the psychology of ordinary minds. That being so, the causes and the course of the two world wars that we have had are of extreme importance to all who are studying politics; and I want briefly to put before you a certain method—a basic map, so to speak, of what took place between, say, 1900 and 1917. This must be the basis of our further investigation into contemporary politics.

Great Britain for 200 years has followed out a policy of "the balance of power" in Europe. No country in Europe would be allowed to dominate the continent because that would put the defense of Britain in an impossible position. They had fought against Louis XIV. They had fought against Napoleon, and in 1914 they went to war against the Kaiser for that purpose and that purpose only. It nearly had been

different, because, if you want to preserve the balance of power, you can fight with A against B, or you can fight with B against A. And some time towards the end of the century there were elements in Britain who said that it was better to join up with Germany instead of joining with Russia and France. That fell through. The *Entente Cordiale* was established and when the war came it came against Germany and the Central Powers.

"MADE IN GERMANY"

Below this business of the dominant power in Europe, tangled up with it, was the question of new developments, not only in political, but in industrial and commercial relations. Some of you are too young—most of you are too young to remember—I remember it as a small boy before the war: "Made in Germany". British colonies were being flooded with goods made in Germany. Today they are being flooded, I think, with goods "Made in Japan". Isn't that so? In addition, there was competition for the continent of Africa.

In 1880 when they were all scrambling for Africa, Bismarck summoned the Treaty of Berlin and there they had sat down around the table and comfortably carved up Africa. "I will take that; you take that, and you take that." My friends, that is exactly what happened. They divided it among themselves. By 1914, some of the weaker ones—like Germany in 1880—felt they were more powerful now; they wanted a larger share of Africa. The thing had to be redivided, and you can divide with a certain amount of peace, but redivision is something else; so that you see you have a complex of conflicts: Britain, to keep the balance of power in Europe; Britain and Germany fighting over world markets; all of them squabbling over the redivision of Africa. There was the question of where to export surplus capital. That is treated in many books, the best of which is Lenin's *Imperialism*.

Everybody could see the war coming but they could do nothing to stop it. The Second International, consisting of socialist workers from Germany and France and Britain and Belgium and Holland and Russia, etc., met at an international conference in 1907 and decided that they would not take part in any imperialist war. When the war came and their

rulers were inciting them, they would say, "No, we are not going to fight against our proletarian brothers; the war we are going to fight is against you for leading us into this mess." This was in 1907. Five years afterward the drive to war was becoming stronger and stronger. The international socialists met again in 1912 and they passed another powerful anti-war resolution.

THE FAILURE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

You know, when we look back, it should give us cause for thought. Here the world in 1914 was moving into this period of war and disaster—the degradation of civilization which has continued unabated till the present day. The Marxist International met in 1907 and then met again in 1912 and pledged themselves to resist it to the end by holding a united front against the international quarrels of the rulers of the various countries. My friends, in 1914, when the war broke out, they were unable to stick to it; they broke down and each went with the rulers and the armies and the politicians of his own country. But today, as I look back, the anger and the hostility with which we looked upon them as having betrayed the cause, do not now loom so largely in my own mind. Looking back at 1907 and that resolution of theirs, and 1912 and their resolution and then their breakdown in 1914—as I look back there from 1960, today, I see them as spineless, it is true, and many of them had paid only lip service to Marxism. But they were the initiators of a great international movement, which, in my opinion, more than ever today is the only solution to the perils and catastrophic destruction which faces society. That we shall come to.

They broke down in 1914, the Marxist International. They went to war. They led the workers into the war. But the vitality of the Marxist movement was proved by the fact that the moment it became clear to one of them, Lenin, that the International had broken away from the principles and the policies that it had proclaimed, he set out at once to lay the foundation of the Third International, and it was under the banner of the Third International that the Russian Revolution took place in November 1917 and, ultimately, brought the European war to a close. That is what I mean by 1848 to 1917. We have come right through. We have seen what Marxism has behind it, and we are now by 1917 in the midst of what Marxism has before us. (applause)

CHAPTER THREE

Monday, 15th August, 1960.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have so far covered a certain amount of ground and I hope that those who are following are now more or less confident that, although we jumped from spot to spot as people jump from rock to rock in crossing a river, nevertheless we were laying certain foundations.

A REVIEW

In the first lecture, I made it clear that at critical moments when the great masses of people, who usually are not particularly active in politics, see an opportunity to shape the course of political events, they usually, or they have often attempted to establish a society of equality, of harmony and of progress. We saw, also, that the writers who wrote round and about those events themselves were moved by the desire, if possible, to work out in theory what, at critical moments, the masses tried to do in practice. It is obvious that what I said in that period cannot be considered the history of political evolution. There are long periods in history when nothing particular happens in the sense that there is nothing outstanding for the historian or analyst of the future. A revolution, however, is important because at that time, all pretenses and conventions are torn away and you see social reality. In taking the Greek City-State, the Roman Empire, the City-States of the Middle Ages, the English Revolution and the French Revolution and the American Revolution, I believe I took a representative body of events. Later we went on to deal with the more modern developments in politics.

Modern politics begins, apart from the leap to political democracy of the Levellers, with the men of the Age of Reason. What they did is still viable in modern politics. But it was limited. We saw how Rousseau, in political philosophy, and Kant, in philosophy proper, attacked the ideas of the men of Reason—the men of the 18th century—and how the French Revolution showed that Rousseau and Kant had a firmer grasp and deeper penetration into political reality than the other men of the 18th century had, despite the good work that they had done. The 18th century looked forward to the revolution (although the revolution that actually took place was not the one that had been expected. They would have been horrified at it, but revolutions have that habit). The revolution took place. It ended in Napoleon, and this disappointment unloosed a crisis in the thought of Western civilization. Out of that crisis emerged the philosophy of Hegel, the political economy of Sismondi, Ricardo and others, and then, finally, out of the struggle to find a substitute for what the Age of Reason obviously had been unable to do, we get Marxism. The details you can work out, you will have to work out for yourselves. The important thing is to get firm hold of the movement of ideas and the developing sequence of events.

THE GENERAL DIRECTION

My reason is this. The 18th and 19th centuries were dominated by the idea of progress. Human society was seen as a progressive evolution with many retreats and deviations to one side and sometimes long periods of undistinguished bleakness; nevertheless, the general attitude in the 18th and 19th centuries was that mankind was making progress towards some future in which man would arrive at some sort of society that corresponded to his special status in the universe. The 20th century has seen such a decay and degeneration in modern society that now the idea of progress, except among the Marxists, is in decay; it is sneered at and it is denounced by many excellent people. In other words, they repudiate the whole of the 18th and 19th centuries. The present crisis of mankind in the 20th century

SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

Now someone last week asked me what was the difference between the Socialists and the Communists. I have described the Second International--masses, millions of them, organized in their various labor parties (the official name is Social-Democratic); and these same millions organized in the International Trade Union Movement, and that was the organization of the working class in its essential and most advanced elements up to World War I. As you remember, they had decided to oppose imperialist war and each section of the international proletariat was to maintain its internationalism by attacking the capitalists in its own country. They passed that resolution in 1907, they passed it again in 1912 and when the war came in 1914 they broke down and, substantially, each went along with its own national forces. In 1917, however, Lenin, who had opposed this from the start--it is quite significant that he was an exile from Russia--when he heard the news that the German Social-Democracy, which was the parent of all these movements, had supported the war policy of the Kaiser and his Government, Lenin disbelieved it. He said, "This is nothing else but war propaganda and fakery;" but it turned out to be true. They all had gone their individual nationalistic way. Lenin did not. In 1917 the revolution broke out in Russia and Lenin was able to go back home, assume its leadership and lay the foundations for a Third International.

Soon after the war was over, the working class movement in the great countries of Western Europe found itself divided into two--those who continued to be "national" and to believe that socialism would come by gradual and parliamentary ways, and those who went with Lenin and decided that socialism could come only by the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie. The Communists linked themselves in an international organization, the Third International. They said that the Second International had betrayed socialism. And to the present day the workers of Europe, wherever there is freedom of political organization, are divided into these fundamental groups: the Second Interna-

is the most disturbing in the history of human society. If we continue to believe in the idea of progress, and not only to believe but to carry out our politics within the orbit of that idea, it is necessary, particularly at this time, that we know where we have come from and the foundations upon which we stand. Progress is not in a straight line. (Rousseau had some startling ideas on progress.) But the general direction is clear.

Last time, having shown the foundations and the origins of Marxism, I proceeded to take up the First, the Second and the beginning of the Third International, all of them different stages in the progressive evolution of the working class. I stated without any equivocation that the history of Europe since 1848 to the present day, after World War I to a great degree, and substantially after World War II, is fundamentally a history between the defenders of capitalism and official society and the attack upon this society by people who are organized under the banner of Marxism. This is not a question of whether you agree with Marxism or not. I stated, and I state it again, that the history of Europe since 1848 to the present day, and particularly since World War II when the Far East is included, is the history of the struggle between traditional capitalist society and those who are attacking it under the banner of Marxism. If you do not accept that, if you do not see that, then you can belong to a political organization, and you can carry out political activity, but you have no conception of what is the course of modern history. Those who claim to be Marxists are divided. You know where I stand. But without that general picture you are lost.

Now tonight I am going to proceed along much the same lines. I am not giving you a history of any period. I am trying to outline a course of development, so that when you look back at your past reading or you undertake new, at any rate you will have some idea of the general line which many others besides myself follow. And so we come to Lenin and the Third International, the Russian Revolution.

tional, preaching that parliamentary democracy, universal suffrage and votes will bring socialism; the Communist International, guided, organized by Moscow, devoted in theory to the idea of revolution, but working as one single group for the establishment of international communism. That is the basic disagreement. In between you have all sorts of left democrats, and half-Communists and Trotskyites, etc., but these are small and if, at any time, they come to some importance, we will hear about it.

In addition, the Second International has its own trade union movement and the Third International has its own trade union movement. There are new developments in Africa; we will come to those in time.

THE SOVIET FORM

Now the important thing about the Russian Revolution—I am not going into the cause of the revolution at all—is the fact that it initiated for the first time—brought into being—the Soviet form, the Soviet which appeared in the 1905 Revolution in Russia, which had failed. What is the Soviet? The Soviet is nothing more than a political organization which is elected by 500 workers, more or less, in every factory. So that the Moscow Soviet consists of workers who are elected not as in ordinary political democracy, as single individuals, according to their place of residence, but as members of an organization of production—a factory or any place where workers are congregated. They elect and you have the city Soviet, the Moscow Soviet. You have the regional Soviet, the Soviet of the Ukraine and you have the All-Russian Soviet. Now the thing that we have to remember always is that *nobody invented it. Nobody organized it. Nobody taught it to the workers.* It was formed spontaneously and in fact when it was formed in 1905 the two divisions of the Russian Social Democratic Party both turned up their noses at it, and Lenin had to come from abroad and tell them: "Why don't you go in? Go in."

Now up to 1917 Lenin had not had the slightest idea of establishing socialism in Russia, none at all. He said: "This is a backward country. It has about two million workers; it has over 100 million peasants—socialism in this country is an absurdity. You can talk about socialism when you have a majority of industrial workers—that is the basis of socialism. For Russia of 1917, impossible."

We have that today in Britain, in France and Germany, in Holland, certainly Italy, Spain, etc. But in 1914-1917, with this mass of peasantry—a backward, ignorant peasantry, great illiteracy, Lenin said, "What we can do is to carry the bourgeois-democratic revolution through, establish parliamentary democracy and finish off with the landlords, the corrupt clergy and the czars. Then the capitalists of Russia will come into power. We cannot help that. We will become a Socialist Opposition for the time being."

Revolutionary history in England and in France shows that to get the bourgeoisie into power, the workers have to do it. The bourgeoisie are not able to do that themselves; they talk a lot but when it comes to fighting they are not too eager. They are not cowards but as soon as they see the mass of the people in the streets, and organizing themselves, the bourgeoisie starts to make compromises with the feudal reactionaries. That is why Lenin said that we, the proletariat, have to carry the bourgeois democratic revolution through to a conclusion, but once we have carried it through we are not strong enough to maintain or even to establish a socialist society. What they were going to have in Russia is what existed then in France, Britain, Germany, etc. They were ready for socialism. Russia was not.

If Lenin had new and rigid and very severe ideas about the organization of his party which we have come to know as the Leninist Party, it was because Russia was a police state. This being so, the Russian party could not function freely as the others where there was no police state. Russia had to have a very disciplined party to fight a police state. These were the ideas of Lenin up to 1917.

LENIN AND THE SOVIETS

The first revolution in Russia broke out in March, and if you read one or two of his early letters you will see that he had much the same ideas even after he had the first news of the revolution; but later the news came over, not only about the political problems of Russia—I can't go into that—but about the Soviet. Within about 72 hours after the overthrow of Czarism, 20 million workers in Russia were organized in Soviets in all the large cities of the country.

Lenin took a new position. He said nobody told the Russian workers to do that; nobody taught them to do that. They were not instructed; nobody expected it. Here they had built up these organizations that were actually in charge of the various cities of Russia. If they had wanted parliamentary democracy, they would have organized themselves differently.

Lenin recognized that this was one of those creative events that occur very rarely in history. It is nearly always spontaneous, this creation of a new political form. What clinched it was that on all the urgent questions—end the war, land to the peasants etc.—the new Government, which would be swept out of power by the Bolsheviks in October, was opposed to the Soviets.

Thus when Lenin came to Russia he said, "All power to the Soviets." There was a row not only among other people but inside his own party. They told him, "For all these years you have said that Russia is only suited to bourgeois parliamentary democracy. You have said Britain and the others will form a socialist society. But we have to wait behind." He answered, "What are you going to do with these Soviets? This means the people are ready for socialism. We must go forward."

The Soviets were the new form and it was through the Soviets that Lenin went on to power. When the Bolshevik Party took power, it nationalized nothing. It is the workers

who went on and nationalized. Lenin did not want to nationalize anything. If you read Lenin's writings closely you will see that from 1917 to 1923, that is, about 71 months, I think I have counted—and I can't read Russian—that about 90 times he told the Russians, "We cannot have any socialism here; you had better take note of that." There were times when he said, "We will be lucky if our children and our children's children get socialism. All we can do is to hold on to the proletarian power and hope that in Germany and Britain and France the workers will succeed. If they succeed, we are safe; if they don't, we are lost." He was a very harshly realistic man. Nobody ever said anything half as savage about the Russian Soviet State as Lenin himself said, but if you, an enemy, attacked the Soviets, he would go to town on you and say, "I am entitled to say these things, not you."

So there was the Soviet State formed in Russia, formed on the basis that nothing else could have satisfied the demands of the people, but on the expectation that the rest of Europe would follow. Lenin said over and over again: "If they in Europe don't achieve another socialist revolution, we in Russia are lost."

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Now we are going to look for a bit at the Soviet State—the Soviet form. You will remember where we began in 1848. The workers in Paris were saying, "We don't like this democratic republic because after we have come out into the streets and overthrown the reaction, the end of the democratic republic is that we are left holding the bag; we get nothing. So we want a new republic, a socialist republic." And Engels, who writes the history of this period, says, "When you asked them what was the socialist republic, they did not know." All they knew was that they did not want the old one, they wanted a new one.

Marx examined this and he said the next workers' revolution is going to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. People asked him what was the dictatorship of

EUROPE AFTER WORLD WAR I

So there was Lenin and the Bolsheviks in a backward country. After the war and the revolution the production of backward Russia was down to 18 per cent of what it had been in 1914. They were waiting for the revolution in Western Europe to help them. Bourgeois society in Western Europe collapsed with the German Revolution in 1918 which brought the war to an end. Yet bourgeois society was able to recover. It recovered only to plunge us into the far deeper catastrophes of the last forty years.

There are certain things that I have not got the time--you have not got the time either--to go into now. I have one of my books here, *World Revolution*, in which I have accumulated a mass of the evidence of how bourgeois society was able to recover. The Second International of the workers saved it. They were the only people who could even keep order after the breakdown of society, particularly in Central Europe in 1918. This is not the opinion of observers. They themselves boasted about it. They don't boast now; they are not very proud of that now; but they boasted about it then. I have long extracts in my book here from Otto Bauer, one of the leaders, who says over and over again, "We were the ones who maintained bourgeois society in the /Austro-Hungarian Empire." The Hapsburgs fled (I think one of them is now selling motorcars or aeroplanes or something). The German Kaiser, he went his way to Holland; the German generals were discredited. The war had been brought to an end by the revolution of soldiers and civilians against them, and the workers turned to their leaders of the Second International, the Social-Democrats as they were called. The Social Democratic leaders struck down all those who were for the revolution and maintained bourgeois society. It is a horrible thing to read about today, especially when we see the mischief and the misery they have caused by propping up capitalism when it was on its knees. No force was in existence to stop them. If there is anybody here, or anybody here who knows somebody else who wants to come--I will be very satisfied to sit down when my time is finished and hear him

the proletariat. He would not answer. Then came the Commune. Now observe closely how the Commune came. It came by ordinary suffrage, manhood suffrage; it was an ordinary election, but the Government that was elected made a great step forward, from the Marxist point of view. They said, "This Legislature is going to be legislative and executive at one and the same time," and Marx, who worked from what had happened, comparing it with what existed before, and then upon this basis speculating as to what is likely to take place in the future, Marx said: "It looks as if you can't take over a state of bourgeois parliamentary democracy or any bourgeois state, put Socialists in it and so create a socialist state. You see what happened in the Commune? They rejected entirely the bourgeois state, and they made a state for themselves."

It lasted only 71 days, and Marx must have spent God knows how many hours working out and examining and seeing what was involved. Lenin and other Marxists studied Marx and they studied society. Thus when the Soviet broke out in 1917 it was clear to them that a new stage had been reached, because the Soviet was a political form based on the economic units and economic relations in society. (Later there were peasant Soviets.) Marxism had laid it down that any society, in its social and political relations, could only be properly explained by examining its economic basis. And here these Russian workers--the majority of them knew nothing at all about Marxism, absolutely nothing--had formed a society with a political structure which was based on the economic relations of the country. The Marxists felt very confident of Marxism.

Today in the Russia of Stalin and Khrushchev, there are no longer Soviets. That is too dangerous. They vote as in ordinary countries. One man in his house, one vote. The vote based upon the position in the economic structure of society, that is gone.

So here, obviously, in the Soviet State was something new. It was new, but it was not final. We will come to that later.

say something different to this and give some evidence. I warn you, he will be systematically destroyed as soon as he is finished.

NOSKE AND SCHEIDEMANN

What happened after World War II in 1945 was that the Russian Army from one side and the American and British Armies from the other, moved so fast that there was no opportunity for the masses of people in Europe to deal with those who had led them into the war and disaster. Or wherever they attempted it, they were stamped upon, especially by the Russians. But in 1918 the armies were not there. The armies had not reached Berlin and the rest of the cities. All of them were still under the German control and the moment the German Army was defeated, and the German rulers and many who were concerned with the war, fled or hid, the whole situation was open. Lenin told the Social Democrats that all of the resources of the Russian State, the Russian Army and the people of Russia were at their disposal. He begged them to make a revolution, to create a socialist society. He said that Russia was not in front but, backward as Russia was, if Germany made the revolution, Russia would once more be behind, and Germany would once more lead Europe. They refused. My friends, look at Europe today; look at what Germany went through under Hitler from 1933 to 1945; think of the waste of World War II. Look at Germany, cut in two. Look at Berlin. If they had established the socialist society in 1919 as they were perfectly able to do, look at the millions of lives and the vast quantity of labor and production and effort that would have been saved. There was no problem to take it over, but they refused.

The men whom you should study—I can only mention their names—are Noske and Scheidemann in Germany, and Otto Bauer in Austria, Vienna. Noske and Scheidemann were so determined to preserve bourgeois society that already in 1919 they were intriguing with the German generals to establish a republic and the German generals were to support

Noske, the Social Democratic Leader, as President. Those German generals who, with the Kaiser, had led them into that mess for four years; the Second International preferred to go with them rather than with Lenin and the revolutionary elements in Germany.

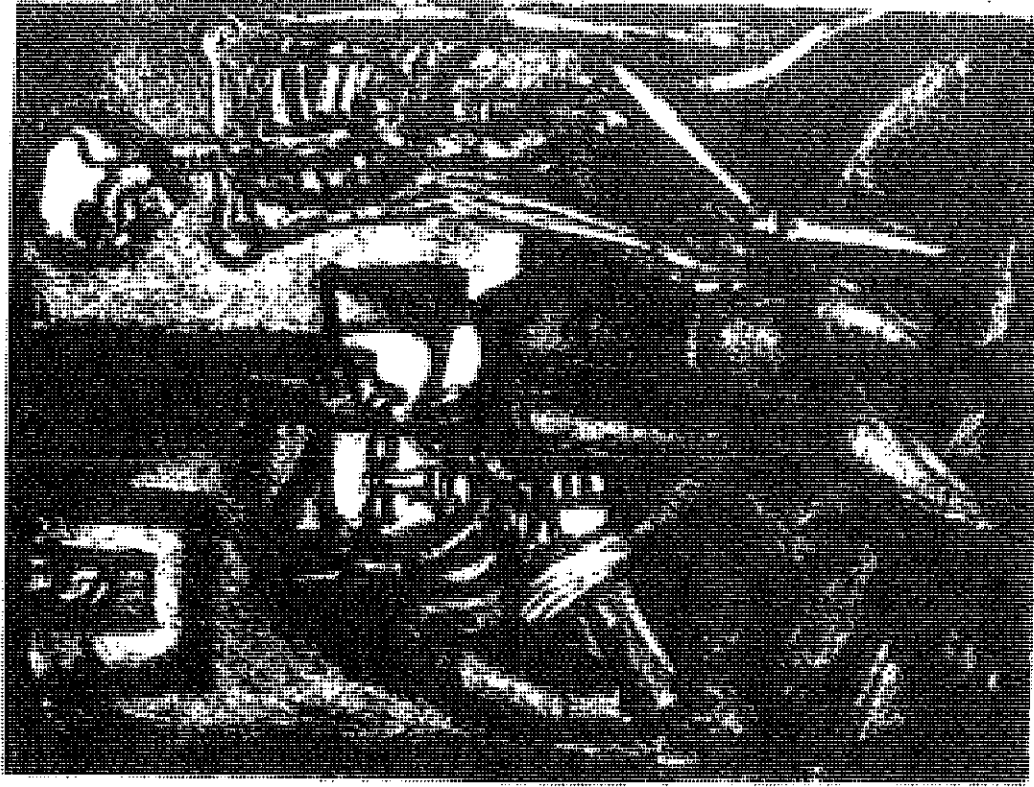
By 1923 the revolutionary upsurge was over because people, as Trotsky has pointed out, are not by nature revolutionary. A revolution takes place because people are so conservative; they wait and wait and try every mortal thing until they reach a stage where it is absolutely impossible to go on and then they come out into the streets, and clear up in a few years the disorder of centuries. By 1923 the thing had quieted down, but something new then appeared in Europe—Fascism. In 1919 it came with Mussolini in Italy, and in 1922 Mussolini made the famous "March to Rome"; Mussolini himself marched sitting in a railway train.

FASCISM APPEARS

Now you must understand that up to 1917 the idea of a socialist society, a Workers' State—that was considered a lot of nonsense. But after 1917 there was the thing itself in Russia, and in addition, Russia formed this Communist International. European capitalism, European landlords looked at this and took a new look at parliamentary democracy. You couldn't depend on the Age of Reason and all that anymore. (Rousseau was coming into his own now.) Now, the working class movement, as Marx always insisted, its great strength was that it did not have to organize itself. In an advanced industrial society capitalism organizes the working class by putting them together in huge factories, by putting them all to live in the most convenient spots to get to work early in the morning. So that Marx's essential point is that the working class is united, it is disciplined and it is organized by the very mechanism of capitalist production itself; and he says the more progressive capitalist production is, the more it unites those who are destined to be its grave-diggers: Marx is a wonderful writer apart from anything else. But other persons besides Marx were looking and seeing, and they said,

"Well, we can't organize in a factory but we will organize outside." And Mussolini formed the Black Shirt Movement. The Black Shirt Movement of Mussolini and the Brown Shirt Movement of Hitler were organized for the sole purpose of destroying the threat of a socialist society that the working class now posed, with the example of a Soviet state actually in existence. They built battalions of dissatisfied middle-class elements, and thugs. There is nothing else to it—at least there is plenty, but nothing that really matters. Mussolini's program was universal suffrage; everybody to have the vote; women to have the vote. They did not have it in Italy; up to 1945 they did not have it in France. In 1919 Mussolini said: Fascism—progress; women must have the vote; sick benefits, sickness insurance, old age pensions. Mussolini's Fascist program. Confiscation of profits by income tax up to eighty-five per cent. War profits, total confiscation. The wealth of the clergy—the Roman Catholic Church for various historical reasons is extremely wealthy in Italy—confiscation of the wealth of the Catholic Church. The Socialists were attacking the idea of a standing army—Mussolini proposed abolition of the standing army. Instead, a workers' militia—arm the whole population so that in case of war everybody defends the country and you have no army to attack the workers. That was Mussolini's Fascist program.

Now that teaches us one thing: that even this, the most desperate reaction that Europe has ever known could make an appeal to the middle classes only on the basis of what could pass as the initial stages of a socialist program. But what Mussolini, and later Hitler, made clear to everybody was: this is my program, but the only way we can get it is by crushing the Marxists, i.e., the proletariat. The middle classes, fed up with the Second International, and seeing the workers split in two, went with Mussolini. Europe was in turmoil. People had been rooted out of their traditional status and the middle classes went with Mussolini, the Social Democrats would not fight and the Communists could not fight.



Georges Rouault, This Will Be the Last Time, Little Father.

THE NAME OF HITLER'S PARTY

Fascism came into power in Europe and Europe was plunged into the ruin and degradation of 1933 to 1945. Hitler, the Fascist, was able to come to power and destroy Europe between the quarrels of the Social Democrats and the Communists, the Second International and the Third International. Between them they had about 75 per cent of most of the large towns in Germany, and a larger majority of the population in voting than Hitler then had. But they fought one another, the Communists in particular, with more bitterness than they fought him. It is obvious today that by this failure these two organizations had proved that they were unfit for any proletarian or socialist purpose. More of that later.

Of Hitler's program, I have nothing to say. I will tell you only the name of Hitler's party. I wonder how many of you know it; it is one of the great facts of European history. If you know that, you know much about modern Europe, particularly Europe today. The National Socialist Workers Party of Germany. That is the name of Hitler's party. That is the name of the party that destroyed the German working class movement and tore to pieces every element of rationalism and parliamentary democracy in Europe--the National Socialist Workers Party of Germany. He could not dare to come forward in Germany, even with the obvious intention of destroying the Marxist movement, without saying, "I am for socialism too and I am for the workers." That is the situation; that was the situation in Europe yesterday and it is still the situation in Europe today.

How did Hitler come to power? Now the movement of history begins to get completely international. What happened in Germany is only to be understood if you take a look at Stalinism in Russia. Nowadays and from those days there is no history of any single country any more. That's over. The Bolsheviks and Lenin held on til 1923, and then in 1923 two events took place of great importance in the history of Russia. Number one, Lenin died; and number two, the



Rico Lebrun, Buchenwald Pit.

German Revolution tried again in 1923. It failed, and it was clear that this Socialist European Revolution that the Russians were depending upon for the salvation of their immature socialist state was not coming, would not come for some time. What was to be done? A tremendous struggle broke out and Stalin finally won; and for this evening's purpose I will summarize Stalinism in three points.

STALINISM

Number one: the destruction of the Leninist Bolshevik Party. This is not a phrase nor a symbol. He destroyed it completely, root and branch, materially and spiritually. Trotsky was exiled, and was finally murdered by a Stalinist in Mexico. Zinoviev, Kameney, and the great leaders of the Russian Revolution--the founders of, in my opinion, up to 1923, the greatest political party the world has ever known--they were dragged up in trials before the public, confessed to all sorts of unimaginable crimes, and then were ruthlessly executed within twenty-four hours of their condemnation. Today any book published by the Russians will tell you that Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kameney, Bukharin and various other names that I do not want to go into, were not only traitors after the Russian Revolution, but from the very days that they joined the Communist Party had acted in the Communist Party and helped to overthrow bourgeois society in Russia as agents paid and carrying out the instructions of the imperialism of France, Britain and the United States. That is the history that is taught in Russia up to this day. Any Russian history book--there are usually some about--will tell you that that is the history of the Russian Revolution. So that they were not only murdered, sent to Siberia, put into prison, sent to convict camps, etc., but finally executed. Stalin took pains to destroy their very memory and particularly what they stood for, in the minds of the Russian people. When people say that Stalinism is the same as Leninism, it is very strange that Stalinism could only establish itself in power by the complete physical and spiritual destruction of everything that the Bolshevik Party stood for.

Having eliminated rivals and established its own power at home, the second thing that you must note about Stalinism is its complete repudiation of the revolution by the Stalinist parties abroad. Lenin had organized the Third International on the strict lines on which he had organized his pre-war Bolshevik Party. After Lenin's death, this degenerated into a bureaucratic subservience to Moscow which continues to this day. The Stalinist-controlled parties have never made a revolution anywhere. Where they have taken power in Czechoslovakia and Rumania and Hungary, etc., the Red Army marched in front and they marched behind, but they do nothing. No one here, or no one whom you can bring, can give the slightest evidence of any revolution carried out by the Communist International under the direction of Moscow. One very great revolution has been carried out in the world by a so-called adherent of Moscow, and that is the Chinese Revolution of Mao Tse-Tung. But we know it today. You can read it in the various places. The best place to read it is in a book by Isaac Deutscher. Mao, that very sinuous Chinese, went to see Stalin and Stalin told him, "Don't you go and make any revolution in China. Don't. Go and make an arrangement with the Americans, Chiang Kai-Shek, and work out some coalition government for China," and Mao said, "Yes, absolutely." And then Mao went and led the revolution to success. When he was victorious he said, "Our glorious comrade Stalin is the one who has helped us to make this revolution. Long live Stalin!" Stalin absolutely opposed any revolutionary struggle for power by a Stalinist party. That is one of the causes of the destruction of the working class movement in Germany and the coming into power of Hitler. I hope that I am not wasting time when I point out that the coming into power of Hitler was not merely a question of the destruction of the Marxist movement. It was a question of the destruction of Western Europe. It was held together by the United States; otherwise it was finished.

STALINISM AND HITLER

In 1929-1930 Hitler had about 30 members in the

watched. Mr. Churchill gained his great reputation because he was one of those who constantly shouted, "That man is dangerous!" The others said, "He is a bit unpleasant, but we have to keep a balance."

Trotsky, however, wrote somewhat as follows (I am quoting from memory): "The coming into power of the National Socialist Party will mean the extermination of the flower of the German proletariat, the destruction of its organizations and the destruction of its belief in itself and in its own future." He went on to say that when you noted the sharp capitalist contradictions in Germany as compared to what they were in Italy when Mussolini came into power, the hellish work of Italian Fascism against the Italian workers would be a pale shadow of what Hitler was going to do to the workers in Germany when he comes into power.

"Retreat, you say, you Communists who yesterday were talking about the immediate revolution. Leaders and institutions can retreat, individual persons can hide, but the working class will have no place to retreat to in the face of Fascism and nowhere to hide."

He continued: "If the monstrous and the improbable were to happen and the Communist Party were to refuse to take the field against Hitler now, what will happen is that the bloody extermination of the vanguard of the German proletariat will take place after the seizure of power by the Fascists and not before. Disrupted by the destruction of its organizations, disappointed in its leadership, the struggles of the German proletariat against Fascism after Hitler comes into power will be nothing but a series of futile and bloody convulsions.

"Ten proletarian insurrections, one after the other, ten successive defeats will not so much demoralize the German proletariat as if now you counsel it to retreat, and it does not fight, when the question is posed, 'Who is to be master in the German household?'"

The Communists continued with their slogan: "After Hitler Our Turn." So it was that he came into power. He never had a majority of the German people. He led no revolutionary struggle like Cromwell or Robespierre or Lenin. He used to talk about "heads will roll" but his Brown Shirts of middle class young men and thugs fought no serious battles.

THE PROLETARIAT AND THE MIDDLE CLASSES

I intend no offense against school teachers and clerks and bookkeepers, etc. They could wear shirts of whatever color they like—they cannot in fighting deal with the proletariat of an advanced country. When ten thousand school teachers, bookkeepers, the writers and talkers like myself, and editors and so forth, vote, that is ten thousand votes; and they can have one thousand extra and have eleven thousand votes and defeat ten thousand workers, in votes. But the moment a revolutionary struggle is on, the workers—this group takes the railway, the other one the waterfront, the other one turns off the electricity, and the other one stops the transport; the teachers, etc., can only make some noise but they cannot do anything; they can send the children back home or bring them back or something. (laughter) In all struggles of this kind it is the proletariat that is master of the situation. The moment any government breaks down, then they can take charge. But these two Internationals crippled and hamstrung the workers of Germany. Hitler destroyed both of them; smashed their movement to bits; executed the leaders. He used to execute them with an axe, cut off their heads; let the blood flow; let everybody see. And when he was finished with the proletariat, he turned to the liberals and the rest of them who had stood aside and allowed this to take place. He finished up with them too. It is from there Europe moved into the war. The barrier against the war was the German proletariat to stop Hitler. Don't forget that. The others could stop him afterwards at the cost of untold destruction and the death of God knows how many millions of men. But he could have been stopped by the German proletariat before he had done

anything; and the German Communist Party took the position it did under the instructions of Moscow. Stalin did not wish to be disturbed with any revolution. He believed that it would only make a lot of trouble for him.

STALINISM DESTROYS BOLSHEVISM

The third point is a positive point in regard to Stalinism: First he had to destroy the Party. Instead of the proletariat he put the bureaucrats in power. Then very late and after opposing the idea, he said, "I am going to lay the foundations of a modern industry in Russia." The German Communist Party and the other Communist Parties he saw as organizations that were to keep up activity and so forth outside, so as to keep the imperialists away from him. He did not know the defeat of the German proletariat meant inevitably the attack upon Russia by Hitler, but he laid the foundations of a modern industry in Russia. There is no question about that. Whether the methods and the circumstances under which that foundation was laid are, even today, justifiable, is a matter which is debatable. For myself and certain of my comrades and others, we opposed it all through; not it, but him. It cost the lives of perhaps seven to ten million peasants in the collectivization. Russia became undoubtedly the most barbarous modern state Europe has ever known. Some ten per cent of the economy was produced by "convict" settlements, under the control of the secret police, in places where it was difficult to carry machinery and so forth. Millions of people were working there. They dug canals and mines, just as in the old Greek and Roman days; and that came to an end not because the Russians stopped it or when Stalin died—or, as I believe, was murdered. It was stopped because of the tremendous strike that took place after the last war when it became clear that they could not hold the prisoners there any longer. The bureaucratic mismanagement, the brutality, the murders, judicial and injudicial—they would fill twenty volumes. I cannot ever accept that a whole generation should be sacrificed for future generations. One of the consequences you have seen in Communist policy in Germany. Such a method of production put an end to the

aims and ideas of Marx and Lenin, both outside and inside Russia. The consequences will be with us for a long time.

Why then do I say it is debatable? In this sense. There are a lot of people who say, "You see the cruelties, you see how awful that is, your Workers' State." Pay no attention to them. They have a little position for themselves somewhere and they are defending that. Let them explain the history of capitalism during the last fifty years. One world-wide disaster after another, and no end in sight. No. There are Marxists, however, who say: "Marxism teaches that production is the basis of society; it is obvious that Russia, from being one of the most backward countries in Europe, has now become a country which is able to challenge the United States" (and rob a whole lot of other countries of their power and add it to hers, which is not necessary but also is part of power). Stalinism did this and they accept it. I, for various reasons, some of which I have explained, have been and am still opposed, not to what he did but the methods by which he carried it out. Others have different opinions. I have to leave it at that for now.

A NOTE ON TROTSKYISM

Now I have to say a few words about Trotskyism. Whereas many of us denied that Stalin's Russia was a Workers' State, Trotsky and the Trotskyites have always insisted that it is. They say that as long as the property is nationalized, you can plan production and this makes it socialist. We say that as long as the working class is not managing production, all that you have is capitalism in a new form—state-capitalism.

THE UNITED STATES

Now for the United States in this period.

The great problem of the United States in the modern world is: will it in time develop a proletarian movement and a proletarian party as the other countries in Europe and Asia

and Latin America have done? The great problem of the United States, with all due respect to the color of the majority of my audience, is not the Negro Question. (If this question of the workers' independent political organization were solved the Negro Question would be solved. As long as this is not solved the Negro Question will never be solved.) Is the U.S. going to develop a proletarian party, Social-Democratic or Communist or both, as Britain, France, Germany, Holland, China, Ceylon, Burma, India, Brazil and all the rest have done? Is the United States destined to be the solitary exception to the universal law that Marxists proclaim and other countries have followed? That is the question. Because the day that the United States established a proletarian party, whatever its program, the whole world situation would be at once changed. At present the American proletariat looks this way, at the Democrats, and sometimes that way, at the Republicans; these American capitalist parties go round and round all the time. The common talk is that the United States, owing to its wealth, creates a bourgeois life for its workers and they will never join a definitely proletarian party. Let them explain why these workers, despite all the economic advantages claimed for them, only recently staged the steel strike, one of the greatest of modern times. As has been said on so many occasions: we shall see.

Meanwhile, a few words about what happened to this powerful capitalist economy, this country where the workers were, are, and will ever be so rich that they will never form a workers' party. When the Great Depression hit the United States in 1929, it hit harder in this most advanced capitalist country than it did in any other country in the world. The official statistics will tell you that there were about twelve or fifteen million unemployed. I have been assured—and if I had the time I could prove it—there were nearly twenty million people unemployed in the United States between 1929 and 1932. The country was helpless before the capitalist crisis and more helpless than most of the others because it had not expected this. Here is where Roosevelt came in. Mr. Roosevelt, by means of sanctioning and encouraging trade

union organization, social security, the rights of the working class, old age benefits, workmen's compensation, disciplining the banks, etc., was to bring the United States—up til then the apostle of an unlimited free enterprise—into line with what had taken place in the other countries of Western Europe. He did this without forming a proletarian party. That was the great contribution of Roosevelt to American capitalism, others will say to American democracy. It was a tremendous political feat, and Mr. Roosevelt and his wife together have a place in American history and the minds of the American people which will never be forgotten. Before Roosevelt and the New Deal, free enterprise and independent action by yourself for everything reigned as the unchallenged ideology of the United States. When Roosevelt was finished, that was finished. The Government was now held responsible for those who were in difficulties owing to the difficulties of a capitalist society. In most of the countries of Western Europe, this had been carried out directly or indirectly by proletarian or labor parties of one kind or another. Roosevelt carried it out in the United States through the Democratic Party.

This Democratic Party consisted of the advanced elements, proletarian and liberals in the North and West, and the Southern Bourbons in the United States, who maintained a social regime of the most oppressive kind, feudal in many aspects.

ROOSEVELT WANTED A NEW PARTY

In 1944, Mr. Chairman, President Roosevelt—the greatest political leader of the United States of the 20th century (present company excepted; I do not want to say anything against General Eisenhower)—Roosevelt wrote a letter to Wendell Willkie, the leader of the Republican Party. (You will find the letter in Judge Rosenman's book, *Working With Roosevelt*.) In that letter Roosevelt told Willkie what amounted to this: "I can do nothing more with these Southerners who are in the Democratic Party. You have a Liberal wing in the Republican Party. Split them away from

CHAPTER FOUR

Thursday, 18th August, 1960.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Listening to the introductory statement about the singer who is to come—by Mr. Rogers—and remembering also the glimpse I had in the other room of her photograph, it struck me that it would be very helpful if that lady herself, or persons of equally exotic charm, could undertake to speak on Marxism as well as sing. The doctrine, then, would need not only its logic and convincing realism but it would be assisted also by what most people seem very happy to pay attention to. However, I must say, without making any reference at all to my exotic charm, but rather to my sweating up here and sweating before I came, that we seem to be going along at least with not too much opposition and a certain sympathy from the audience which is very helpful. It enables me to cover more ground than ordinarily.

Tonight, however, I propose to talk with you under the headings of "Atomic and Global Warfare," the "Passing of Colonialism," "The U.S.A. versus U.S.S.R.," "Immorality of Global Warfare" and "The Hungarian Revolution." I propose to take up certain aspects of modern civilization which are—I do not know, but by good luck the Chairman used the word—very explosive. Nevertheless, we are going to deal with them with a certain sense of realism; and tonight I am going to do something which I very rarely do, which I do not like to do, because it breaks the communication between the speaker and the audience. I am going to read right at the beginning a section from the *Times Literary Supplement*, June 28th, 1957. Now the *Times Literary Supplement*—I have a private name for it; I call it "Old Solemnity"—is a very serious, very sober magazine of the British ruling classes. The

the Republicans, and bring your Liberal wing and Republican youth to me. I will chase the Southerners out of the Democratic Party. You and I will join together and we will form a genuine Liberty Party in the United States. I will run as President, and you will run as Vice President; and in 1948 I will retire and you will take over." Willkie told him, "O.K., I will." Willkie, however, lost in the primaries and Roosevelt died a little while after. But it is important to note (all this Nixon and—what is the other one's name? Kennedy? Kennedy-Nixon and Nixon-Kennedy, Kennedy-Nixon, Nixon-Kennedy business is insignificant compared with this): Roosevelt not before but after the New Deal said, "I have now reached a stage where I cannot go a step further as long as the Democratic Party is tied up with these Southerners." And he was ready to take the first step to form what he called a Liberal Party. He and Willkie may have formed it, and they would have called it a Liberal Party, but I do not think it would have remained Liberal very long. I am not exactly a young man and I am confident I am going to see—far less a lot of you, you are going to see it—that the United States will have to follow the political course that other capitalist countries have followed.

So there we are in 1939 with Hitler in power in Germany, moving to the war. The workers in other countries in Europe divided between Social-Democrats and Communists, and the United States having just made a tremendous step forward but still under the aegis of capitalism—capitalist political parties. They all are moving to what I shall call the final crisis. (applause)

daily "Times" is already one of the great pundits of journalism. It is a very good newspaper, in its own way, for its own purpose. But the *Times Literary Supplement* appears only once a week, and in it there are not very adventurous but very sober and penetrating analyses of contemporary literature and contemporary society, which have been more or less accepted by educated people in Britain. I want that distinction to be clear.

The *Times Literary Supplement* claims that it is not in the vanguard. It does not propose to say what is the latest thing. But whatever has reached a certain stage of acceptance the *Times Literary Supplement* will put it forward. I lay great stress on this and you will see why as soon as I read the extract. The name of the article, front page, a full dress article, is "Loyalties" and it begins:

"A time of strained and breaking loyalties all over the world—in politics, nationalities, religions, moralities and families—is certainly a time of troubles. . . . There is a total breakdown in all the things that really matter to civilization.

" . . . Such a time has come upon us all, for the first time in history. . . . That is the age in which we live. We do not feel it so strongly out here, although sensitive people do, but that is the situation in the civilization of Western Europe and also in the East.

" . . . That secular religion which once seemed the hope of half the world—Communism—has equally become a prey to conflicts of loyalty, nationalism and morality. In Russia, as in America, India and Britain—in the Jewry of the diaspora and of Israel alike, as among dwellers in Arabia—the old faiths cannot hold the young. Materialism rules the roost, and societies bid fair to come apart at the seams. Worse, they begin to seem unpatchable; yet no one knows, no one can foretell, what kind of society will emerge as typical of the continental groupings (if not "the world State" itself) towards which our familiar nation-states are being hustled."

Now that has been the main theme, the thesis of what I have been talking about through these lectures, the consciousness of total breakdown—return to barbarism, the possibility of suicidal self-destruction; and no way out—because those people have no way out, none at all. That is what I have been talking about, and this evening I want to go further into it. And I thought it would be just as well to preface what I had to say with a clear statement of the decay, the degeneration, absence of any political, social or moral standards by which the individual can guide himself, which is characteristic of the world in which we live. I want you to note that they mix together—India, Russia, the United States and so forth. Naturally, in the *Times* every morning they would not speak like that, because they support the West against the East and democracy against totalitarianism and so on. That is what they have to do. But here they are very serious and the note of hopelessness is total.

HITLER'S PLAN TO DESTROY GERMANY

I shall now go a little further, and I would like in advance to make it clear that I mean no offense to any nation or any race at all, but the truth must be told. In 1944 and in 1945 when the last war was coming to an end, Speer, who was in charge of German production, went to Hitler and told him that it was obvious that Germany was defeated and now certain steps should be taken in order that the population should not be reduced entirely to destitution. Hitler told him, "Destroy the waterways, destroy the gas works; destroy all means of communications and production; make Germany into a desert." Speer told him, "But even after we are defeated and peace has been declared, the population has got to live. We cannot reduce the country to this state." Hitler replied, "Those who are worth anything will die in the field of battle. The others who remain behind will be inferior and no consideration is due to them." The Fuehrer, the great leader of the German people, whose rise was to last one thousand years, was ready to destroy the country totally.

Now that is something new in history. Something new,

particularly in modern history. On the other side of Europe, Joseph Stalin, during the previous decade, aiming at what he called "the collectivization of the peasantry", had taken a toll of something between seven and fourteen million lives. The figure is unknown. This much is certain, and students of population can easily verify it: when in 1939 the Russians held a census, the loss of population was so great and so shocking that the results of that census were never published and they had to take a new one.

I have spoken already of the concentration slave camps in the Arctic, far away in Siberia. Mr. Dollin has written an authentic book on that subject. How many millions we do not know exactly, but they were under the control of the secret police. Their production was about 10 per cent of Russian production, and the conditions and the morality could not be equalled in any other part of the world, except the concentration camps in Hitler Europe where, under German control, some six million Jews were systematically massacred. In many camps—we have records—so many per day into the gas chamber; done, ticked off, with all the care and scientific accuracy for which the Germans are famous. The brutality, the callousness and disregard not only for human life but for any moral standards and values, surpassed anything that I know in previous history.

THE MORGENTHAU PLAN

Now I want to take that a little further, and here is where the trouble is going to begin. (Mr. Chairman, will you keep your eyes on those two pages for me, please.) The book is *The Struggle for Europe*, by Chester Wilmut. I was in New York somewhere about September 1944, and I remember when something called the Morgenthau Plan for Germany began to be talked about. The Morgenthau Plan proposed that Germany should be turned into a peasant country. All industries and industrial structures that were not destroyed should be taken away and the Ruhr, one of the great industrial concentrations of the world and the greatest industrial concentration in Europe, should be systematically

destroyed and so treated that within the foreseeable future it could not possibly be reconstructed. Now I was a member of a political committee at the time, and when this piece of insanity began to be talked about, some members of the committee came and said, "Look at what they propose to do to Germany!" These comrades were working on a theory that human society was retrogressing, and they gave this prospect for Germany as a horrible example. I and one or two others said, "That is a lot of nonsense. They cannot do that. You cannot take a twentieth century, industrialized country as Germany and turn it into a peasant country of the seventeenth century. You just cannot do it. Germany has twenty-five great towns of hundreds of thousands of people each. If you destroy all the industries, what are you going to do with the population? Not only the clothes and the conveniences of modern civilization, but the very food that people eat is dependent upon modern industry and their treatment in modern industry and their transport. You cannot take a population of some eighty million people, of whom over thirty million are working in industry and all that that involves in the rest of the population, and destroy the industry. What are you going to do with these people?" I dismissed the whole business—my friends and I—with contempt. We said, "That is a lot of nonsense. That is some sort of foolish propaganda."

It was not. The plan was sent up to Quebec for a meeting of President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill (I think the date is the 15th of September) and they agreed to it. It is quite true that Mr. Cordell Hull and Mr. Henry Stimson opposed the plan, but with all their advisers at an international conference to decide what was to be the future of Europe after the war, Churchill and Roosevelt agreed to this destruction of one of the most highly civilized countries in Europe.

Now you have your opinions. I have mine. And when I speak about the barbarism, the degeneration and the decay of Western civilization, I do not separate East from West, and Fascism from Democracy. I take the whole as symptomatic

of what is taking place today.

I could give you a lot more evidence but I want to stick to this particular episode. Goebbels, when he heard this, was transported with joy. For once he could carry on his propaganda by speaking the truth: no lies were necessary. Goebbels had been telling the German people that the Bolsheviks of Moscow and the Kremlin were plotting to destroy Germany from the East. Now he was able to say it was not only the Bolsheviks. The barbarians from Moscow and the barbarians from London and Washington were planning to do the same to Germany. "Look at the evidence," he said. "It is being printed everywhere, and their two great statesmen have agreed." The war was prolonged for many months by this, because the German people felt, well, where could they turn now? All thought of overthrowing Hitler or trying for some sort of peace. That was finished with, because of this monstrous declaration by the democracies. To follow what happened afterwards is very interesting—it illustrates the morality and the mentality of modern statesmen. General Eisenhower, leading the armies into Germany, discovered a stiffening in the resistance of the German soldiers. So he sent a message to Roosevelt, asking him if he couldn't do something about the proposal to destroy Germany. And on what ground? He said it was causing the progress of the army to be delayed. Anthony Eden, at another conference, said, "I am against this plan, absolutely against it. The Germans are going to be driven to starvation and we, the British, are going to have to feed them. I do not wish to be involved in this at all." The soldiers opposed it on military, the politicians on political grounds.

Goebbels was revelling in this propaganda gift, but Roosevelt could make no counter statement. Why? There was an election in the United States pretty soon—1944; this was September, the election was in November. Roosevelt said, "If after making that statement I now back down on it in any way, the Republicans are going to say, 'This man is weakening and is not carrying the war through as he should in order to come to early victory.'" He said it would have to

stay till after the elections.

WHY DO THEY BEHAVE THIS WAY?

Now look at the bunch of them, please. Look at their attitudes to one of the most horrible political proposals that has ever been put forward, not only before a Government, but before any public. I can assure you this is something new in the world.

Those of you who study history, when you read about a former dictator, Napoleon, you will find that the Duke of Wellington (round about 1815, when they had to decide what was to be done with France) and Metternich, that old scoundrel from Austria, and the rest of them, they were not like this. They had different standards. They had a different outlook. Their ideas of civilized behavior were in many respects crude, but it never approached this. At the end of World War I there was a stage of degeneration, but nothing like this. These standards by which we live today and by which our political leaders from the East or West, North or South, guide the destinies of the world are the lowest, most savage, most callous, most sadistic that I have ever seen or heard of in any kind of historical record.

You will understand, therefore, that in approaching this we have to come down to fundamentals in a sense beyond the ordinary. I don't know how people who support the politics which led to this will explain them. The habit today is to speak about original sin; they have gone back to Genesis. Man, they say, was born that way; he is evil. All the ideas of the nineteenth century about the progressive character of the development of human society they declare to be false, but whenever you hear someone talking about the natural evil in human kind, look out for him: he will then say that the only way to keep order is by strong government and authority, of which he and his people, of course, would be the executors and organizers. That is where they are today—original sin. They believe that they are supported in this by modern psychology, the psychological studies of Jung and Freud. I

am going to take those up later, but that is what we face. Add this to what I read at the beginning about the total breakdown in the minds of modern people, the absence of anything by which they can look forward to a harmonious, progressive and even a normal life in society. That is the world we are living in. I want now to give you some idea of what is the Marxist analysis of this state of affairs. We do not believe it to be a question of original sin. We do not believe that there is any inherent tendency to degeneration in modern man. We believe that by the very nature of capitalist society, its manner of development, it dominates the nature and character of politics and of human nature, and as it pursues its predestined course, it takes with it the men who are guiding it. In other words, in a capitalist society, in an advanced capitalist society, it is capital that rules, and it is capital that dictates the manners and morals of those who submit themselves to it.

Now I believe that that, at any rate, is a reasonable interpretation and allows us to look upon the prevailing barbarism with some sort of confidence, not only in human nature but in the development of a new state of society which will allow mankind to give rein and to develop those qualities and characteristics for which people have been struggling over the many centuries. To do this, to give you some idea of the movement of capitalist society, I shall have to go into some technical terms, but I do not think they will be beyond your immediate grasp. In any case, I am hoping that some of you will go further with some of these matters if you are not familiar with them already.

MARX'S VALUE THEORY OF LABOR

The Marxist idea of the capitalist relation is a group of workers who have no property—neither land nor means of production—and who, therefore, are compelled to sell their labor to the man who owns, and now we have to add, who controls the means of production. One of Marx's fundamental theories is the labor theory of value, or, as it should be more correctly called, the value theory of labor. Marx says

that in capitalist society the wage of the average worker is, classically speaking, what he needs for eating, drinking and shelter, and to reproduce his children so that future capitalists can have future workers. The law is not absolute. In a very rich country, workers get a little more; a powerful trade union could get more than the minimum. But, he says, by and large, in dealing with theory you must take the absolutely pure situation from which you can work out variations. That is value production.

He says, now if, for instance, you are producing a motor car and you put one thousand dollars worth of plant into this type of car and then you put one thousand dollars worth of new material—rubber and steel and so forth—into that, that is two thousand dollars. And you pay your laborers one thousand dollars. He says nothing on earth can make you sell that for less than three thousand dollars. One capitalist can do that; on a national scale that is impossible. You cannot get less than you put in. Nevertheless, it is possible to get more than you put in. He says, when you purchase a laborer's work you pay him two dollars a day, but the work he does is not worth two dollars, it is worth two-fifty; and the sole source of profit at all times and in all types of capitalist production is the difference between what you pay the laborer and the value of the work that he puts into the product. He calls that the surplus value. What you put in in the way of plant and raw materials cannot produce any profit. He says, ten hundred pounds of steel put into a product will give you the value of ten hundred pounds of steel and nothing can ever improve that. But, he says, when a man works, that and that alone can improve the production. Pay him less than the value of his work, and you get the full value of his labor, and that makes profit—surplus value.

MACHINES AND LABOR—CONSTANT AND VARIABLE CAPITAL

Now great battles have been fought over this theory. I have read many learned professors who try to explain it. They don't know what they are talking about, because they

begin wrongly. You will remember we talked about Kant's Reason. Here we have another example of the same philosophical method. Marx's point of view is that you cannot prove the value theory of labor by itself. You can argue from now until 1997; you cannot prove it. He said the value of the theory is what it produces as you develop it, and if from the basis of your theory you get facts and ideas and movements which are an approximation to society as you see it, that is the proof of your original theory, and there is no other proof. So that on this basis of the value theory of labor, Marx says that capitalist production must be looked upon as dependent upon two forces--one, mechanized industry, and number two, labor. He gives these special names of his own. Constant capital he calls mechanized industry, and variable capital he calls labor.

I am not going to bother you with any detailed development of this, but Marx's idea is that as capitalism, on the basis of value production, produces and develops, the whole secret of it is that the constant capital, the quantity of industrial structure, of mechanized industry, increases in relation to the amount of variable capital, of human labor, which you have to use. A developed country is a country in which, for example, mechanized labor in relation to human labor is about 15 to 1. That is, say, in the United States--I am just giving illustrative figures--if in the United States mechanized labor in relation to human labor is 15 to 1, Great Britain, I expect, would be about 7 or 8, perhaps less, to 1. Russia would be about 4 to 1. As for Trinidad and Nigeria and similar places, they are none to 1 or something like that. (laughter) These of course are not real figures, but I give them to emphasize the enormous difference between a country like the United States and an underdeveloped country.

Now these numerical relations are of profound importance in regard to the development of capitalist society itself. Capitalism is a system that depends upon the world market. It is not a national system at all. If we look at the ordinary capitalist production, we can see one of the causes of its

strength in the early days and one of the causes of its weakness today. If I have a factory and I am producing a motor car which costs me five thousand dollars, and the car, let us call it an "A" grade car--you know, one of those long ones you see in Trinidad from about here to over there (lecturer indicates)--I sell it for seven thousand dollars and all is well. It does not matter that this car I am producing is, as far as these monstrosities go, a good car. But suppose a man next door to me or in another country produces exactly the same car in every detail, but whereas mine cost me five thousand dollars to produce, his cost only four thousand. It is the nature of capitalist production that my factory is immediately useless. If he is going to produce for four thousand the same car I am producing for five thousand, nobody is going to buy my car, although it is exactly the same car. I may as well shut up shop, commit suicide, go in for something or other. This magnificent factory is automatically useless. Profit can be lowered, but two can play at that game.

THE WORLD MARKET

Now it is not necessarily so in a socialist society or in any other society. My factory is still valuable: it produces a car just as good as any other one. But in the competition on the world market, the cheapest car is the one that will sell according to value, and mine must go. Capitalism has produced a great deal, but it has wasted quantities of production because of the necessity (the technical word: obsolescence) because of the necessity of getting rid of any productive mechanism which is not able to keep up with others in the market as a whole.

In the days of free competition that was the cause of the great progressiveness of capital, because periodically there would be a crisis. In this crisis people suffered. All those factories and production units which were not of the first class, which were not properly handled, fell apart. They would go bankrupt, and when the world market lifted itself out of the crisis, only the most advanced, the most highly

productive elements, remained, and society would move forward from this higher level.

But at a certain stage capitalism begins to run to the government for salvation. Government also begins to enclose its production within the national boundaries because of war and tariffs. The capitalist, as soon as he gets into trouble, runs to the government and says, "Look how many people I am feeding, and look at the value of the production that I am producing for the benefit of the country. I am in a crisis. I am in difficulties owing to no fault of my own, but these miserable people in the other countries are under-selling me. They are paying their workers very little. Look how much I am paying mine. I would be glad if you could give me a subsidy of some kind." And as he has helped to put the government into power, the government looks into the matter and appoints a commission and tells the commission to examine the industry rigorously and give him the subsidy that he wants. He takes hold of the subsidy and, especially if an election is near, he goes to his political party, passes a little bit to them, and tells them to be careful to say how government interference is ruining capitalist production all over the world.

What exists in the world today in all these advanced economies is an absolutely artificial, non-competitive and therefore reactionary form of production. The free competition by which capital threw out what was not up to standard and passed on the advantages to the most advanced does not exist any longer. What we have today is state capitalism, and there is not much opportunity of backward industries being thrown out, because you must have full employment, and when the industries look as if there is going to be unemployment, particularly in countries like France and Britain, the government steps in and every effort is made to preserve it, whatever its value upon the world market. The United States, the most powerful of all, shelters behind tariffs. War preparations within national boundaries dominate production. In other words, even in theoretical terms, the special advantages which distinguished the system in its best

days and which made it the most advanced system of production the world has ever known, those special advantages—essentially free competition—have been lost.

WHO WILL CONTROL THE WORLD MARKET?

That is the general theory. Now how does it apply to the world today? There are many people who believe that Russia, because private property has been abolished, is not subjected to the fundamental movement of capitalism. They are quite wrong. Capitalism—I cannot say it too often—functions on the world market. Today the competition is not for the selling of goods. The competition is for total control of the world market. What does global mean? Global war! What are they fighting for? I hope there is no one here who believes they are fighting for democracy versus totalitarianism or vice versa. It is for total control of the world market, and it is not a question so much nowadays of sale of goods. It is a question of the capacity to mobilize millions of men with great speed, to transport them with great rapidity and facility from one place to another; to be able to produce armaments of all kinds and what is required by an army at the greatest possible speed. It is to produce ballistics. It is to produce satellites. It is to produce one of these things that go in forty minutes from one end of the world to the other—missiles. That is what the production of the modern country is geared to do, to keep people going, but essentially to produce these. You produce these during the "cold" part of the war, and when you reach a certain stage and you begin to use them, that is the "hot" part of the war.

And now you see the consequences of mechanical development—Genghis Khan and Attila the Hun and these others committed many murders and massacres of hundreds and thousands of people; but they did not have atomic bombs. They just killed them, you know, with swords—struck them with a spear or something. You can do a great amount of damage with those but you cannot do too much.

But much of the problem today in this terrific struggle

that is going on is that you begin with an ordinary atomic bomb; and the fellow over there has none. He, however, is working hard and he produces one a little better than yours, whereupon you produce one a little better than his, and so the competition which you carried on previously in regard to ordinary production has been transferred to the dominant armament industry. We have in full force the great principle of obsolescence whereby as soon as you have produced something, if the other country on the opposite side is able to produce it faster than you, no matter how many billions you have spent on it, you have to get rid of that and start afresh. They are at it all the time. So that the principle of capitalist production, which we have seen in previous stages of capitalism applied to the production of ordinary means of production and ordinary means of consumption, still governs the production of the most advanced sections of industry. That is the situation that we face--this constant development of industry along regular capitalistic lines for the mobilization of the population for the most advanced weapons of war and all the production which goes to the waging of national war by a national population. And with war after war, the killing of millions, the preparation in peace for ever more destructive weapons of war--this and not original sin breeds the mentality in which men plan and commit these most horrible crimes.

THE DOMINATION OF CAPITAL OVER MEN

Marx was very insistent that the mechanical development of capitalist production had a life of its own, and that it carried men along with it. They could not stop at any stage; the mechanical development automatically took them along as long as this infernal competition lasted; and therefore his analysis of the behavior of modern politicians and statesmen is, I believe, the most human, the most reasonable and the most hopeful, because it sees them as the victims of an economic system which has outlived its usefulness and in which the competitive elements, having been transferred from individual units of production to national states, now carry politicians, statesmen and people in a direction towards



Kathe Kollwitz, Tower of Mothers.

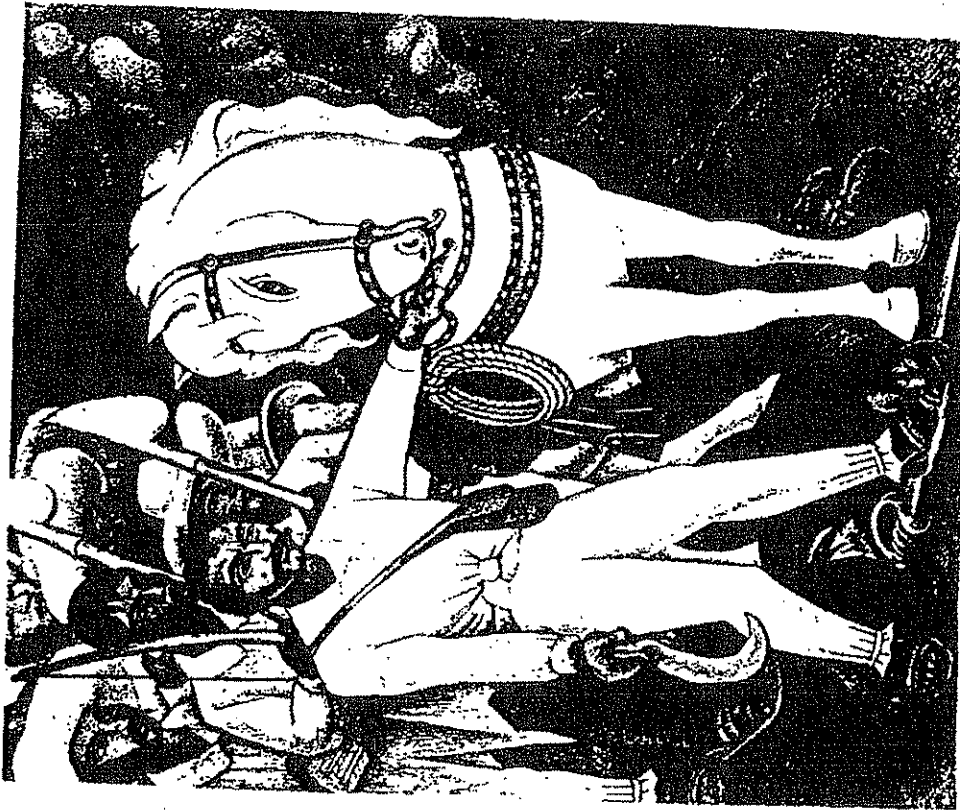
violent clashes which they cannot control.

I submit that that is perhaps—not perhaps—it is the only analysis that I know that can explain in reasonable human terms what is taking place and the threats of the destruction of the world and the suicidal interchange of bombs, atomic bombs, hydrogen bombs, etc. You look at them, at the people, and you wonder if the world, if men, have gone insane. They are in the grip of this economic movement, and although they are building guns and atomic bombs and hydrogen bombs and ballistic missiles, etc., the economic movement which is essential to capitalism is still continuing. It shapes the characters of the men who have to use them. Marx's analysis is that that is the movement on the one side. The opposite movement is the organization of labor in ever larger, more highly developed units. Only when these take control of industry will men control capital and capital will not control them. Labor will concern itself first with the development of men and not of capital, and only in this way will be broken the fanatical competition which threatens us with destruction.

THE NATIONAL STATE.

Now that is one example of where capitalism has reached today. I want to give you another example dealing with global and atomic war. If you study the history of capitalism you will see that it began with rather small units. These units steadily increased. (There was a certain amount of capitalism in Ancient Greece, you know. We know more about it during the last fifty years, and it was the capitalistic elements that caused the progressive developments in the City-States of Ancient Greece.) We watched capitalistic elements in the City-States of the Middle Ages, the immense comparative wealth that they produced; also the destruction that they caused in the civilization of the time because they fought each other to the finish—employers and workers and that stage of civilization were destroyed.

Now the stage which followed was peculiarly suited to



Diego Rivera, Zapata.

capitalism, and under that stage capitalism developed splendidly. The political form suited to capitalism as we know it was the national state; the national state of Germany, of France, of Italy, of the United States, Canada and various others; the national political state. Ancient Greece did not know the national state; ancient Rome, though its empire covered the whole of the known globe, did not know the national state. The City-States of the Middle Ages were not national states. The national states are essentially the states which were created and helped to create capitalism in the form that we know it today. But we have to look at the modern world and keep our eye on Western Europe in particular in the generation of modern roads, modern motor cars and modern trucks, in the age of modern large scale production. I remember in Detroit when at the River Rouge Plant, there were, I think, one hundred and ten or one hundred and twenty thousand workers working in the plant at the same time. Now you multiply their families and those who have to feed them, to transport them and the police to help to put them in jail when they need it, and so forth, you have around this community of one hundred and ten thousand workers in one plant in Detroit, you have a total community of some half a million.

THE NATURAL UNITY OF EUROPE

Now, with units of production of that size, you have rapidity of transport, rapidity of communication, larger and larger urban units, greater and greater interchange of different types of material, freedom in the use of fuel, where formerly you had to produce near to coal and so forth (oil is now rapidly transported), the telephone, radio communication, television. It is clear that the units of production to which we were accustomed for many generations and which reached their greatest heights in the old days, say, before World War I, are today outmoded. Europe is crying for unification. These little countries with their customs barriers, each with its own cotton and steel and so forth—Belgium, Holland; Belgium with its eleven million people, Holland with its nine million or something of the kind; even France,

Germany, Spain, Portugal—all these. As for Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and all of those scraps of states—everybody knows that those today are an anachronism—not the people, not the language, not the national culture, but the economic structure that each holds for itself. Europe is crying for unification—production on a continental scale. And these wars that we are seeing are not just wars for the sake of war. It is because substantial sections of the European population in every country feel the need for this unity. In one respect the Kaiser's attempt in 1918 was an attempt to unify Europe, under the domination, however, of one national state. That is the failure. Hitler's attempt to unify Europe was another attempt, a response to an obvious objective need. Today the democrats are trying. They have formed the European Common Market and they have the Coal and Steel Community. Nevertheless they remain knitted within their national borders.

The problem is not only themselves knit within their national borders. The national state today is an anachronism and it in another way is one cause of the degradation of modern society. Great Britain as a national state must see to it that Europe does not unite. Isn't that a commonplace of British policy? What they call the balance of power? So that, you see, the national state becomes not only a barrier to the development of capitalism in the old way, but it now becomes a political barrier to the development of society. In addition the United States now cannot have any unification of Europe. The Atlantic is only a pond. The United States constantly backs Britain to maintain the balance of power on the continent of Europe. So that the world is moving economically and socially in a certain direction, but for the preservation of the interests of the national state, it is continually being torn apart by war; and when men find themselves in these retrogressive positions they are liable to take the steps and do the things that I began with at the beginning. The idea of destroying Germany—that inhuman, debased, degenerate program could only come to the minds of men for whom the preservation of their own national states took precedence not only over military but even social

and moral values. That is the situation that they are in. The National State has to go or they will continue to behave as they do.

FINAL FAILURE OF THE NATIONAL STATE

Now a further example of the non-viability of the national state. The national state today, despite all its power and despite all the degradation to which it reduces the men who try to run it, never achieves its purpose. The British and the Americans sought to prevent the domination of Europe by Hitler in order to maintain the balance of power. What is the result? At the end of the war, Europe is closer to the domination of one power than it was when it began—before they spent all the men and money and wealth.

What is the situation of the Americans in the Far East, despite all the power? Their idea was to prevent the domination of China by Japan. If anybody was going to dominate China, they were going to dominate China. Not those backward Japanese whom they brought into modern life in 1850. They fought a tremendous war with what results? China today is dominated neither by Japan nor the United States. So that both in the West and in the East, in the objects for which the national states fought, they have failed, and they have failed because these objects in the modern world are unobtainable.

THE ROAD OUT

Now what is the road out? The road out is a *continentalization*, to begin with, of the various economies. Europe must become one unit; but it is obvious that this unification—which even the national capitalistic states are trying to achieve—cannot be achieved by them. Marxists believe that if it is to be achieved, it is to be achieved by a new social class which is not governed by the political and social privileges and traditional interests of the national states which are three or four hundred years old. We believe that it can only be achieved by a social class which, from its very

position in industry and the structure of society, can reach out to others of the same class in other countries. Mankind must leave behind the outmoded bourgeois class and all the obstacles which the national state now places in the way of an international socialist order. *THAT IS MARXISM*. It says: no longer the national political state but an international social order.

There are a lot of people running around busily building what they call a world state. They propose to join up Khrushchev, President Eisenhower and that very tall man, General de Gaulle, and Mr. Macmillan and the President of Brazil. They are going to join them all up in a world state. These people are very mischievous; they take important words and phrases, throw them around and make them look nonsensical. The capitalist system of production, the bourgeois national state under which capitalism grew to maturity, are today outmoded. The social order of the future is an international socialist order with classes in command or controlling the direction of the economy and political life who have got rid of the nationalist ideas, the nationalist policies and the nationalist economics of the bourgeois national state. The Russian Communists now put themselves forward as the force to unite Europe. That is one great part of their appeal. Their method is the same as Hitler's: force, brutality, suppression of freedom. They can only think in terms of a Russian-dominated Europe. The Socialist United States of Europe will be a free federation. The working class of Europe, in the three Internationals, shows that internationalism is inherent in it.

That is the Marxist position. I do not know of any other position. There is a position that is being preached now, at least they were preaching it up to the summit or up to just before the summit took place. It is a password called "co-existence". The moment one state tells another state, "Now we shall be able to practice co-existence," that means they are in mortal conflict. You don't have to tell your neighbor next door that you and he must practice co-existence. You just live together. This insistence on co-existence

Japan did it without imperialism. No, the argument is silly when it is not malicious.

BOURGEOIS BREAKDOWN AND COLONIAL INDEPENDENCE

Point No. 2 is that these colonies and ex-colonies are getting their freedom today with the ease that they are getting it because of the breakdown of capitalist society. Let nobody believe that if they were as strong as they were in the days of old, all sorts of impudent little states like Cyprus and Malta and Trinidad and Jamaica and Ceylon and all of them would be allowed to say, "Freedom, independence, set a date," and all that. They would not have stood for that. My view is that the passing of colonialism is part of the general decay of capitalism, and part of the general decay is the disinclination of millions in imperialist countries to carry on any of these imperialistic adventures any more. Millions of workers don't want to have any part of it. The most striking example of that is Indo-China. You know who fought the war of Indo-China? Not the French soldiers, not the French Army; volunteers and the French Foreign Legion, including many of Hitler's soldiers who had nothing to do in Germany and were prepared to go fighting and see what they could get out of it. That was the great French war in Indo-China. So that the rise of colonial independence is a part of the breakdown of the system of capitalism and the national bourgeois state.

Point No. 3 is highly significant for the future. The newly independent states are uncorrupted by the tremendous weight of tradition and practice and habit which now burden the national bourgeois states, whether they are ruled by Labor or Conservative parties. Today they are in the very vanguard of the progressive forces of modern society.

NEW PERSPECTIVES

I want to take Ghana and in a few brief words tell you what are the policies of this little state of five or six million people. Ghana aims at a United States of Africa, and

Nkrumah is very serious about it. He says, "At any time we are prepared to give up completely the national sovereignty of Ghana, which we fought so hard to get, in the interest of a united Africa." There is no European statesman who could say that. If he wrote it down, when he stood up to read that he was going to give up national sovereignty, he would choke. He could not say it. (laughter) Ghana and Guinea say, "We have nothing to do with either East bloc or West bloc." They say, "We do not want any kind of military bases on African territory. We will oppose it whenever we can." Sekou Toure says, "Not only no military bases, but no kind of economic or political subjugation of any part of Africa to either of the blocs." They say, "We are going to train people. If anyone comes to Africa to test any bombs, as de Gaulle did, we are going to march on the installation and try to put an end to it by force."

Usually even when political parties say these things, when they get into power as governments they forget them. But these are governments that are saying them, and the Convention People's Party of Ghana has got a huge settlement where people from all parts of Africa who are fighting against imperialism and oppression can come and live and get some food to eat—because revolutionaries are sometimes very hungry and miserable. They are thin because they have been working too hard under hard conditions. They get food and rest and paper to write on and somewhere to print and money to go back to fight the imperialists in Africa. Nkrumah has invited all states that wish to oppose nuclear warfare to form a non-nuclear club and condemn nuclear warfare for the barbarism that it is.

India's policy is the same, and these countries go to the United Nations—Arabia, the Asians, Latin America, all these small countries—and they pester the lives out of the big ones whenever any imperialist question comes up to the vote. Now America bribes some and Russia bribes and terrifies others, but by and large some of them take the bribes and vote against them. (laughter) They say, "Thank you for the economic aid; we would like to have some more technical

aid; but your behavior in Algeria is shocking, and you should not have done that in Guatemala, etc." They vote against colonialism.

Very soon we in the West Indies are going to have somebody there, and he will be speaking and he will be voting, and I hope he will be speaking and voting right, because if he does not he can look out for one enemy and that will be me. (laughter) So that the passing of colonialism, you see, is a sign of the weakness of the capitalist bourgeois state and at the same time it provides ammunition for the breakdown of these imperialist states which dominated them before. Nevertheless there is no question about it: the basic opposition to imperialism must come from the proletariat of the advanced countries. As long as they remain under the physical and mental control of their nationalist leaders, the present situation will go on. Therefore, I want to say a few words about the Hungarian Revolution.

THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

You know what the Hungarian Revolution signifies? You know what was its leading characteristic? Its leading characteristic was that political parties and trade union organizations had nothing whatever to do with it. It was established by Workers Councils in every factory and in every department of the national life. And after a week of it, the Hungarian intellectuals asked the Workers Councils to form a Workers Council Government.

Now you will remember last time we spoke about the Soviet. I have traced carefully with you the outbreak in 1848 when they did not know what they wanted; then the commune in 1871 when they formed a legislative and executive body in one (with nobody instructing them). From 1889 they formed the Second International; the Russian Soviet came, in which factories elected people into what was essentially a political body based, however, on economic relations—something entirely new. Nobody invented it; nobody told them; they just felt that that was what they

wanted at the time. The Soviet was the latest, and you had in the Soviets the two parties, the Second International and the Third, contending for power. In my opinion, the Second International and the Third International, the Social Democrats (the Labor Party) and the Communists, passed out of history as useful political forms in Germany in 1933. I have described how both of them allowed Hitler to come into power when united they could have overthrown him without any difficulty. Political organizations which allowed this to happen have thereby proved their incapacity to handle the problems of the day. The coming into power of Hitler, owing to the divisions and incompetence of the Communist Parties and the Social Democratic Party, was a catastrophe not only for them but for the whole world. It will be many years before we get rid of the consequences of that. I will take that up in later issues when I will go more into the psychological problems which these crises have placed upon us. The Spanish Revolution took the Soviets further, but political parties still fought for power in them and so ruined them. Now we find that in 1956 the Hungarian Revolution formed the Workers Council, no Soviet. And do you know what was the decision of these Workers Council in the Hungarian Revolution, one of the greatest revolutions in history? They said, "No Communist Party, no Social Democratic Party, no Catholic Party, no small peasant parties in our Workers Councils. All of these parties for all of these generations have been leading or trying to lead, and always the reaction has defeated us in the end. This is a Workers Council. Any man who works in this industry, in this factory or in this office is entitled to vote for a representative, but no party is going to be represented here."

That is the latest development. It means very little to these clumsy-headed barbarians who do not understand the movement of history, but as a Marxist I have tried to show you how the socialist movement has developed from 1848 and how stage by stage without a single writer or theorist or publicist instructing them in anything, the workers have constantly developed new and more advanced political and social forms until they have finally arrived at the Workers

Council, based upon a man's employment in all forms of industry or office activity. You elect a representative upon the basis of the number of men in that particular section of the industry and that grouping is at once economic and political and a social form. For us, the Marxists, it is the ultimate form of modern political development.

THE REJECTION OF THE PARTY

That is why my friends and I have broken with Trotskyism. Trotsky was trying to form a Fourth International based on Lenin's conception of the party. We said that Lenin's conception of the party was a great achievement for his time, but that today Leninist Bolshevism is dead. Workers in advanced countries, i.e., where the proletariat is large enough and strong enough to lead the nation, will only be misled and corrupted and hamstrung and defeated by parties of this kind. The proletariat, we said, had to discover new forms, as it had always done. We said this in 1951, and so when in 1956 the Hungarian workers not only developed Workers Councils to the highest pitch but rejected the struggle of parties in them, when we saw this and examined it, we felt that we were right and, what is more, gained added confidence for the future of society.

One point I must not omit here. The party, adapted to local conditions and basing itself upon a careful examination of both the Second and Third Internationals, is still valid for countries which are underdeveloped, that is to say, where industry and therefore the proletariat is not dominant. One proof of the continuing validity of the party in those areas is the victories that they are winning in country after country.

THE NEW FORM OF ORGANIZATION

Now for the last word I will leave you with to tie together the points of this evening. The new form is a close and intimate relation of the ordinary man in his labor and on the basis of his labor creating a social and political form over which he has immediate and constant control. Politics is not

carried out in some other room by politicians but in the factory itself. Time is taken off for the industrial and trade union and political life of the country. It is done in the actual place of labor or the office, so that political life is not taken away from the people. Now the thing that Rousseau was so savage against—this close and intimate political structure—corresponds to the tremendous scope of the international continental organization. Because without this, an international organization would mean that the average individual person would be utterly lost, more lost than he is today. So that, as society moves forward towards an international organization to get rid of the national political form—not the national language, nor the national customs, etc.—to get rid of the political form of the national state in the interest of larger organizations of a continental scope for handling industry on the broadest scale; at the same time we see that the class that we say has to do that has worked out for itself ways and means whereby it would be constantly and immediately in touch with the greatly increased expanse of economics and politics.

Of course there are a great number of questions that the Hungarian Revolution did not answer and could not answer. The Russians destroyed it before it had lasted a few days. But it made a remarkable beginning. The miracle is that it did so much in so short a time. It is when you are familiar with the stage by stage development of the past—I have tried hard to keep this before you—that you are able to see what the Hungarian Revolution signifies. I believe that that is the way society has to go, and if it does not go that way we will have what I began with—ordinary human beings behaving as demons and monsters in a manner that would have been unthinkable during five hundred years of European civilization.

Til next time. (applause)

CHAPTER FIVE

Monday, 22nd August, 1960.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to begin by reading what the last two lectures will deal with. I must tell you--and I think it is right that you should know--that this is undoubtedly the most difficult course in any theme of politics or similar matters that I have ever given. The reporters are taking it down; I am going over the texts. and I have the opportunity of really seeing what I have been saying. (laughter) The effect is most surprising: we have been covering an astonishing range, and I see that, by and large, although the course is long--six miles--nearly everybody who started is keeping up. There are between five and six hundred people every lecture and over one-half are here for every session. It is very striking and very satisfactory. These last two sections are going to break some new ground. That is what we have been doing every time, and I may say that although I am sticking to the headings, the things I am talking about are not exactly the things that I planned at the beginning; but we have gone on and I think you are following, and those who do not follow everything will be able to get the text.

I want to read what remains. Lecture No. Five this evening is called "The Battle for Survival", and the sections are:

- (a) What Is The Good Life?
- (b) The Welfare State--Democratic and Totalitarian;
- (c) The Exploitation of Sex--I have changed that to the Exploitation of Women;

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(d) The Exploitation of Class; and

(e) The Exploitation of Race.

Lecture No. Six we call "Where Do We Go From Here?"

(a) How We See Ourselves: Rimbaud, Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Proust, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Jean-Paul Sartre, Hemingway, William Faulkner--a representative selection of the most gifted of modern writers.

In opposition to them, I pose

(b) "The Undying Vision": Chaplin--that is our friend Charlie, who is one of the greatest men of this century; D.W. Griffith, the American movie director; Eisenstein, the Russian movie director; and Picasso.

In regard to Picasso, I am going to talk about only one painting by him. My wife bought a reproduction in the United States. I could not get one which I would have liked to bring from England--a reproduction of his great painting, *Guernica*. However, Mr. Comma has it, and I think by next time you will be able to see it as you come in. It has a very close relation to what I am talking about during these last lectures.

To continue.

(c) Science and Industry: The Grandeur of Automation and the Folly of Satellites;

(d) Science and Man: the theories of Freud, substantially; a few words about him and Jung and the theory of the unconscious.

And, finally:

(e) The Political Alternatives: The Ascent of Man to

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Complete Humanity, or Degeneration into the Life of the Cave and the Jungle.

And I mean that. They are living in caves in Sweden already, and I am sure every modern country is building caves. They do not talk about these caves; they don't want to frighten us more than we are frightened already.

So that we come now to "The Battle for Survival" and "What Is The Good Life?"

WHAT IS THE GOOD LIFE?

I do not propose to preach any sermons here. Please get that out of your minds entirely. I am speaking about the good life from the point of view of society. It is a difficult question and it is made more difficult by the follies and inanities of statesmen. Let us presume for the sake of charity that it is political necessity (their necessity) which makes them talk so much nonsense. For example, Mr. Butler, who is an able man at his own British politics, rebuilt the political perspectives of the Conservative Party after its defeat in 1945—a thing that Mr. Churchill could not possibly do; but Mr. Butler has told the people in Britain that in twenty-five years' time—a quarter of a century—the standard of living will be doubled. It is the kind of inanity that I want to warn you against, and I would be glad if, when you hear it, you really express yourself, not offensively, but with the necessary contempt and scorn. That statement is without meaning. This is 1960. Fifty years ago, 1910, I am sure that the amount of goods, the quantity of services that were at the disposal of the average worker in a particular country were more or less about half what they are today. You know that in your own lives: what your fathers and grandfathers lived by, the goods and services they had were small in comparison with what you have today. That is the situation in Europe and in Britain as a whole. Has that solved anything—the doubling of the standard of living, what you have at your disposal to use, the goods and services which are twice what they were fifty years ago? Has that solved any social or political problems? The

social and political problems are today worse, more acute, than ever they were in 1910. But, you see, when he says in twenty-five years "we" will double the standard of living, he thinks that he will have doubled the number of votes for the Conservative Party, because, you see, his party, if left in power, will have been the one who will have done that for the workers. It is the kind of quantitative analysis, vulgar materialism—materialism of the most vulgar type—which makes absolute ruin of any attempt to form any sociological or social analysis of the development of society. People today are concerned with whether they will be able to live at all in twenty-five years' time.

THE CITY-STATE ONCE MORE

The average Greek must have lived on what I expect would be today about fifteen or twenty-five cents a day. The houses in which they lived were extremely simple; the territory of Greece was very unproductive—chiefly dried fish, olives and olive oil, dried fruits. The houses were notoriously commonplace—four or five rooms, somewhere in the back for servants. But when you walked out in the streets of Athens you could see Plato, Aristotle, Pericles, Socrates, Phidias, Aeschylus, Sophocles and many more of that stamp, all at the same time; and they were active in the daily life of the city.

The question, therefore, of what is the good life is not to be judged by quantity of goods. What I said at the beginning is the most important: that community between the individual and the state; the sense that he belongs to the state and the state belongs to him. Rousseau, if you remember, expressed it with great violence. He said, "Before we have any kind of government, we have agreed to meet together, to work together; and I take my liberty, which is mine, my property, and I give it to the government along with yours, so that when I obey that government I am in reality obeying myself." That, in my opinion, was the greatest strength of the City-State and the great strength of the Greek individual—the basis of a good life. It is hard for us

to understand, but a Greek citizen could not conceive of his individuality apart from the *polis*, the City-State. It made no sense to him to think of it otherwise; and recently I have been reading a modern writer on the Greek City-State who says that even when there was no democracy--when there was an oligarchy (government of the rich) or monarchy (government of a king) or aristocracy (government of the nobles)--even under these diverse regimes, the Greek had it in his head that the state was his and that the state belonged to him and he belonged to the state. If you observe their temples and their statues, it was centuries before the Greek ever put up a statue away from a temple. He would not put a statue in the middle of the square out there. The temple represented the state; and in the niches of the temple he would put statues; but the idea of a statue, i.e., an individual, somewhere else away from the building which symbolizes the state was something utterly foreign to him.

There the good life for the individual citizen begins. Today we do not see much of that. We do not see that very much except in periods of revolution when people get together behind a program and leaders. It is very rarely the state, an actual government. Sometimes it is a political party, sometimes it is a leader; and then you get an example again of what Rousseau means when he says that if the minority has to obey the majority merely because it is a majority, that is not liberty, that is not freedom. It may sound fantastic; it is not at all. Rousseau is insisting that the majority must represent the general will, and even if the minority is hostile but the majority represents the general will and the political leader or a political party most obviously represents the general will, then the minority must obey the majority because the general will is being expressed. The general will is expressed when its political form makes the individual feel himself part of the community. A mere majority vote over a minority--Rousseau and Hegel and others make it clear that when you have to obey because they have the police (they put you in jail if you don't)--but strictly speaking, from a philosophical point of view--that is not democracy. That is not liberty. I grant you that this is not easy. You have to

grapple with it and discuss it and work it out. (Think of your own recent history.) A minority, that is to say a group that finds itself in opposition, can submit itself and obey when it feels that the majority represents and is building a national community. This I must warn you is the philosophical approach. But without this you cannot understand politics. And what is philosophy today becomes reality tomorrow.

THE CONCLUSIONS OF HEGEL

I am not going into Hegel's philosophical methods and what constitutes the good life, the good citizen. I cannot do it; it is too much. It would need six lectures by itself. But I will give you his conclusions. They are stated in very profound philosophical form, but I think we can make a beginning, and I shall give you one or two examples.

Human society is an organism; and he says that contradiction, not harmonious increase or decrease, is the creative moving principle of history. There must be opposition, contradiction--not necessarily contradiction amounting to antagonism, but difference, obstacles to be overcome. Without that there is no movement, there is only stagnation and decay. That was why the Greek City-States moved so far and so fast, and that is my hope for the development of the West Indies too. Those states were so small that everybody had a grasp of what was going on. Nobody was backward; nobody was remote; nobody was far in the country; and people in the West Indies are even closer because we have methods of transport that bring us very rapidly together. It was within this narrow range that with great violence of conflict and so forth the Greek state leaped from social position to social position and made its marvelous discoveries and inventions. That is the moving force, the creative movement in historical development. That is the first point.

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SELF-MOVEMENT

Another point. All development takes place by means of self-movement, not organization or direction by external

forces. It is within the organism itself, i.e., within the society, that there must be realized new motives, new possibilities. The citizen is alive when he feels that he himself in his own national community is overcoming difficulties. He has a sense of moving forward through the struggle of antagonisms or contradictions and difficulties within the society, not by fighting against external forces.

Let me stop for a moment and give you one sharp example of that. We as West Indians feel that in fighting for the return of Chaguaramas and for self-government against British imperialism and so forth, we are fighting real political struggles. In a sense that is true. When the British go and the Americans go and the British flag comes down and the West Indian flag goes up and all face one another—it is then you are going to see real politics. That is not to say that what has happened up to now is not real. It is very real, but it is preliminary. When all that is achieved, then the fundamental forces inside this country, as in every country, will begin to show themselves. In fact Lenin's doctrine was, "We do not want to have imperialism; we want to get the imperialists out in order to carry on this struggle inside, free from interference by all these people." If I may venture a prediction based on historical experience, the exhilaration based on successful anti-imperialist struggle rapidly declines and a far more solidly based new social movement begins.

THE MASTERY OF WEALTH AND KNOWLEDGE

Now we come to the tremendous jump that Hegel makes and that Marx and the others follow. *It is not the world of nature that faces modern man.* When Descartes, Copernicus, Bacon, the Royal Scientific Society of England, Spinoza and Hume and the rest of them, and early capitalism, early science, began, they were fighting to overcome nature and to learn to discipline nature and to turn nature to the uses of men. That was the struggle for the beginning of the modern world. But not today. Today man has not conquered nature in general (you will never be able to conquer nature), but he is able to bend it, substantial qualities of it, to his own

purposes; and the problem in the world today is not what it was for many centuries. You remember our friend St. John said there must be no sea because to cross the sea with their small boats was very troublesome and dangerous; also fruit trees would not bear once a year, but every month. You understand what he was driving at. The problem for centuries was to master nature. Not so today. The problem in the eyes of Hegel and in the eyes of Marx is the mass of accumulated wealth and scientific knowledge which man has built out of nature. That is the problem. It is difficult to see in the West Indies and in underdeveloped countries because we are still struggling to get some potatoes and to catch some fish and so on. But in the modern world today that is not the problem. In ten or twenty years it would be possible to feed adequately the whole population in the world. That will be no problem. The problem is how to handle, how to master the mass of accumulated wealth, the mass of accumulated scientific knowledge which exist in the world today. That knowledge is driving us to world suicide. Capital, I repeat, controls us. We do not control it.

This is so important that it is worthwhile going it over once more. Capital controls man. Man does not control capital. And this has reached such a stage that the great masses of men live in fear and anxiety. The good life for a modern citizen is impossible. We feel it here, but it is the great centers of population and industry that feel it most, and every human being is affected far more than he is consciously aware of.

THE CAPITAL RELATION

Let us look at the movement of capitalist production again. You remember my analysis of a national economy as being 15 to 1, capital to labor; 8 to 1; 3 to 1, etc. You remember too it is the competition to improve this ratio which is the driving force of capital. The Trotskyists say Russia is a workers state because private capital is eliminated. We say that private capital or no private capital, this murderous competition goes on. Russia cannot ever stop to

use its advance for the benefit of the people. That is subsidiary. It has to get rid of a perfectly valuable plant, etc., to keep up with America, and vice versa. And until we have international socialism that will go on. The mass of accumulated wealth, knowledge, science—constantly preparing the basis for new weapons, new organization of industry, new processes—prevent men ever being able to stop. They have no choice. The good life for the citizen is under these circumstances impossible, even when he has enough to eat. Capital, the capital relation, is the relation of men who have nothing to sell but their labor-power, and men who control or own the means of production. It was not always so. In the best periods of the Middle Ages, for example, the peasant owned his land; the workman, the artisan, owned his tools. They controlled and ordered their own activity. It is interesting to note that England in those days was known as "Merric England". Nobody would call the English today merry. Capital, you see, can transform national character.

The solution, Marxists say, is to put all this wealth under the control of the men who work in it. Then, and only then, will the mass of accumulated wealth and scientific knowledge be used for the benefit of the great mass of mankind. Otherwise you have value production. As long as the wealth and knowledge are being guided by people who are concerned with preserving their position and their managerial status, this fanatical competition will continue, and man will constantly produce more means of production, and constantly improve means of production; and now they have become means of destruction pure and simple.

I hope nobody believes that they really want to spend weekends on the moon. They are not really interested in that. You saw the other day that a satellite has been brought down in Russia with two dogs in it. Everybody is talking about the dogs; that is not in the slightest degree important. What is important is that it was brought down in a particular spot. They are frantically trying in Russia to have this thing going round and round so as to be able to bring it down when they please at a particular spot that they please; and you do

not have to know too much geography to know which is the spot they wish to bring it down at. (laughter) But in the United States they are busy morning, noon and night with exactly the same; and it will not be very long—in fact I do not know if it is not happening already, that we will be living an existence in which these two will have these things going round and round; and the next thing now is not to have yours going round and to bring it down where you want, but to prevent his, to stop it and bring it down back where it came from. (laughter) That is where we are. And you get the fundamental point that Hegel makes and Marx follows. He says, "It is not the struggle with nature; it is not a struggle for good; it is not the struggle to overcome barriers, the seas, the rivers; or to produce power or heat." They say that is not the problem any more. The real problem is to control this mass of machinery and scientific knowledge which is running away with us. I have indicated the Marxist solution. What other is there? I know of none. Our rulers of the great and dominant states are bankrupt, with no perspective but war and destruction. Is that so or not?

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

What is the good life? An individual life cannot be comfortable and easy or creative unless it is in harmony to some degree with the society in which it lives. The individual must have a sense of community with the state. That is where we began. And that today is impossible. We tend to think of the good life in terms of individual well-being, personal progress, health, love, family life, success, physical and spiritual fulfillment. The whole point is that far more than we are consciously aware of, these are matters of our relation to society.

I am not saying that the individual human being is consciously striving to adjust himself to society. Not at all. Since the days of Aristotle and even long before, the philosophers have understood that man seeks happiness and seeks to avoid misery. It is as simple as that. Only that is not at all an easy thing in a complicated world. The thing to

understand is that progress is not simply the increased use of goods. That is utility--utilitarianism. That was the doctrine essentially of the men of the eighteenth century. But progress is the incorporation into the social and individual personality of the stage that society as a whole has reached, which means that a man must feel that he has at his disposal education, capacity and ability to handle the discoveries of his particular age. He need not have a great deal of money to be able to do that. He need not pile up a quantity of large houses with forty rooms, and a great deal of money and drinks. What a man needs is to eat and drink, and to eat and drink satisfactorily by modern standards is very little. That is not the problem. But he must be able to use, to handle, to have at his disposal the greatest discoveries, the latest discoveries which enhance and develop a man's social personality. And individual personality cannot live a satisfactory life if he is constantly aware of great new discoveries and inventions and possibilities around him from which he is excluded--worse still, that these are threatening him with destruction. The peasant of the Middle Ages did not have very much in comparison to what a modern farmer has; the artisan in his guild did not have for his use what the modern worker has. But he understood and controlled what he was doing. We, the great majority, do not. Marxism demands a universal education of all men in the achievements of modern society. It can be done, easily, but only when the masses of men and women are in control of society. Today, a minority has as its first concern the preservation of its rights and its privileges, i.e., the maintenance of the capital relation.

THE MODERN SOCIAL PERSONALITY

So you see the good life demands a feeling that you are moving, you and your children. You must have a sense of movement and of overcoming difficulties within your organism; and if you are doing that, it does not matter what your wages are as long as you have a certain elementary level of material welfare. You must have a sense of movement, the sense of activity, the sense of being able to use or on the way towards understanding and controlling what makes your life.

I do not mean gadgets the way the Americans play with things; I mean things that really matter. This is your personality; this is your social personality; and when this is taking place, although in certain countries they may have two or three times the amount of goods and utilities that you have, yet you can have the good life. You go to a country like Ghana where the general level is even lower than what it is here, but you look at the people, you listen to them, you see what they are doing; you get a sense of movement and activity; they are going somewhere. They will have troubles of course; that does not matter. The Greeks had plenty of troubles.

An American woman told me once that she forgot herself and told an audience of white women in the United States--she was a Negro woman--speaking to them she said, "When I look at you all, I am sorry for you because although whites are oppressing us and giving us trouble, I am actively on the move; every morning I am doing something, but you all are just sitting down there watching." It is not the complete truth, but it is a great part of the truth. This is some idea of what I mean by what is the good life--the individual in relation to society. It is *not*, it never has been, merely a question of what the vulgarians call "raising the standard of living". Men are not pigs to be fattened.

THE WELFARE STATE

Now I want to take the opposite. What, in Washington, in London, in Moscow, what is their conception of the good life for society? Welfare State. Khrushchev, totalitarian as he may be, claims that he is more for welfare than the rest, because in England and in America people can say, "What you are doing is not for welfare. It makes us more miserable." But when Khrushchev tells them in Russia such and such is for their welfare, everybody says yes or says nothing at all; so that they have more of a Welfare State than anywhere. (laughter) Everybody, every government, is agreed today that the state is for the benefit of the community and particularly of the poorer classes of people. That all are

agreed upon. I want to take the most important and most highly developed Welfare State of all--Great Britain. I give you an example of that and then we will take Russia.

American journalists are the finest in the world (everything dealing with the masses Americans are extremely good at). They say that in Britain they see after you "from womb to tomb". (laughter) That is an absolute fact, with one reservation. As soon as a mother knows that she has conceived in Great Britain, she can go to the doctors; they will examine her and see after her and she will be able to get what is necessary--proper food and medical attention and so forth free of charge. When children are born, they have the opportunity to go to a good school. Modern systems of education change, but in Britain they have a sense of tradition. They try to be modern, but there is a discipline and a reserve and decency characteristic of these people (it can be very irritating when you deal with them as grownups); it is very useful in schools; it helps the children to acquire some sort of social personality. (laughter)

If you are unemployed you will be able to go to local relief and be treated not with indignity. At a certain age you have an old age pension. In between, any illness--the most expensive operation--you go to a hospital, they see after you. I know very poor people who have had operations which would cost five hundred to six hundred pounds--absolutely impossible for them without the Welfare State. The doctor writes a prescription, you pay a shilling for each prescription and you get whatever it is.

If you live in the United States and you have to get some antibiotics, you go to the doctor and pay him three dollars; but when you go to the drug store and he gives you the prescription and tells you seventeen dollars, you knees get weak. But in England they just hand it over the counter--one shilling--what it is. Furthermore, if you are on strike, in many districts in England the local municipality (please understand I am making no reference whatever to local problems and local strikes. I have nothing to do with

that. If I want to do that I will put up a notice and let everybody know I am going to speak on that and then express myself freely. You have not come here for that. I want to make that clear)--in many municipalities in England, Labour is in power, and many of the houses are municipal houses, quite a number of them. Often when there is a strike the Labour municipality, which has a lot of trade union members, meets and decides that for the duration of the strike they are not going to collect any rent for the municipal houses; whereupon the employers swear that public money is being misused, and the municipalities say, "We are the majority here. We do what we like." (laughter)

THE SHOP STEWARDS MOVEMENT

That is the situation. There is no doubt about it that the extreme misery and poverty which was characteristic of Great Britain during the thirties has, to a substantial degree, been eliminated. Has it brought peace and happiness? Those workers are hostile to their employers to a degree that astonishes those whose philosophy is confined to the higher standard of living. It is in England you have the Shop Stewards Movement, two hundred and fifty thousand of them. There was something about them on the radio this afternoon. I do not know if you heard of the strikes in Great Britain--the recent dockers' strike for example. I am absolutely certain that the official trade union leaders have nothing to do with it at all. The large majority of strikes in Great Britain are organized by shop stewards and local leaders. Having organized and started the strikes, they go to the trade union leaders and say, "You now make it official." The leaders have no choice. Let no one believe that I cannot substantiate this. I can send you to date and place. The struggle in Great Britain now is not so much between the Government and the employers and the mass of Labour workers at all. It is between the mass of organized labor and the trade union officials; and part of the defeat of the Labour Party in the last election was certainly due to the growing feeling in the community that the trade union leadership and the Labour Party cannot control the workers and the shop

stewards.

You can have little idea of what goes on in British industry, particularly when there is full employment. If a fellow does not like this job here, he simply walks out and goes next door and gets a job. That is absolutely ruinous for capitalism, with the result that serious journals say, "What we really want in this country is at least seven hundred thousand unemployed. Otherwise, we will never be able to have any order and discipline."

At Standard's, an automobile plant in Coventry, two or three years ago, there was the most notorious example. The head of Standard said, "I have eleven thousand men making motor cars. Nine thousand could make the same number of motor cars and make them better if I introduce automation." He said, "I propose to introduce automation and I will have to dismiss two thousand workers. It is for the benefit of the country. We will be able to improve our export trade, etc."

You should have heard what took place. There is a man with whom I was very friendly at the time. He is a Marxist like myself. His brother-in-law is not a Marxist. His brother-in-law passes remarks about Marxists like me, but this man suddenly began to utter statements like this: "I have been working at that plant there for some ten years now. All this big improvement and all this automation that he is going to bring and all the money it is going to cost, we put it there; we, all of us, we put it there; we know that."

He adds, "I am married; I have my wife; I have three children and they are going to school, a good school, and I am buying a house. Now this man tells me that he is going to dismiss two thousand of us. I am probably going to be one and may have to leave Coventry and go to Birmingham. They say there is work in Hull, maybe, or there is work in Yarmouth, or there is work in Brighton." He says, "Not me! I am not going one foot. I am stopping here."

TWO CONCEPTIONS OF PROGRESS

Now that is the question. This man is not a revolutionary. Yet the Welfare State cannot deal with what is vital to him. It can't. It could deal with him before he is born and just as he is born and while he is a boy. (laughter) And when he leaves work on an afternoon it can say, "Well, you can get extra education, and the London County Council will have classes; and when you get old we will see after you; and when you die, if nobody can do anything for you, we will bury you." But what happens to him between seven in the morning and half past three to four in the afternoon in the process of production, that the state cannot do anything about. That is where the majority of men live the most intensive part of their lives. That is the problem. A Socialist is not a man who is a good man and wishes people well—I hope he is, but that is not what is important. There are many Conservatives who are good men. They obey all the Commandments and wish other people well, but that does not solve the perpetual crisis in production. What is to be done with that man during these eight hours? What are you to say to this man who says, "I refuse absolutely to be pushed around in this way"? And these Standard workers went very far. I haven't the papers by me, but some day or other I am going to publish extracts from them. The *Evening News*, the *Evening Standard*, the *Times* and other papers said in horror: "What is it? You are opposed to progress? We must have progress." And the workers say, "All right! Why dismiss us? Bring it in and we would not have to work so hard." (laughter) One of them says, "Sometimes we have to work hard, well, we have to work hard. But if you bring in the thing, don't dismiss anybody. We would not have to work so hard. Maybe tomorrow we will have to work hard again." The Editor, I think it was the Editor, of the *Evening News* nearly collapsed. He said, "These men will ruin the country. How can you be opposed to progress?" (laughter) They made a big fuss and in the end the workers had to be satisfied with severance pay.

What these workers were saying was this: "If you want

to bring in automated machinery here, before you announce it, come and tell us. We work here, you know. Tell us about it. Before you bring in what you are going to bring, tell us. We will discuss it with you and see how and when it should be brought in." Their idea was this: "Well, some people will be dismissed, we know. Maybe this fellow here, maybe he wants to move. This other fellow is a young man, not too particular; let him go. This old man should be sent home altogether." They insisted: "We will fix it up and we will arrange it." Whereupon—and this thing is going on all over the place—the Standard employer says, "You want to tell me what to do with my property!" And they tell him, "That is exactly what we want to do." (laughter) You think those dockers in England—I read about the strike and I know the dockers well—you think they are on strike for ten cents or nine pence more a day? Strikes don't take place for that. They are the result (I am not referring to any strike in Trinidad and Tobago), they are the result of a long process of irritation and antagonism between the two of them that ultimately explodes. This thing has been studied; it is characteristic everywhere.

MEN OF THE FUTURE

Some two or three years ago at a place called Briggs in London, the Government appointed Mr. Justice Somebody to make an investigation. I have the report somewhere. It is in some respects one of the most comic documents that you can read. Those workers, from a certain point of view—from another point of view it is disorderly—those workers have had about three hundred and fifty unofficial strikes in a year. The trade union leaders have nothing to do with that. The strike is started and he in the office has not heard a word at all. (laughter) So the Justice examines. This is what he reports. Those workers carry on lotteries; in six months they have raised about eighty thousand dollars. What have they done with it? They have spent about fifty thousand in giving prizes. The Judge asks them, "What did you do with the rest?" And they told him "Sineews of war." "What are these sineews of war?" "Well, strikes, our own, and to help people if

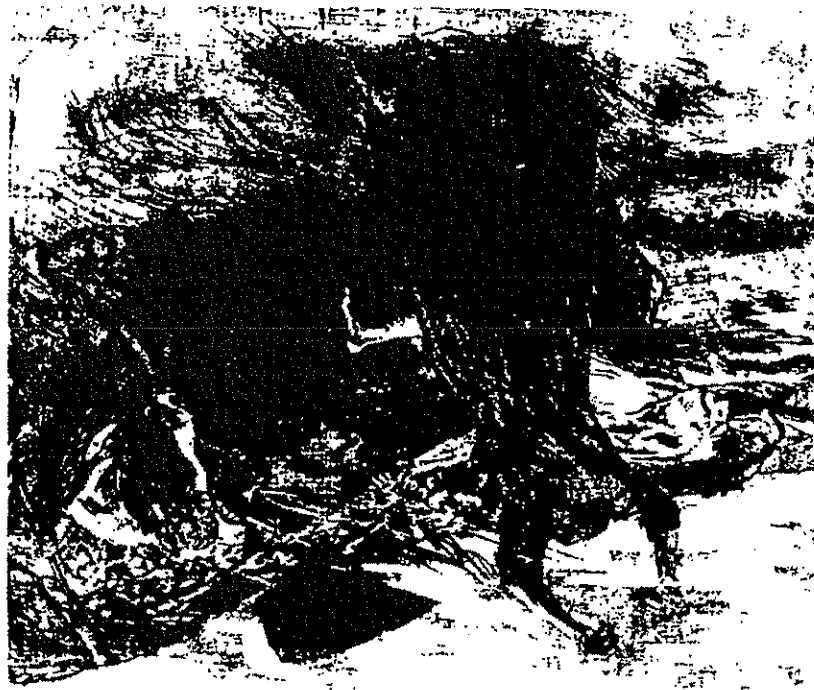


Boardman Robinson, The System Investigates Itself.

they have strikes, to publish newspapers and so on. We just used it up." Are they Communists? The Judge said, "No, they were not. There were Communists among them but they were not a Communist body."

You see, they have reached a stage in England, the United States and France where, owing to the size and the complicated nature of modern productive industry, it is impossible really to control the workers. You cannot control twenty thousand workers in a plant. You just can't. You can work with them. You get them to work by careful handling; but they will do as much as they want to do and they will do no more; and by and large, except there is a lot of unemployment on the way when the employer has the upper hand, they will do it in much the way that they want to. There are slack periods when they are defeated, but there are periods--and each side knows it well enough--when the employer has a chance to make large profits. And then they squeeze him. This thing goes on interminably. The Welfare State can do nothing about it. As a matter of fact, the more welfare, the more those workers carry on in the factories because they are not living from hand to mouth. Now the employer says that they want him to run the plant in the way that they want, and he says, "You are abusing unionism. I have my property; the Government authorizes me to have property. I bought it with my money; my father left it for me. Go to the Government. You will see the stamp. This is mine and by law I have a right to run it as I please. Apart from factory regulations, I can do what I like with my own."

He is absolutely right, absolutely right in his contention. He is as right as the slave owner was in 1861. The slave owner said, "This slave is my property. I own him. Look at the papers that I signed for him. Look at the Government stamp on it." He said, "Look in the laws, you will see it." Bishops and parsons who read the Scripture said, "Look! St. Paul said, 'Slaves, obey your master.'" (laughter) The slave owner had every justification by law, tradition and custom. There was only one thing that was wrong. The slave said, "I am not going to be a slave any more." And it was the slave who



Kathe Kollwitz, Outbreak.

caused the Civil War. North and South met repeatedly and came to agreements but they could not get the slave to agree not to run away up to the North. That split the whole thing wide open and that is the situation we are in at the present time.

You know, there are people who, when they hear this or read it, will go red in the eyes and hoarse in the voice and scream, "Communist." Treat them with contempt. Here we are in the midst of the most terrible crisis society has ever known. What is wrong? I am giving you an analysis of the facts based upon the philosophy of history and the political method known as Marxism. You have a right to know. You ought to know. And whoever does not want you to know is not only an enemy of Marxism. He is your enemy, wishes to keep you in intellectual ignorance and mental slavery.

THE RUSSIAN PLANNED ECONOMY NO EXCEPTION

Now I want to go rapidly over to Russia. The same thing I have described is going on in Khrushchev's country. That is what too many people do not know. You have to be able to read their documents. And I have been taught how to read them. First of all, the Russians are masters at double talk. And secondly, you have to know industry and labor relations in order to be able to read these documents. People have sat down and gone through their documents with me. They have said, "If Russia has a modern electronics plant, which they must have in order to make airplanes, and a modern steel plant and modern plants of various kinds to make those planes and satellites, etc., then nothing on earth will prevent the workers in them behaving in much the same way that workers behave in Detroit, in Washington, in Coventry and elsewhere." And they take up the Stalinist documents and they say, "You see this? You see that? That is what that means. You see this? That is what it means."

This is the essence of Marxism. We study the economic relations and try to come to conclusions about them. And in a nutshell our view is that when the decisive forms of

industry are massive organizations of thousands of workers, the capital relation, that is to say, properly owned and controlled as in the days when a hundred workers formed a big plant, the capital relation breeds perpetual strife. It is the need to put an end to this strife which is one of the most potent causes of totalitarianism. If the rulers of society can settle this problem, then Marxism will have failed. The totalitarians cannot settle it. Not only Poland and Hungary but Russia itself proves that. The more highly developed the industry, the more you create these masses of workers who are determined to handle the situation in their own way; and one of the things that complicates the situation in Russia—particularly in the old days, despite all the ferocious laws that Stalin used to pass—was that the factory employer had to produce so much or he went to Siberia. (laughter) That was a serious matter for him. So that Stalin would pass regulations that workers who came late three times would be sent to prison for so long, and so forth. But those regulations could not apply for the simple reason that the factory manager who had a certain amount to produce at the end of the year, if he did not produce it he was in trouble. If he had a department with thirty or forty workers who were following more or less the leadership of one or two gifted workers and gifted organizers, then when these came in half an hour late, he did not send them to prison. Why should he do that? He said, "Well, try to come in early next time, boys, but get on with the work." He wanted production and they understood it. Both of them understood one another.

THE PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED

I will give you one example of what you could read in Khrushchev's report in 1957. I am a little bit behind hand in documents, being away from London for so long, but the thing is going on all the time. In this document Khrushchev says, "Trade union leaders and party members have now to mobilize themselves and not keep telling us that everything is fine when in reality production is in disorder." What does this fantastic complaint by Khrushchev mean? It has been explained to me by experts and I have written a whole

chapter of a book on it, written and published too. What has happened is this: the Russian workers have made the factory employers and the Communist Party and the trade union leaders and organizers accept certain conditions, and having forced them to accept the conditions, these fellows, when they were asked from above what was going on, sent back to say, "Everything is fine." But Khrushchev complains that it is not so fine. Why? The plan has said that so much production should come from such a plant in such and such time. The workers say, "Impossible." And if twenty thousand workers say that it is impossible to produce two hundred cars every day, they can only produce one hundred and fifty, nothing in the world can make them produce two hundred. What the workers do is to produce one and fifty for three, four, five months. If you try to force them, then the machinery or the assembly line mysteriously breaks down, and you produce zero. But there is incentive pay; the more you produce over a certain number, what is called the norm, the more money you get. So then the plan says two hundred, but they say, "No, one hundred and fifty." And they insist it is one hundred and fifty because (I know them in Detroit and other places) if the managers give too much trouble, as I say, the assembly line will break down; and if production is urgently needed, then the managers do not make any trouble after that because you cannot find out who is responsible for this when you have about twenty thousand workers. So they insist on bringing it down to one hundred and fifty. After it is established at one hundred and fifty, then any time you go up ten, you get a little extra money for that. So that whereas the plan had two hundred as the norm and extra money for over two hundred, these workers reduced it to one hundred and fifty and then begin to get extra money for one hundred and sixty, one hundred and seventy. They keep going up. When Khrushchev and these others ask the Communist Party and Communist trade union leaders, "How is everything?" they say it is fine. They don't want to get themselves in trouble with twenty thousand workers. As you read the reports you see what I am assured of--and now I have learned to read a bit, though I do not read so well as experienced workers--that once you establish these huge organizational

operational factories and structures, the behavior of the workers is dictated by the structure, the production relations dictated by the structure. It is the same everywhere--Welfare State, democratic or totalitarian. Whatever the rulers have to give, they give you outside of the plant. But the worker inside the plant is driven to a hostility which is tearing society apart.

Let me sum up in terms which you should study and work at until they are an instinctive part of your outlook and method of thought:

(a) All development takes place as a result of *self-movement*, not organization or direction by external forces.

(b) Self-movement springs from and is the overcoming of antagonisms *within* an organism, not the struggle against external foes.

(c) It is not the world of nature that confronts man as an alien power to be overcome. It is the alien power that he has himself created.

(d) The end towards which mankind is inexorably developing by the constant overcoming of internal antagonisms is *not* the enjoyment, ownership, or use of goods, but self-realization, creativity based upon the incorporation into the individual personality of the whole previous development of humanity. Freedom is creative universality, *not* utility.

Now I don't want to give the impression in these talks that it is economic relations alone that are decisive. Life is a totality. All we say is that economic relations are the basis. You have to begin there. Why? Because for Marxists economic relations are between people and people; property relations are relations between people and things. And the relations between people and people, between managers and workers in production, are for us Marxists decisive. For example, there are bitter conflicts over the distribution of the product, who will get how much, the division in consump-

tion. Marxism says that if in the process of production there is domination of one set of people, workers, by managers (or owners), then consumption--the distribution of the product--will follow the relations of production--domination of one section of society by another. And we believe that although the connection is not direct, in all aspects of social life, remote though they may be from production, the influence of production relations is felt.

THE EXPLOITATION OF SEX

That is one of the reasons why I introduced the exploitation of sex, the exploitation of class and the exploitation of race. I wish to deal very briefly with each of them from a political point of view as to the relation between the traditional society under which we live and the new society which I believe is necessary if society is not to collapse completely. For many centuries women were the most oppressed section of society, and it is common knowledge, common talk, writing among philosophers, that a society was usually to be judged by the position that women occupied in it. And by the way, I would like to say that the nineteenth century belief that the ancient Greek society treated its women very badly has now been proved to be quite false. These nineteenth century writers had it in their heads and they transferred it to the history they were studying.

Within recent years, however, particularly in the United States, women have won every conceivable legal equality that it is possible to have. Not in England. In England women are working side by side with the men in the factory. They do the same work morning and afternoon, but at the end of the week he gets more pay than she, and he insists upon it. He gives some rignarole story that women are either wife--which means they get money from their husbands--or they are not married--that means they are living at home; and he, the man, has responsibilities. Whatever the reason, that is the differentiation. In America it does not exist, legally. But when you examine it, this is what happens. There are certain

industries--radio, television and such like--which are practically exclusively reserved for women, and whereas a man in one of the big plants will get sixty or seventy dollars a week, the women in these plants get thirty-five dollars a week. So that the segregation is taking place and the discrimination, although not as crudely and as openly as in Great Britain. Now you must understand: in the United States, where the sentiment of equality is extremely powerful, this kind of discrimination breeds a fury in the women who are submitted to it of which you have little conception.

THE SEX WAR

But there are even greater problems. There is the question of the relation between men and women. This society states that they are equal. Middle class women in particular go to universities and live a life of complete freedom. They have their own latch keys; they drive motor cars about; they go to school; they take exams, they don't take exams; they go to Europe; they do exactly as they please. When they come out of the university they marry and then, almost automatically--you should read the writings of Pearl Buck on this question--almost automatically--from the sheer weight of the tradition of society, from the functions that men perform, from the conceptions that men still have in their minds of the relationship of men to women--they find themselves at twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five, in a position of subordination to which they have not been accustomed from the time that they went to school until they left university. The result is a crisis in the relations between men and women in the United States beyond belief. Everybody knows it. It is called "the sex war". I do not know if any of you have met it before or have been reading about it. Europeans and the rest who are more accustomed to taking things as they are, are astonished at this--at the fact that it is in the country where the women have the greatest amount of freedom--where they have all legal freedom--that the relationship between the sexes has reached the stage that it has.

But there is more. A whole lot of women went into the factory during the war. The men had to go to fight and the women went into the factories and they learned to work; they learned freedom; they learned association with other people; they learned independence that comes from doing work with a great number of others, and at the end of the war they did not want to go back home. However, some of them went and even some of those who stayed have been doing their best not to be thrown back again into the narrow, circumscribed life of bringing up the children, removed from the freedoms and associations and opportunities of learning which they had during the years of the war and the years in the factory. They have acquired a tremendous sense of independence. Divorce is easy and free, practically free. There is no problem in many states. You get lodgings quite easily. The subordinations--when I was a young man, a woman with six or eight children had to take it from a man who beat her and spent all his money on drink; that is not the situation in the United States. If a woman is determined not to put up with any ill-treatment of that kind, she can quite often get out of it. The fact is that she can discipline the man's attitude towards her. He does the best that he can. A new problem, from what I gather, has now arisen all over the United States: a man is able to have a certain attitude to a woman if he is the dominant personality and it is accepted as such. But if he grows up as the dominant personality, if in marriage his conception is that of the dominant personality, and then he meets a wife who is quite as familiar in factory business and general activities as himself, he does not know exactly where he stands. And many young men in the United States are in a serious crisis as to exactly what their attitude should be towards the women to whom they are married. Their fathers had no problem; their grandfathers had still less. A woman had to do what she was told; that was very simple. But today, as in so many other things, the old standards have gone but new standards have not been established, with the result that now in the United States, in all spheres of society, there is a crisis such as you have never had before in the relations of male and female. And this takes place precisely because women have economic opportunities and legal

freedom and even social freedom to a degree greater than in most other countries.

THE TOTALITY OF THE PROBLEM

What is going to solve that? It is the belief of the Marxists that the whole society has run down; that it is not an easy problem even to define clearly, these intimate relations, but that, in the last analysis, crises in intimate relations of this kind spring from a dislocation of society, and the attitudes that people have to the society and to the laws, regulations and values by which they live. What is there--in the society--to live by? There is nothing.

In Germany, Hitler, in defense of the interests of the German national state, said: "Women should be the recreation of the tired warrior." (laughter) He said they must have as many children as possible; the state needed soldiers. In Russia, where they carry the perversion of accepted values to an astonishing degree, they say: in Russia we have absolute equality for women, absolute. That, in a society of such a low economic and cultural level, is of course absurd. Look, in the Soviet political leadership, there have been only two or three women.) I believe, from the beginning of the Russian Revolution (1917) to the present day, I can only remember three or four women who were ever in the leading committee. But when you look in heavy industry, in the mines, on the railways, in the steel works, you see any number of them working in heavy industry, in spheres which would never have been allowed in the United States or in Great Britain. In Russia they sent them in and boasted of equality. It is a complete perversion of the ideas of equality.

We have to face a fundamental fact that women in their physical and mental qualities are not inferior to men, but different. They also have the immense burden of bearing children; and women in the professions in particular and in academic studies will tell you that they go side by side with the men up to a certain point, but then they wish to bear children (it is an instinct) and their husbands wish to have a

family. The men they were keeping pace with up to this stage now go beyond. The socialist view is that child-bearing is no reason why they should be penalized, but that is the very reason why they should be given extra privileges, in order to be able to maintain themselves in the work they are doing. For us, child-bearing is not self-indulgence. Bearing children and bringing them up is a necessary part of society.

THE TOTALITY OF THE SOLUTION

Capitalist society does not think in those terms at all. You see, when I speak about the reorganization of industry to stop this merciless warfare that goes on every hour of the day in the big plants, it need not necessarily be a strike. It means a human attitude to the dismissal of workers: who is to go, how many, when. It means a human attitude to the status and work of women. You have this profound dissatisfaction of women with their situation in country after country. America has shown that by giving them legal equality and stating that they have full rights to do whatever they wish in the same way as men, does not solve the problem; it makes it worse than before. Millions of women complain that their life consists of maintaining men in industry and bearing children to work in the industry of the future. They claim that through their husbands they are subordinated to the routines and pressures of the factory as if they were employed there. The beginning of a truly satisfactory relationship in personal lives must begin with a total reorganization of labor relations in every department of life. And by now it is obvious that this can only be done by the workers themselves. There are other aspects of the exploitation of sex, but this is the one I wish to refer to. Despite legal freedoms, the domination and subordination of men in the capital relation leads inevitably to the domination and subordination of women, in the place of work, and in the home. It is in the most advanced of all capitalistic countries, the United States, that the conflict is at its most bitter. What is the way out?

We all know about the exploitation of class. I will give

you one example—the hostility that educated people have to members of the working class is beyond belief. Not so much in the United States. There they do not understand political democracy. The American believes that if there is a vote and he has the majority, then he has a right to make you do whatever he wants you to. De Tocqueville noticed that, and it is so up to today. Vote finished; I am the majority; I am the boss. Not so in Great Britain. In Great Britain, if there is a room with five hundred and one people and five hundred are for and one against, for that very reason they will say, give him a hearing, hear what he has to say, and they will give him consideration. They have what I call the democratic temper, which is not necessarily parliamentary.

But in the United States, in social relations, they are very far advanced. I am sure if President Eisenhower at any time walked out of the White House and dropped into some tavern, they would be a little bit started at first, but if he said, "Give me one of the old mild," or bitter, or whatever it is; then sat down and said, "Well, boys, how is it?" in five minutes they would be as thick as thieves and would be asking him, "How is Mamie?" and if he said, "Not so well," one would say, "My old lady too"; and they would talk away as Americans like to talk. (laughter) That is how they are. Not in Britain! They understand political democracy in Britain but not equality in social life. Nevertheless, in the United States and elsewhere—and in Russia also—the attitude against workers as uneducated, as being incapable of handling social problems, is firmly implanted in the minds of the masses of people by the very system of education. People react violently against the idea that workers, as a class, can manage anything, when in reality it is they who organize most of the work of the world. Foremen and managers are there primarily to discipline workers, to maintain the discipline of the capital relation. Remove the foremen and the managers from most large plants and the work would go on, in many cases better. That has been proved over and over again. The work of the skilled technicians can be learned or incorporated into the general work. Apart from the fact that today it is quite possible in advanced countries to give to all a

general and technical education. This is the Marxist view of the future of society.

NEW ATTITUDES AND IDEAS

What we have to overcome are fundamental prejudices which are the heritage of previous societies and are today maintained for the power and privileges of a minority. There are people who are bitterly opposed to the way in which women are made to see after young children—babies and children up to the time they are ten or eleven. They say that instills into the mind of the child that, in regard to such matters as comfort and material needs, he must look to women for them; but for other things—to go out to play games and work, etc.—he must look to men; so that by the time he is twelve years old, his mental attitude is corrupted by a certain attitude to women. And it is much the same in regard to workers. The plain fact of the matter is that society has to produce ways and means of stopping these ceaseless conflicts in industry, in factory after factory in Great Britain, in the United States and France and everywhere else.

Those are the fundamental problems of our society and the first necessity is to put aside the prejudice against workers as workers. During the war, Lord Beaverbrook was put in charge of plane production in England and the people have told me how he carried on. He would come to the plant, line up everybody and say, "Who are the shop stewards here?" They would stand out and he would ask, "What is it you want to improve production?" They would say, "We want this and this and that." He would tell the employers, "You do what they say," and go his way. When the pressure came and they wanted production, they knew where to go for it. But as soon as the war was over, back they went to the old capitalist way.

Among many members of the middle class, the professional men in particular, there is a sort of horror of workers and the idea of their playing a dominant role in society, when in reality they run the railways; they make the steel; they

produce the wheat; they grind the flour; they give us electricity; and whenever society collapses they are the ones who have to put it together.

Marxism is not an abstract ideal. It envisages change in its examination of reality. The attitude to workers is changing. One of the most important aspects of contemporary society is the mechanization of clerical work. I heard the other day with great interest that there are in America white collar workers (or black-coated workers), girls with high heels, who are on the picket lines. These girls, who used to do the typing and the writing, find that they are becoming proletarianized. Employers bring in machines—I expect they have some of them here—and the girls are not paid by the week any more. They come into the big plants and go into the office upstairs and they are paid by the hour. Mechanization, automation, is taking over the work that they used to do, with the result that they are joining unions and are going on picket lines with the workers whom formerly they used to despise: here we have another example of capitalism producing its own grave diggers.

THE MIDDLE CLASS

These are fundamental problems of modern society. There are middle class people here who speak of the workers as if they were some kind of *manicou* or *lizard*. (laughter) These people are hundreds of years behind the times, hundreds of years behind the times. You have to watch the worker's function in society and the dependence of society upon the fundamental functions that he carries out and his capacity to handle his own affairs. That is what is to be examined, and the professional classes in particular have nothing to lose from a socialist society. What have they got to lose? The employers have a lot to lose. People who own property. That is obvious. But what has the professional class got to lose from a socialist society? Do they believe that the workers, having come to political power, will at once begin to hate doctors and dentists and lawyers? Probably the lawyers will not have much to do, but they will find something else

to do, that is all. (laughter) This social prejudice is a heritage of many generations and Marxism believes that only a new society will change it. It is unsuitable to the conditions of modern existence.

THE EXPLOITATION OF RACE

The last one I wish to take up is the exploitation of race. I am not going to speak about the Negro Question and Africa. You are familiar with that. I want to speak of the way in which today the race question is a great political question apart from the question of Africa. I can just outline the main points.

Number one: historically it is pretty well proved now that the ancient Greeks and the Romans knew nothing about race. They had another standard—civilized and barbarian—and you could have a white skin and be barbarian and you could be black and civilized. Those were the standards that they understood. It is said further that the conception of dividing people by race begins with the slave trade. This thing was so shocking, so opposed to all the conceptions of society which religion and philosophers and others had (despite St. Paul and his, "Slaves, obey your masters"), that the only justification by which humanity could face it was to divide people into races and decide that the Africans were an inferior race. That is the beginning of the modern conception of people being divided into different races. It did not exist before. It is going to take a lot of trouble before it is finished with. Anyway, Nkrumah and others in Africa are doing a pretty good job to clear up that mess over there, and that will help.

That is not all. Hitler introduced the conception of the master race. You see, the world does not make progress and stay there. Either it goes on or it goes back, and Hitler introduced into Europe the most reactionary concept of the master race, which had originated in colonialism. He used it as an ideological instrument for murdering millions of people.

There is another concept originating from colonialism—the alleged superiority of one system which entitles it to rule allegedly inferior systems. The imperialists used that doctrine. Today the Russians dominate half of Europe, which does not belong to them. They are the masters; there is no talk there about "in future when you learn to govern" as the British will say, "we will go and leave you." Not with the Russians. They are there; they are going to stay there. As far as may be seen they intend to be masters of that half of Europe, and from the fuss they are making about Berlin, they mean to terrorize the other half. Their ultimate aim is to drive the Americans out of Europe with the result that, not under the name of race, but in the name of a superior society, the Russian state is steadily establishing itself as a master race in Europe. Their army and their secret police and their agents rule in the satellite countries. There are some short-sighted people who turn a blind eye to all this and claim that the Russian system is progress. To me the argument comes strangely from the mouths of those just emerging from centuries of colonialism. The Europeans have paid a terrible price for allowing these ideas to establish themselves unchecked in European thought. Let us see to it that we do not make the same mistake.

Look at race and the question of Chinese and Japanese. Before the war, on the West Coast of America, California in particular, they spoke incessantly of the "yellow peril", so that as soon as the war broke out, government moved in on the Japanese, put them in concentration camps and stripped them of their property. Now the war is over, Mao Tse-Tung and the communists become masters of China, establish Chinese national independence, except for Chiang Kai-Shek fooling around in Formosa. Thereupon the American attitude changes. Look at television, listen to the radio, look at movies, you see a lot of pictures of Chinese and Japanese girls marrying American men, American girls marrying Japanese men. Why this change? Why no more "yellow peril"? Because the problem now is: which way is Japan going to go, with the democratic West, or is it going to go Communist and join up with China? That is the problem now: political, not racial.

They are doing their best to win over the Japanese. The question of race has subsided. That is why they took Hawaii and made it an American state. The Japanese—they and all the Orient—kept on saying, "You all are taking everybody, you have all sorts of states, but why don't you take the Hawaiians? They want to come in. Why don't you take them? It is because they are not all of them white that you don't." And under that pressure, and with sympathetic elements inside America, they made Hawaii the fiftieth state. You see, they exploited race as long as it was useful. Now it is dangerous and they drop it. But if tomorrow Japan goes Communist or becomes a close ally of Communist China, as sure as day the yellow peril business is going to be raised again. So that is the way, you see. Our masters exploit these fundamental relations in society: sex, class and race. They are always there to be used by reactionary elements, and Russia exploits these in her own way.

I have gone into them not as profoundly as I might if I took up each alone. But I was concerned to show you that Marxism is not merely concerned with economic questions and economic production—production relations—as so many people think. It is clear that all these problems are posed in the West Indies, if not sharply today then certainly tomorrow. You will judge. I have given America as the chief example, but in Britain and elsewhere they are there.

ETERNAL VIGILANCE

Progress is not automatic. Hitler threw Europe back. To fight him it was necessary to fight the theory of race. But that theory can rise again. These reactionary concepts can become more acute than they have ever been in the past, not because they are ineradicable from human nature, but because of the fundamental disorder in modern society. You see what the Marxist solution is. Marxists envisage a total change in the basic structure of human relations. With that change these problems will not be solved overnight, but we will be able to tackle them with confidence. Such are the difficulties, contradictions and antagonisms, and in the

solution of them society moves forward and men and women feel they have a role in the development of their social surroundings. The individual can find a more or less satisfactory relation to the national and to the world community. It is in this movement that we have the possibility of a good life.

But if, on the other hand, reaction grows and the question of the freedom of women and the question of the equality of classes and the question of differences of race begin to be used—as they are bound to be used by reactionary elements in the defense of positions which are no longer defensible—society becomes sick unto death. The individual cannot find an easy relation either to the state or to his fellow men. Not only are we affected in war, in economies, and in politics. The turmoil the world is in reacts upon our most intimate consciousness in ways we are not aware of. And every succeeding day brings us nearer and ties us closer to the decisive forces and conflicts of the modern world. What has suddenly erupted in Cuba is going to place many of the things I am talking about before you, first for your discussion, and sooner or later for your decision. We were not able to choose the mess we have to live in—this collapse of a whole society—but we can choose our way out. I am confident that these lectures will help and not hinder.

Next time we will conclude. (applause)

CHAPTER SIX

Thursday, 25th August, 1960.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

This is the last of the series of lectures. I would like to say, first of all, that I have given many series of lectures at classes of one kind or another, not only when I was a regular teacher, but in the course of an active political and literary life. Looking back over them I believe that, taken as a whole, although I have given classes and lectures at universities, this is about the most important and the most satisfactory to me—and I hope to you—that I have given in the course of the last twenty-five years. (applause)

I have not said everything: if I had said a lot of the things I have omitted to say, I would not have been able to say many of the things that I have said. I shall try to make clear in the course of this evening's final lecture what I have been endeavoring to do. But all things considered, I would like to say that I am profoundly grateful to the Trinidad Public Library and their Adult Education Program for giving me the opportunity to speak as freely as I have been able to do. I cannot imagine any other forum anywhere in which I would have been able to speak with more freedom than I have been able to speak here on a very controversial subject, and that is a matter of great importance. I hope that when the shriekers and the barkers start to yell, as will inevitably happen, all of you will rise to the defense of freedom of speech in the Adult Education Program. (applause)

I have been very careful how I have spoken. I am trying to put forward certain ideas which are not only of theoretical and intellectual importance, but are of objective importance in the world of today and still more of tomorrow. They are

going to be published. My wife and I are working very hard on the scripts, and when the time comes we shall be satisfied that in the course of three years here we have been profoundly grateful for the opportunity, and feel that in this particular series of lectures as published we shall have left something behind us which will last. (applause)

Tonight I am going to stick pretty closely to the program, and when question time comes I hope the reporters and those who are recording will take everything. I have not only to go through the program but also to fill certain gaps and connect various strands, which may have been loose.

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

Now the first thing is "How We See Ourselves", and I have given a list of modern writers—a famous and remarkable list, as you can see. I am going to spend a minute or two on each—no more—in order to underline—that is all I can do—how the most gifted and most sensitive minds of our period see the world in which we live. There is Rimbaud, a French poet, one of the greatest poets of the modern age. He fought in the Paris Commune as a boy of eighteen and then he went wandering over Europe. He had a homosexual relationship with Verlaine, another famous French poet. They wandered about in Belgium and Holland; one got jealous and cut up the other with a knife. One went to hospital, the other one went to jail. He finally left Europe—I do not think he wrote any more poetry after he was about twenty-five. He found his way to Abyssinia, where he traded, and lived with a native woman. He suffered from venereal disease and came home to die at the age of thirty-three. His most remarkable poem is *A Season in Hell*, in which he describes the homosexual relationship with Verlaine.

This is one of the greatest poets of the last hundred years. You can read him in translation and it is almost as fine. Writers are often erratic people in their social behavior but few have been quite so erratic as Rimbaud. Rimbaud's idea of writing poetry was the most remarkable I know. By means of

drugs or by some process, he aimed to derange his mind, to turn his mental faculties upside down, to become crazy; and then he wrote what all the world recognized as magnificent poetry. In other words, you see, what is taking place here is a total rejection of the standards and values of the age. He has to get himself into a frame of mind in which he sees everything the opposite way, so to speak, and what is still more remarkable, when he gets in this frame of mind and writes, it is recognized by the public that he has made deep penetration into the realities of modern society.

JOYCE

The next one is James Joyce. His first novel is *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in which he shows how he got away from the Catholic Church. His second is *Ulysses*, one of the greatest books of our day. It describes the lives of a few Irish people in twenty-four hours—one day—and Joyce penetrates deep into the realities of the human mind and human life, into the depths that lie under the surface behavior—to such a degree that the book was banned for many years. It had to be privately printed, and only recently a judge in the United States and another one in Britain decreed that the book can be published for ordinary reading. Again we have a total rejection of contemporary standards and values. Joyce went still further. He wrote another novel called *Finnegan's Wake*, which I can't read. It is written in a language entirely his own. So that he not only rejects standards and values but ultimately the language that the ordinary people speak and in which he had written for years.

LAWRENCE

The next is D.H. Lawrence. Lawrence found that men were so lacking in masculinity—particularly bourgeois educated men—that it was necessary for the world once more to try to recover the real profundity of the sexual relation before life could become healthy again. Meanwhile, his ladies, the women, they fall in love with gamekeepers. I remember a story called *Son*, in which an American woman falls in love

with an Italian peasant who was cleaning up the yard. He has another story significantly called *The Virgin and the Gypsy*. Here is one of the finest of modern prose writers, and this is his view of society. You cannot reject Lawrence. It is true that being a Protestant Englishman he rather shrieks and yells about things which people on the Continent would take a little more lightly, but what he has to say about the sexual degeneration of modern society is as valid today as it was when he wrote it.

PROUST

The next is Marcel Proust, who wrote the famous novel, *In Search of Times Past*. It is one of the finest pieces of literature produced during the last fifty years, and it is one of the great novels of the world. It consists of the merciless picture of the degeneration of the French aristocracy after the French Revolution of 1848. One of the most striking characters is a homosexual.

ELIOT AND POUND

Next Mr. T.S. Eliot. What is the name of his famous poem? What does he think the world is? He calls it *The Waste Land* and the world ends "not with a bang but with a whimper". It does not even make a gesture. It just crawls off into some hole.

Ezra Pound is one of the great literary figures of the day. He and T.S. Eliot have had a greater influence on the shaping of the English language into the modern style than any other two authors, these two Americans. Pound's poetry is very difficult, but I will give you some idea of his life. He went to Europe somewhere in the early years of the century. He worked with Eliot at destroying the Miltonic and Wordsworthian and Tennysonian traditions in English literature. They put an end to that. Pound was anti-Semitic; he hated Jews. He hated capitalism. He preached some fantastic economic theory of social credit. He knew nothing about economics, but he continued to write essays and some poetry

about it. In his poetry he translated from the Latin, from the medieval French, from the Chinese, linking them all together, always hostile to the existing standards of modern society. He went to Italy. When the war broke out, he joined the Italian Fascists, and he broadcast on the Fascist side against America, his native country. When the war was over, he was taken to the United States, a prisoner. Obviously he was a traitor. What to do with this man? They put him in jail, and while in jail he published a volume of poetry, and judges of American poetry said this was the best for that year. (laughter) I don't know if he is still in jail or if they have let him out on parole. I don't know what has happened to him. For my part, he may as well be out. I doubt if he will convince anyone of his political ideas.

That is a picture of one of the most gifted literary men of the twentieth century. No history of the literature of the century could be written without paying tribute to Ezra Pound.

SARTRE

The next is Jean-Paul Sartre, the Existentialist. He believes that the prevailing condition of the human mind is anguish. He has written a famous philosophical work, *On Being and Nothingness*. The name of two of his books are *Nausea* and *Flies*, and I assure you they are well named. Sartre is the most gifted, learned and versatile of post-war writers. He flirts with Communism and is an inveterate enemy of bourgeois society.

HEMINGWAY AND FAULKNER

There is the famous Hemingway. Just look at the names of Hemingway's books: *A Farewell to Arms*; he is finished with all that war. Another of his books: *Men Without Women*. The next one, *Green Hills of Africa*. He goes there shooting wild animals, and when he is finished he goes to Spain to write *Death in the Afternoon*, a panegyric on bull fighting. The Civil War breaks out in Spain, and he goes there

and writes another book: *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. That is his mentality. (laughter) When the Second World War broke out, he went again and wrote *Across the River and into the Trees*. Hemingway has no use for enthusiasm, liberal values, everything that we may call "uplift." He has no use for that at all; that is the basis of his famous style. Hemingway is interested in things that you can touch and you can see, and in elemental emotions that will deceive nobody. He is a Nobel Prize winner.

Faulkner is another American writer. His themes are rape, perversion of all kinds, incest, murder, suicide, race prejudice, decline of a family, decline of a whole town, decline of a whole province. That is Faulkner—another Nobel Prize winner. Faulkner is a born writer.

CAMUS

Another Nobel Prize winner is Camus, a Frenchman who died the other day; he was killed in an accident. Of the two books which made his reputation, one is called *The Stranger*, and the other is called *The Plague*. And one of his famous philosophical books is *L'homme Revolte*—Man in Revolt.

I could spend the rest of the evening describing these modern writers—the finest writers of the day—who paint such a picture of gloom, degeneration, decay, perversion as I don't remember in any previous period of literature.

Some of the American businessmen complained very bitterly some years ago: "These artists never write about us," they said. So one or two people tried to write some novels about them. They didn't succeed.

This is the picture of our age by its most gifted, its most penetrating, its most creative writers. I know their work, most of them (I don't know Pound's work very well; I know the work of the others), and they are some of the finest writers of the last hundred years. Their condemnation of modern society is absolute.

THE UNDYING VISION

However, those are not the only artists of the time. There are some others, and I have called them examples of "The Undying Vision"; and the people I have chosen are Charles Chaplin; the American movie director, D.W. Griffith; the Russian movie director, Eisenstein; and the famous Spanish painter, Picasso.

Now the one I like to begin with first is D.W. Griffith, not only the greatest movie director in the whole history of movies, but in my opinion the greatest artist of the twentieth century. (I do not count Tolstoy because Tolstoy was dead by 1909.) I believe that in a hundred years' time, when the history of art of the twentieth century is being written, it is these men that will be written about, and not these others. Life is too limited in the vision that the prophets of gloom and doom have of it.

BIRTH OF A NATION

Griffith was doing his finest work before 1914—his best work was done before 1920 and he went on until about 1930. His audience consisted chiefly of immigrants from abroad who did not know the American language very well. He was using movies as a means of interesting and educating people who were not quite at home in the American civilization. I believe that being a great artist and being compelled to meet the necessities of the great masses of semi-educated people, is the secret of the great discoveries that he made and of the place that he holds today in the history of the cinema. Two of his films I recommend to you, and I sincerely hope that somehow or other they will be brought here. One is called *Birth of a Nation* and it is the history of the Civil War in the United States. In the second part of that picture, Griffith is very harsh on the Negro people. He did not know any better. Most of America thought the same at the time. In the United States today, when the picture is being shown, most of the Negro organizations and many of the white progressive organiza-

tions go and picket because they say the picture is anti-Negro. I go early in the morning to see the picture and then come in the afternoon to picket. (laughter)

INTOLERANCE

Griffith is a very great artist and should not be judged too hastily. Lenin saw this picture, and he wrote a letter to Griffith in his personal handwriting, asking him to come to Russia and take charge of the Russian movie industry. He did not mind that Griffith had shown prejudice against the Negro. Lenin knew that this could be overcome. And in his next picture, *Intolerance*, he made amends. (I hope, Mr. Comma, that you will try to bring to Trinidad *Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*. It would be a magnificent contribution to education, both artistic and social, in this country.) (applause) *Intolerance* is a film that lasts about three hours. In it Griffith tells four stories: the story of Christ; the story of the St. Bartholomew Massacre in France in 1572; a story of modern life—workers and employers; and the story of the fall of ancient Babylon. These four stories are not told one after the other. He cuts from one to the other. He has a marvelous eye, and when you see some people riding down a street in Paris in the sixteenth century, you see Paris in the sixteenth century, and you see the people also.

In this film he introduces a rape by a white person of a white girl; so he meant to say, you see, everybody rapes—no, not everyone rapes—but anybody, not only Negroes, can rape. (laughter) At the end of the picture, in the last fifteen minutes, there is Christ going up the hill of Calvary, Christ and the two thieves. And he cuts back from that to the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, another historic event. And then he cuts again into the history of the fall of Babylon. The girl in the modern story, her boyfriend is falsely accused and is about to be hung and somebody is racing to get him off with a pardon. So that there is a story of Christ and the Crucifixion, there is the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, there is the twentieth century—someone in a motor car racing a train in order to get to the Governor to save this young man's

life—and there is the fall of Babylon. After cutting two minutes, two minutes, two minutes, he starts cutting one minute, one minute, one minute, and as somebody has said, you see history pouring over the screen.

I have seen that picture about ten times. My wife has taken notes of each separate scene and the time Griffith gives to it. I am going to write about it some day, but to write about it is not good enough. You have to see it. You have to see them: *Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*. And do not let Griffith's anti-Negro attitude in *Birth of a Nation* put you off from one of the great movies of the world.

CHARLIE CHAPLIN

The other man is Mr. Charles Chaplin, one of the great artists of the day and one of the greatest ever known. His early pictures: *Shoulder Arms*, an anti-war picture; *The Immigrant* shows you how the immigrants to the United States were treated; *City Lights*, *The Circus*. All the early ones and a good many of the middle ones—there is nothing like Chaplin on the modern stage or in modern movies at all. And what is Chaplin's fundamental position? It is the same as that of *Don Quixote*. *Don Quixote* is one of the great novels of the world, among other reasons because Don Quixote, in the days when the modern world was beginning, dressed himself up in armor and went around trying to behave as if he was one of the great knights of old.

Chaplin has done the same thing, only the people he is mocking are not the knights of old. He has dressed himself up in his bowler hat, a morning coat, some big boots, a cane and a fancy waistcoat, and he is mocking bourgeois society and its typical representatives. Those are the people he is laughing at. Don Quixote had made himself an idiot in trying to be a knight of old. But Chaplin says that he is going to be a gentleman. He is very poor and very miserable, but at least he can behave according to the standards and values and high principles of the romanticism of the nineteenth century. Chaplin is going to be a perfect gentleman, and as he bows to

the ladies in the most elegant style, he slips on the banana skin and falls down.

That is what he is doing at the time, showing how impossible it is to live according to the standards and values that people talk about. Hemingway will have nothing to do with that at all, absolutely nothing. He wouldn't even attack it directly; he just ignores it. Chaplin is different. He says, "Well, let us live according to these gentlemanly principles if we can." In addition to that, he is a very human person, and when the gentlemanliness, etc., does not work out and Chaplin has to fight or to run for his life, he fights and runs like you or me. But in addition to being so ridiculous, the fundamental human virtues (not the superficial ones) are with Chaplin. And you know his famous endings: after all the trouble, you see him walking off into the distance along the road, into the horizon. He has been in a lot of trouble, he has been defeated, but he is still unconquered, and he is going off. And the next time he turns up as bright as ever. His vision of the good life is undying. His sense of form is unsurpassed, his humanity wide and deep, and I believe that it is his consciousness of the popular audience that gives him his strength.

EISENSTEIN

The next one is Eisenstein. His famous film, *Potemkin*, is a film of the 1905 Revolution in Russia, with the famous scene on the steps of Odessa. All the people have come to pay homage to a revolutionary who was killed. The people are on the steps there and suddenly the Czar's soldiers appear at the top and they start to come down. The people rush down the steps, and at a certain time you only see boots—those long top boots, and bayonets, not men any more; boots and bayonets—the people running and boots and bayonets. This is one of the most famous of modern scenes, and it epitomizes what Czarism stood for in the minds of the Russian people and the people of Europe.

He has made many other films, but none has equalled

that. That was done in Russia during the heroic days of the Russian Revolution. You see, what I am saying is that the greatest artists of our day have been people who somehow have found themselves in circumstances in which they did not write or work for the educated intellectual public, as all these other writers do, but found themselves compelled to appeal to the ordinary citizen. What I am telling you is no idiosyncrasy of mine. These men who worked as popular entertainers are today recognized, although some would not go as far as I go.

PICASSO

The last man that I want to speak about is Picasso. I am very sorry that we only have this reproduction here of his painting, *Guernica*, but as a memento of this series I am going to send you, Mr. Comma, a reproduction of *Guernica* large enough to give some idea of the picture. Furthermore, it is made in a material which does not reflect the light and it is washable. I hope you will put it up somewhere in this hall or on the steps coming up, so that people coming to future lectures will see it and remember me. That will be very nice. (applause)

Picasso, I have been told by people who are art critics, as an artist, at least as a draftsman, is of the quality of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. Nobody could handle a pencil and draw anything better than Picasso. He was a complete master, but for many years Picasso was noted as one of the most gifted of modern artists who, however, experimented. He had a blue period. I think he had a red period. He had a Greek period. He had a Negro period (although he denies it), which does not mean that he painted Negro people, but he imitated or got ideas from Negro sculpture. And this went on, this extraordinary virtuosity and this series of great paintings, until 1937, when Picasso was about fifty.

He is a Spaniard and in 1937 Franco's Air Force wiped out a small city called Guernica. They wiped it out

completely. It was an anticipation of atomic and hydrogen bombs. Picasso decided to do a painting of Guernica. For the first time in his career he was moved by social action and he used all this magnificent capacity and technique that he had accumulated to do something which the ordinary person would be able to respond to. Everybody knew of what Franco had done to Guernica. The result is without a shadow of a doubt, if not the greatest, then the most famous painting of the twentieth century. If the Chairman will hold this (picture) with me--afterwards if you wish you can come up and look at it--I will give you some idea of what the painting is like.

In the center of it is a horse, which represents feudalism, reaction, political conservatism of the meanest kind. The horse is in desperate agony, and you know these feudal horses always wore a sort of big cloth over them. Picasso has put a cloth over this horse, but on the cloth he has a lot of what looks like newspaper print, a lot of propaganda they are always filling people up with. Below the horse is a man who has been fighting, who has been defeated. I do not understand that fellow very well; to me, when you look at him, he seems pretty hollow. On the right is a building on fire from the bombs, one woman screaming and another woman running away. On the left is a woman with her child appealing for help to a bull. The bull, I believe, represents the general public, not yet certain of what it can do in regard to this crime but full of power and with rising anger. Other work by Picasso and a drawing by Goya, another great Spanish painter, seem to indicate this. Over the whole is an electric light: the electric bulb of extreme power shows that it is the modern world. But to me, most remarkable of all, there is a Greek face and, attached to the face, an arm holding a lamp, so that in the midst of this chaos and these catastrophes is the lamp of culture and wisdom that was lit by ancient Greece. Picasso places this in probably the most dominant position in the painting. In all the chaos and catastrophe of the modern world, Picasso affirms the undying vision of Greek civilization and the power inherent in the mass of mankind.

THE ARTIST AND THE AUDIENCE

There is a famous painting by Velasquez called *Las Meninas*, The Maids of Honor. You will see it in a lot of books, reproductions of it. It is a picture of the king and one of the young princesses and the maids of honor, the painter himself and his pictures; a study in composition and light. When we were in London the other day, we went to an exhibition of Picasso. You know that fellow sat down and painted forty-seven different versions of *Las Meninas*. He twisted it all ways and then he turned it round and he looks at it from this point of view and that, he does it in modern style—forty-seven times. I mention that to show you the type that he is. But his greatest painting is *Guernica*. We knew nothing about atomic bombs then; we knew nothing about hydrogen bombs and guided missiles then. But somehow he felt that the destruction of *Guernica* meant something significant above the ordinary. He got caught up in revolt against what had taken place and the result is this stupendous painting. Picasso's *Guernica* and Chaplin and Griffith and Eisenstein—in the twentieth century they have been able to do what they did because they turned their faces away from the normal educated public who are accustomed to reading the poetry of Eliot and Rimbaud and the novels of Sartre and Proust. They spoke to ordinary men, and the result is the greatest art of our century. To me this signifies a great deal. Picasso calls himself a Communist, but when he draws pictures of the Communists, they raise Cain, because they even tell Communist artists how to paint. But Picasso lives in France. They can't control him, and he paints as he pleases.

Last time I spoke of sex and race and class because Marxism, although it bases itself on economic relations, is a total view of society. And now we have had a glimpse (merely a glimpse) of modern art, to see conflicting currents and where, in my opinion, what I call "The Undying Vision"—that men will do something with themselves—on which side and in what circumstances—that can be found.

AUTOMATION

Now I am going to review finally all that we have been doing, and I hope that you will bear with me if I read some extracts, a thing I do not like to do. But I think we can take it at this stage.

"Science and Industry; the Grandeur of Automation and the Folly of Satellites."

Now some of you, I am sure, know what automation is. Year after year the factories in the United States are being automated. Some of them go to the extreme of having a dozen workers where formerly a thousand worked. That is the latest technical revolution, and it faces mankind, especially workers, with an insoluble crisis under the present social order.

What are you going to do with them? It looks as if in ten or twenty years we will be able to produce with only one-tenth of the present number of workers. I don't know about these bombs and missiles. I am speaking about ordinary human beings and what we need in ordinary life. In ten or twenty years one-tenth of the present population, of the working population of the United States, to take one country, will be able to produce what ten times their number produce today. What is to be done? The average capitalist says, "That is the business of I don't know whom. I am going to have some automation and produce cheaply in order to be able to sell more goods." But the Government and the trade unions and those who are concerned with the labor movement are profoundly concerned because there have been enough disorders and conflicts in the labor movement and in production up to this day. To add this new problem means a final catastrophe. And yet I say "The Grandeur of Automation".

THE UNIVERSAL MAN

Now we have discussed in the past the labor question. I

have given you some examples. Tonight I want to clinch the question by giving you only two statements. The first is from Marx's *Capital* and I am sure you will admire me for my forbearance, that in six lectures on Marxism I have never quoted him once. The average lecturer on Marxism quotes him six times in each lecture, but I prefer not to do that. I have aimed at giving you a conception. You will read and find out for yourselves. But I want to read a passage from *Capital*, Volume I, and I am going to read it very carefully. Marx says:

... *Modern Industry, on the other hand, through its catastrophes imposes the necessity of recognizing as a fundamental law of production variation of work, consequently the greatest possible development in his varied aptitudes...*

The labor must be varied; consequently fitness of the laborer for varied work. He should have a technical education; consequently the greatest possible development of varied aptitudes. Then Marx is very specific. He says:

It becomes a question of life and death for society to adapt the mode of production to the normal functioning of this law. Modern Industry, indeed, compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail-worker of today, crippled by life-long repetition of one and the same trivial operation...

He says society will collapse if it does not replace the detailed worker of today. You have seen Chaplin's film in which he went to work on the assembly line, and what happens to him? Have any of you seen it? What is the name of that film? (Audience: *Modern Times*.) *Modern Times*. It had slipped me. You have seen it here? (Audience: Yes.) Chaplin is doing a certain action all the time, and after a while he can't stop. He just goes on doing it all the time, and then he starts to walk around and he sews buttons on ladies' clothes and he starts to carry out the action again. It is a marvelous satire but satire on a very serious question.

Marx says (continuing):

... *crippled by life-long repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labors, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs, are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers.*

He says that is what modern industry has to be, or the whole thing will collapse. Now automation demands very highly skilled workers and very highly skilled, though not very many, attendants. Furthermore, it is certain that changes in production will be extremely rapid and Marx says you have to have a worker who is able to adapt himself to these changes—who is so educated that he is fitted for a variety of work, so that as industry shifts and changes and various scientific and other combinations take place, this man is able to adjust himself to any changes, because he is educated to correspond. That is Marxism. That is the theory. *Capital* was written in 1867. Marx foresaw. He says that is where capital is going, and ultimately it will not be able to proceed at all unless you get a working force of this kind. But a working force of this kind is not going to be ordered about by an employer. It is going to take control of industry and that is the socialist society.

The study of Marx's *Capital* is one of the most rewarding studies, and it can and should last a lifetime. Today, 1960, students of automation and of Marxism will tell you that this type of highly-skilled, educated, creative worker is the type that automation must have. He is there already. In the most famous chapter of *Capital*, the chapter before the last in Volume I, one of the greatest triumphs of the human mind (you should know it by heart), Marx shows that the socialist society already exists, under the capitalist covering. Its task now is to break through.

THE WORKERS COUNCILS

Now the second extract I am going to read is very modern. This is a most respectable book. It is a book on the Hungarian Revolution. It is written by Mr. Melvin Lasky, and it is published for the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Bertrand Russell, Silone and a lot of very distinguished liberal-minded gentlemen—they have a Congress for Cultural Freedom. (I once wrote an article for one of their papers and I told the Editor, "You will never publish that article in your paper." It was a French magazine. He said, "I will publish. You get it translated." I got it translated. He paid me the money to get it translated. He paid me twenty pounds for the article, and to this day it has not been published. I said, "They will never let you publish that." He said, "I am the Editor." I said, "We will see.")

Anyway, these gentlemen produced this book on the Hungarian Revolution—full of important facts, etc. I am afraid they didn't understand it very well. It takes a lot of trouble to be able to understand things like the Hungarian Revolution. They put some of the facts down, and I want to read for you in relation to this what the Presidium of the National Trade Union Council of Hungary issued as a directive to factories during the Hungarian Revolution. You will remember, please, that, as I have said, this book is "kosher," as the Jews say. This is what the leading body of the Hungarian trade unions has to say:

The Trade Union Council Presidium recommends that workers and employees [that means clerical workers] embark on the introduction of worker-management in factories, workshops, mines and everywhere else. They should elect Workers Councils.

(1) Regarding the functioning of the Workers Councils, we recommend that members should be elected by all workers of the factories, workshop, or mine in question. A meeting called to carry out the election should decide the method of election. Recommendations for Workers Council

membership should be presented, as a general rule, by the works council or by a worker who commands respect. Depending on the size of the enterprise, the Workers Councils should generally consist of 21-27 members, including proportionate representation of every group of workers. In factories employing less than 100 workers, all workers may be included in the Workers Council.

(2) The tasks of the Workers Council Workers Councils shall decide all questions connected with production, administration and management of the plant. . .

That, you see, is total. It continues:

. . . Therefore: (a) it should elect from among its own members a council of 5-15 members, which in accordance with direct instructions of the Workers Council, shall decide questions connected with the management of the factory—it will hire and fire workers, economic and technical leaders; [That means bookkeepers and engineers. These will take charge of that.] (b) it will draw up the factory's production plan and define tasks connected with technical development; (c) the Workers Council will choose the wage system best suited to conditions peculiar to the factory, decide on the introduction of that system, as well as on the development of social and cultural amenities in the factory; (d) the Workers Council will decide on investments and the utilization of profits; (e) the Workers Council will determine the working conditions of the mine, factory, etc.; (f) the Workers Council will be responsible to all the workers and to the State for correct management.

SOCIALISM OR BARBARISM

These Workers Councils were formed all over Hungary. And when that takes place, that is the end of the capitalist mode of production. These fellows were prepared to take over completely—investments, profits, wages, working conditions, hire of bookkeepers, hiring of engineers. Nobody told them about this, you know. Marx said that capitalism would

inevitably come to the stage where the workers would take over. If they don't or can't, he added, society would relapse into barbarism. Look at the world we live in and judge.

That is what Marxism is, not an ideal, a utopia in the head, but a scientific doctrine that enables you to examine phenomena, predict developments and so prepare for them, correct yourself when you are wrong, recognize the limitations of man's possibilities at any particular time or any particular stage, but recognize also his mastery of all possibilities within those limitations. For us, that the workers of Hungary were ready to take over the economy and had won the confidence of farmers and intellectuals, that is the vindication of our theory and a guarantee of a high destiny for the great mass of mankind. For non-Marxists, what does the Hungarian Revolution signify? God only knows.

There are many conclusions to be drawn. I will draw just one or two. If you have followed with how stage by stage capitalism produces an organized proletariat, you will recognize the enormous significance of what took place in Hungary (and by the way, it was taking place in Poland also). Now it is clear that when the Russian troops smashed up the Hungarian Revolution, they were smashing up the socialist society. You cannot have it both ways. Russian state capitalism couldn't allow Hungarian socialism to exist because Poland was just next door and if this thing had spread, it was going to spread to Russia too. They said, "Finish up with this here. We don't want any of this kind of business." And they sent tanks to smash it to bits.

Now you will remember that everybody was saying that the world was destined for totalitarianism. George Orwell had written a book in which he said 1984 was the date; you know the book—Big Brother and so on. People said that the Russians would get the children and teach them and nobody would be able to teach them anything about freedom and socialism. Then this revolution exploded and showed what the Hungarian people wanted. We respect books, like Rousseau's *Social Contract* and Marx's *Capital*. But books are

tested in life. Study books but study also great historical events like the Hungarian Revolution.

THE GOVERNMENT OF WORKERS COUNCILS

Now this book by Lasky does not have the most important resolution that was passed in the revolution, and that was this: when the Hungarian intellectuals saw what was taking place and they saw that the Russians might come back (the original Communist Government was gone), they stopped all their talk about free elections and parliamentary liberties and all that and they said: "Let us have a Government of Workers Councils," and they proposed to make Zoltan Kodaly, the famous Hungarian composer, to make him President. They said, "Everybody knows him, and if he goes and sits and says, 'Well, I am with the Workers Council,' he will stand for Hungary."

The importance of that is this: the intellectuals, the educated, the professional men had to turn to the workers for a government. The army had joined the revolution; the police had fallen apart; the secret police were hiding. The Communist Party and the Communist Government could not be found anywhere, and there were Workers Councils everywhere. So what to do? They said, "Form a Government of Workers Councils." You see, that is the way these things happen. They are the result of the objective actions of millions of people in regard to a definite situation. Simply, there was a situation to be dealt with. That I believe is the highest point yet reached by the Marxist movement.

Some of you say, yes, the society is breaking down; you don't know how many satellites are going round and round and round; we are faced with disaster; there is general decay. You agree to all that. But you sit on the edge and you want it fixed nice and tight so that you can just leave this old society and step into this new one. It does not happen that way. Oh no. It does not happen that way. After all, the first workers state as we know it—very rough and crude—faced great difficulty in 1917. This is only 1960, forty-three years. Look

where the Hungarian workers have reached.

Take parliamentary democracy. The Levellers put it forward in 1646. It was 1927 before the British gave the vote to women, and in France the women got it after they had fought in the Resistance Movement. I don't think they have it in Italy up to now. No, these things take time, and as far as I am concerned, the Marxist movement and what is taking place is moving fast enough from a historical point of view.

"The Grandeur of Automation and the Folly of Satellites." Please, when we are finished, there are always some gentlemen who like to come here and, in addition to asking questions, express themselves. I shall be very happy to hear you as long as you don't take too long. Will somebody tell me what is the advantage to humanity, in the state in which it is at the present time, to be spending all this enormous amount of money and energy on going to the moon? taking photographs of the other side of the moon? I tell you frankly, I have no sympathy whatever with it, absolutely none. And primarily because I know why they are doing it. They are not interested in what is going on on the moon at all. They are not interested in scientific discoveries as Galileo was and Newton was and Einstein was. These fellows are interested in improving and perfecting weapons of destruction. I am against it. Who is for it? There is a lot more to be done with scientific knowledge, discovery, industry and organization in the world today than to be carrying on these idiotic and dangerous games. (applause)

FREUD

The next point is "Science and Man." I do not want to speak here without dealing with psychoanalysis. At the beginning of the century, Freud made what is certainly one of the greatest discoveries about human nature that has ever been made. He unfolded the power of the unconscious, the instinctive desires and needs of the human organism. Great writers and great artists have always been aware of it by the peculiar instincts and insight that they have. And Freud



Pablo Picasso, Guernica.

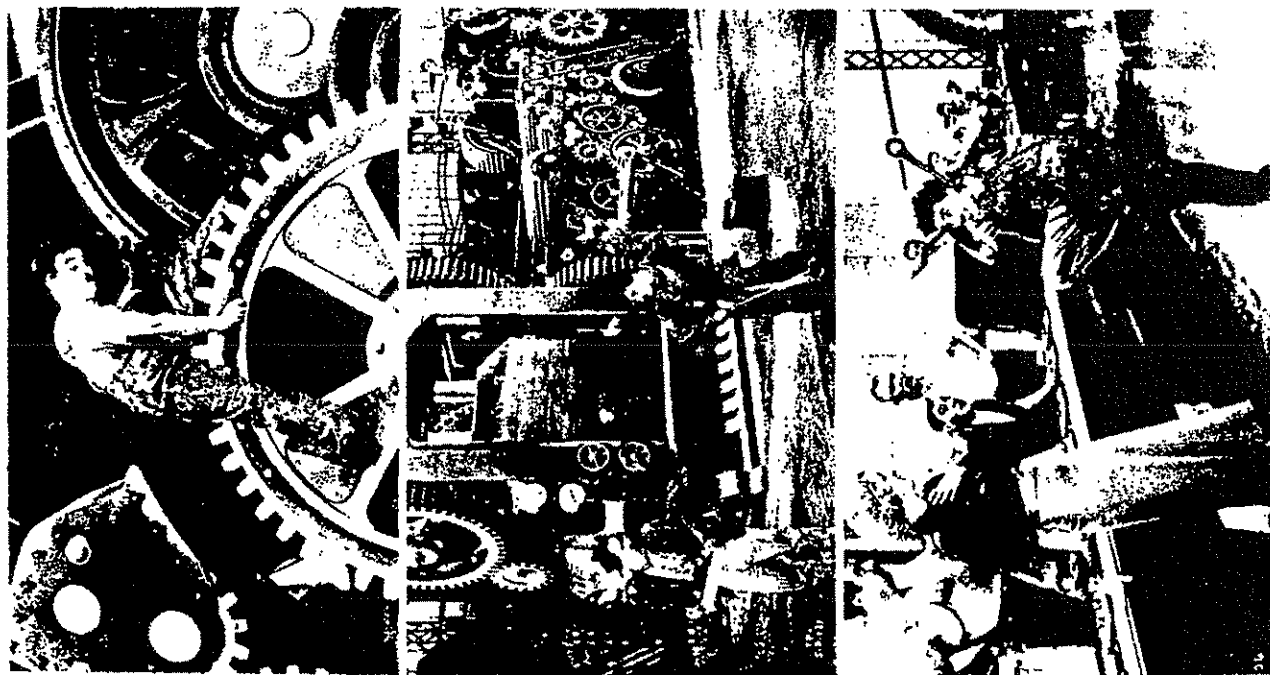
could point to this one and that one and the other and show that they had known what he was talking about. But he first put it on a scientific basis.

Now Freud was a revolutionary. I don't want to go into the problem of the unconscious, that is to say, first the raw, naked desires of humanity, human beings as animals. And then, above the unconscious some disciplined section of the personality which keeps some sort of order (the ego); and still above that, what he calls the super ego (which is something like Kant's Reason), which is still beyond the ego. I do not know much about it—you will get that in any book on psychoanalysis, and a lot of magazines vulgarize it. But most of them don't say what Freud actually said. There are two things about Freud which all these people—most of them—leave, but they play the fool and write as much nonsense about Freud as all these liberals and semi-socialists do with Marx. Freud taught infantile sexuality, the sexual instincts of the infant from the time it is born til it is about five or six years, that decides its character for the rest of its life. He is not playing. And number two, the neurosis, i.e., the incapacity of man to adjust himself—these instincts, despite ego and super ego—to modern or to any society, which makes neurosis a permanent feature of human character. Man cannot adjust himself to society. He is and must be psychologically sick. That is the true Freud.

Freud taught that if some people are very ill, half-crazy, they can be cured. He never set out to cure the whole world of a permanent neurosis. But most of the psychoanalyst practitioners, particularly in America, set out to cure everybody. If you get into trouble with an American who is an intellectual, one question you ask him: who is your psychoanalyst? He will be very embarrassed, or he will tell you straightaway, and you and he are friends. (laughter)

THE CRISIS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

As I see it, Freud's theory is the most merciless condemnation of society that you could think of. He said,



Charlie Chaplin in Modern Times.

"Human beings cannot adjust themselves to it. Absolutely impossible. The very sick ones I can cure. They have a disease. But the normal conditions of human kind, man being what he is, is a universal neurosis--inability to adapt himself to society." That is Freud. Anything else you read (one of the most offensive of all is a woman in Hollywood; she makes a lot of money--all those movie stars go and lie down and tell her their troubles and she tells them something; they go off comforted and come back next time, paying a lot of money--she writes books telling how all can be adjusted), all that has nothing in common with Freud.

I have written one or two pages on Freud in a book of mine, and I sent it to the Psychoanalytic Society in the United States, and they sent it back to me next post. They will have nothing to do with it. They are out to cure people, you see, and I am quite sure that they can't cure them.

Yet I think there is a connection between Freud and socialism. I believe that we have reached a stage in modern society--I will not belabor the point--with a total reorganization of the fundamental economic basis of society which will itself involve, not today or tomorrow or the day after, but in the process of time, a reconstitution of sexual relations and the position of the women in society; a reconstitution of racial relations, because race prejudice is not got rid of very easily, you know; a reconstitution of class relations; the opportunity for the artist to work on the scale that the great artists of the past have worked and not to be faced continually with nothing else but signs of degeneration and demoralization, which they write for the public to read. I am not sure, but I believe that when Freud wrote as he did, he was conscious of society *as it was* and he meant that mankind would never be able to adjust himself to *this* society. Freud was no socialist. But in a socialist society, the unconscious could be the source of enormous power in the way human beings will tackle their social, and not only their individual, problems and not be the cause of a permanent neurosis. That is what I think. I think I understand what Freud was after, but I think his conception of society was too limited. He had

no vision of a different type of society, and that is why he was so categorical. And to the extent that he was categorical in relation to bourgeois society, he was right.

This, of course, is very tentative. But I mention it because, though Marxism rests on economic relations, it is not confined to these, but opens up immense possibilities for the future development of society.

I had intended to say a few words about Jung. But there is no time, and in any case there is no need. Jung has made important discoveries, but his special theory of the "collective unconscious" means less to me every time I read it. Freud in particular demands a knowledge of medicine and even of therapy, but I have tested Jung's theory of the "collective unconscious" in regard to literature, and it seems to me a lot of nonsense and quite unnecessary nonsense.

And now we have finally "The Ascent of Man to Complete Humanity or Degeneration into the Life of the Cave and the Jungle".

The life of the cave and the jungle, I will not spend any particular time on; we know all about that. Twelve H-bombs (that was three or four years ago) could destroy civilized life in Britain. I think now with the great "progress" they are making, they could do it with three or four and, God willing, if the progress continues, they will be able to do it with one. No doubt in time they shall arrive at being able to destroy the whole big world with one little bomb. That would not end it. The struggle for the moon is on, to get it or destroy it if the other fellow gets it first. Possibilities are unlimited. Why not, after the moon, the sun? Not to destroy it, but to prevent it shining on the other half!

A REVIEW

I want to spend the last few minutes--it is ten minutes to ten--in giving you a brief view of how I see the world of yesterday, today and tomorrow: "The Ascent of Man to

Complete Humanity." I hope you will bear with me. I am very happy with writers who continually review the situation and take up again what has already been covered.

We began with the Greek City-State, which Picasso has reminded us so forcibly of and so splendidly. The Greek City-States declined, and we had the Roman Empire. (I do not speak about the Jews because I do not wish to speak about religion. It makes a lot of trouble and it does not help. This is not the place; there are a lot of churches everywhere.) The Roman Empire gave Europe a sense of the unity of humanity. When Christianity came, it established that men were equal, if not in the world, in the sight of God. It was a form of equality. When the Roman Empire collapsed, the Roman Catholic Church took its place and for many centuries the Roman Catholic Church was not only the vanguard of religion, but it was the vanguard of civilization and gave Europe an even stronger sense of the unity of its intellectual, religious and to some extent its agricultural life. The church at one time was the most advanced practitioner both of agriculture and to some degree of industry. The unity of Europe as a concept in the consciousness of people was established first by the Roman Empire and secondly by the Roman Catholic Church which succeeded it. Then we have the Middle Ages and those workers in the towns that I have told you of. Here is the French historian, Boissonnade. He has written a fine book on San Domingo, a most respectable professor, and his book has been translated by Miss Eileen Power, formerly an equally respectable professor of medieval life and history in the London School of Economics. You will pardon me if I inflict upon you one of the finest passages that I know in history, a history of labor in the Middle Ages, of those towns—Florence, Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp, Siena, Rome and the rest of them. This is it:

For the first time the masses, ceasing to be mere herds without rights or thoughts of their own, became associations of freemen [this is the fifteenth century], proud of their independence, conscious of the value and dignity of their labor, fitted by their intelligent activity to collaborate in all

spheres, political, economic, and social, in the tasks which the aristocracies believed themselves alone able to fulfill. Not only was the power of production multiplied a hundredfold by their efforts, but society was regenerated by the incessant influx of new and vigorous blood. Social selection was henceforth better assured. It was thanks to the devotion and spirit of those medieval masses that the nations became conscious of themselves, for it was they who brought about the triumph of national patriotism, just as their local patriotism had burned for town or village in the past. The martyrdom of a peasant girl from the marshes of Lorraine saved the first of the great nations, France, which had become the most brilliant home of civilization in the Middle Ages. They gave to the modern states their first armies, which were superior to those of feudal chivalry. Above all, it was they who prepared the advent of democracy and bequeathed to the laboring masses the instruments of their power, the principles of freedom and of association. Labor, of old despised and depreciated, became a power of incomparable force in the world, and its social value became increasingly recognized. It is from the Middle Ages that this capital evolution takes its date, and it is this which makes this period, so often misunderstood, and so full of a confused by singularly powerful activity, the most important in the universal history of labor before the great changes witnessed by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

RELIGIOUS THEORY USED FOR REACTIONARY PURPOSES

These were workers, workers over six centuries ago, laying the foundations of our civilization. You see, I respect the working class.

To continue. We know in Britain of the seventeenth century out of the religious preoccupation came parliamentary democracy. In eighteenth century France, out of the struggle for political equality came the socialism of Babeuf. We remember Kant's tremendous effort to make people realize the contributions that the mind had to make to the

examinations of the objective world. Kant had learned from Rousseau and particularly his *Social Contract*. The men of the Age of Reason did wonderful work, but the work that Kant began, the German philosophers, ending with Hegel, completed. From all this came Marxism in 1848. Now let these modern people tell you that there is no fundamental or no believable theory of the progress of humanity. That is what they are saying today; you find it everywhere: man is born to original sin. They are not religious. They steal the doctrine of original sin for political purposes. It is false.

There has been a development; the development is along the lines that I have tried to show. Man is ready for great strides forward today. But we have those two monstrous blocs; each of them has not only got enormous material power, but they have their labor movements--the democratic labor movements of Walter Reuther and the rest of them, and the Communist labor movement--and whichever way you turn they are waiting for you, either above with their diplomats and economic aid or below to catch you, each with his labor movement. In either case they have no other purpose but to involve you in their war preparations and their merciless struggle for world domination. I will not believe that this is the end.

THE ASCENT OF MAN TO COMPLETE HUMANITY

In 1939 General Marshall and the American military authorities, aided by the Government, organized fourteen million men and women. They washed them and dressed them and cleaned up their teeth and taught them to read, those who could not read. And then in two or three years they had them ready--for what? To go abroad, all over the world, fighting against people who had done the same thing on the opposite side. What is the purpose of these suicidal, these tremendous efforts on the part of human beings only to destroy one another? I believe it is possible to mobilize even more tens of millions of people for the work and the arts of peace. Properly encouraged and given a sense of history and a sense of destiny, they will do all they now do for war, for the

sake of improving the normal life and relations of human beings. (applause) But this will come only when people are their own masters.

That for me is what Marxism is, and we must not be afraid, we must not think because we are small and insignificant that we are not able to take part in all that is taking place. The first thing is to know. Anyone who tries to prevent you from knowing, from learning anything, is an enemy, an enemy of freedom, of equality, of democracy. Those ideas, and the desire to make them real, have inspired men for countless centuries. Marxism is the doctrine which believes that freedom, equality, democracy are today possible for all mankind.

If this course of lectures has stimulated you to pursue the further study of Marxism, we will have struck a blow for the emergence of mankind from the darkness into which capitalism has plunged the world.

BOOKS TO READ

A long list of books helps only professors and students. I would recommend here a few which you should have always by you.

The Politics of Aristotle in the edition of Sir Ernest Barker.

The Social Contract by Rousseau (Sir Ernest Barker's edition is pretty bad and should be avoided).

The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

Capital, Volume 1, by Karl Marx.

The State and Revolution by V.I. Lenin, which now, I am informed, surpasses the Bible as the world's best-selling book.

The Acts of the Apostles and *The Epistles of St. Paul*. St. Paul was a revolutionary advocating and organizing for a new revolutionary doctrine, Christianity. His writings give you a sense of history and the manner in which it moves.

For more modern studies, I recommend:

Facing Reality by Grace C. Lee, Pierre Chaulieu and C.L.R. James. This book gives as clearly as can be obtained within the covers of one small volume my own Marxist analysis of modern society.

The Origins of Totalitarianism by Hannah Arendt. Hannah Arendt does not understand the economic basis of

society. But for knowledge and insight into the totalitarian monsters and their relation to modern society, her book is incomparably the best that has appeared in the post-war world.

All collections of documents on the Hungarian Revolution, such as *The Hungarian Revolution*, edited by Melvin J. Lasky.

A FEW WORDS WITH HANNAH ARENDT

One does not say everything every time one speaks or writes. To begin with, it is impossible, and there is no reason to argue further than that.

Yet in recommending as strongly as I do Hannah Arendt's book, I see an opportunity to supplement the view of Marxism which I have given in these lectures. In the latest edition of her book, in a chapter on the Hungarian Revolution, Hannah Arendt says:

For what happened here was something in which nobody any longer believed, if he ever had believed in it—neither the communists nor the anti-communists, and least of all those who, either without knowing or without caring about the price other people would have to pay, were talking about possibilities and duties of people to rebel against totalitarian terror. If there was ever such a thing as Rosa Luxemburg's "spontaneous revolution" this sudden uprising of an oppressed people for the sake of freedom and hardly anything else, without the demoralizing chaos of military defeat preceding it, without coup d'état techniques, without a closely knit apparatus of organizers and conspirators, without the undermining propaganda of a revolutionary party, something, that is, which everybody, conservatives and liberals, radicals and revolutionists, had discarded as a noble dream—then we had the privilege to witness it. Perhaps the Hungarian professor was right when he told the United Nations Commission: "It was unique in history, that the Hungarian revolution had no leaders. It was not organized; it

was not centrally directed. The will for freedom was the moving force in every action."

Now, undoubtedly the large majority of political and other persons had given up hope of revolutionary upheavals to overcome totalitarianism and advance the socialist society (with the natural consequence that they put their hopes on A-bombs, H-bombs, etc.). But that everybody had given up hope is quite untrue.

In *Facing Reality*, published in 1958, the reader will see a full argument as to the inevitability of such upheavals. But this was after the revolution. In *State Capitalism and World Revolution*, first published in 1950 and then republished in 1957, the arguments are again stated. Let me, even at some cost of space, quote extensively.

You will find them in the periodical, *Correspondence*, which began publication in 1953.

You will find them also in the French periodical, *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, which began in 1948.

We did not have to wait until Stalin's death to foresee the crisis of Stalinism.

Here are our views as expressed in *State Capitalism and World Revolution*.

(c) But the Stalinists are not proletarian revolutionists. They aim to get power by help, direct or indirect, of the Red Army and the protection of Russia and the Russian state. That is the reason why they follow the foreign policy of the Kremlin—it is sheer naked self-interest.

(d) There is a last desperate attempt under the guise of "socialism" and "planned economy" to reorganize the means of production without releasing the proletariat from wage-slavery. Historical viability they have none; for state-ownership multiplies every contradiction of capitalism. An-

tagonists of an intensity and scope so far unknown already have Stalinism in their grip. Power merely brings these into the open.

The problem is of course a highly theoretical one.

We hope no one believes that the Stalinists go through all this merely for "Trotskyite-Bukharinist-fascists." To anyone who knows them and reads Leontiev's article, it is perfectly obvious that there is inside Russia itself a tendency to call Russia state-capitalism and the Stalinists can only fight it by mutilating Capital. They must attempt in theory as well as in practice to destroy every manifestation of the developing revolution in Russia. The theory of state-capitalism is the theoretical foundation for this revolution.

The debate over Volume III of Capital is the debate over the developing revolution on a world scale and especially in Russia. If the problem is selling goods, then there is absolutely no economic reason for the collapse of the bureaucracy. If, however, the problem is the rate of surplus value in production, needed for expansion, then the bureaucracy is faced with a revolution in the process of production itself.

But great problems are solved by great forces. This is how we saw the solution of the problem in 1950; we did not have to wait for Hungary. For us, as Marxists, totalitarianism is doomed.

These intellectuals are the most cultivated in the modern world, in the sense of knowing the whole past of human culture. Having achieved what the idealism of Hegel posed as the Absolute, they are undergoing a theoretical disintegration without parallel in human history. In France this disintegration has assumed the form of a literary movement, Existentialism. In America it takes the form of a mania for psychoanalysis, reaching in to all layers of society but nowhere more than among the most urbane, sensitive and cultivated individuals. In Germany the intellectuals cannot

choose between Christian Humanism and psychoanalysis, whether guilt or sickness is the root of the German catastrophe. This is total unreason, the disintegration of a society without values or perspective, the final climax to centuries of division of labour between the philosophers and the proletarians.

5. Philosophy Must Become Proletarian

There is no longer any purely philosophical answer to all this. These philosophical questions, and very profound they are, Marxism says can be solved only by the revolutionary action of the proletariat and the masses. There is and can be no other answer. As we have said, we do not propose to do right what the Stalinists have failed to do or do wrong.

Progress in Russia, says Zhdanov, is criticism and self-criticism. The state owns the property, therefore the proletariat must work and work. The proletarian revolution alone will put state-property in its place.

In the United States the bourgeoisie extols all the advantages of democracy, the bureaucracy those of science. The proletarian revolution alone will put science in its place and establish complete democracy.

The evils that Christian Humanism sees, the problem of alienation, of mechanized existence, the alienated Existentialist, the alienated worker, internationalism, peace—all are ultimate problems and beyond the reach of any ideological solution.

The revolution, the mass proletarian revolution, the creativity of the masses, everything begins here. This is Reason today. The great philosophical problems have bogged down in the mire of Heidegger, Existentialism, psychoanalysis, or are brutally "planned" by the bureaucracies. They can be solved only in the revolutionary reason of the masses. This is what Lenin made into a universal as early as the 1905 Revolution.

"The point is that it is precisely the revolutionary periods that are distinguished for their greater breadth, greater wealth, greater intelligence, greater and more systematic activity, greater audacity and vividness of historical creativeness, compared with periods of philistine, Cadet reformist progress."

He drove home the opposition between bourgeois reason and proletarian reason:

"But Mr. Blank and Co. picture it the other way about. They pass off poverty as historical-creative wealth. They regard the inactivity of the suppressed, downtrodden masses as the triumph of the 'systematic' activity of the bureaucrats and the bourgeoisie. They shout about the disappearance of sense and reason, when the picking to pieces of parliamentary bills by all sorts of bureaucrats and liberal 'penny-a-liners' gives way to a period of direct political activity by the 'common people', who in their simple way directly and immediately destroy the organs of oppression of the people, seize power, appropriate for themselves what was considered to be the property of all sorts of plunderers of the people—in a word, precisely when the sense and reason of millions of downtrodden people is awakening, not only for reading books but for action, for living, human action, for historical creativeness." (Selected Works, Vol. VII, p. 261)

That was the first Russian Revolution. In the Second the proletariat created the form of its political and social rule. Now the whole development of the objective situation demands the fully liberated historical creativeness of the masses, their sense and reason, a new and higher organization of labour, new social ties, associated humanity. That is the solution to the problems of production and to the problems of philosophy. Philosophy must become proletarian.

I hope in future Hannah Arendt will not be so quick to say: all of us had given up hope. Those people who give up hope are those whose political ideas are not based upon the sense of history and philosophy which I have tried to

establish in these lectures. The world today is full of political people who feel that they are caught in the trap of East bloc or West bloc, and even in many of the neutralists can be detected the sentiment that ultimately their fate lies with one or the other. Marxism has nothing in common with this fatalism or capitulation to seemingly all-powerful states.

FROM HUNGARY TO CHINA

The appearance of the Workers Council in Hungary had a violent repercussion in Communist China. Here is an account of this based on careful examination of the Communist totalitarian press of China.

The leaders in Peking immediately grasped the difference between the reformism of Gomulka and the revolution of the Hungarian Workers' Councils. If the Chinese press rushed to favour a policy which in Poland maintained the essentials of the bureaucratic structure while keeping a certain distance from Moscow, it just as rapidly interpreted the Hungarian revolt as a reactionary conspiracy plotted by the imperialists. But there had been too much abuse and epithets thrown against all kinds of people in China for the Chinese proletariat, itself struggling against the totalitarian regime, to accept the workers of Budapest, dying on the barricades, as fascist agents in the pay of the United States. From November 1956, despite the grossly deceitful character of the information spread in China, the advanced workers and students, often even members of the Party, perfectly understood what was taking place in Budapest. From that time on, the Hungarian Revolution acted like a powerful accelerator to the wave of opposition spreading across the length and breadth of China.

Disturbed, the Chinese leaders took precautions. Conferences of security police were held one after the other. Everywhere the police were put on the alert, conspiracies were uncovered, and the accused confessed, as usual, that they were agents of Formosa.

Despite this preventive terror, incidents multiplied at Shanghai in November. Opposition posters appeared in the factories, streets and alleys of the old workers' quarters. Slogans were scratched on the walls and in the toilets. Mimeographed leaflets appeared. Beyond any question secret revolutionary nuclei existed. This campaign of agitation found its strongest echo among the masses. The factory workers and employees, to which were joined the unemployed and peasants who had fled the cooperatives, were creating "agitation and disturbances." Some demonstrations were organized, demanding a raise in wages, better living conditions, improved distribution in the market. Police spies were assassinated.

In the ensuing months strikes and demonstrations exploded in other areas of China. It was not surprising that in Kwantung, thirteen strikes accompanied by street demonstrations followed one another in quick succession during the course of the winter. In their turn the Peking and Manchurian areas were also centers of disturbances. In the mines of the Northeast the workers abused the doctors who refused to give them certificates of sick leave. The miners sat down at the bottom of the pits and refused to work.

In general, after coming to an agreement among themselves as to their demands, the workers began by sending letters and petitions to their leaders. Then they distributed leaflets, put up posters in the factories and on the streets. Sometimes they stopped work, noisily voiced their dissatisfaction and marched out into the streets where they provoked "all sorts of disturbances."

How did the forces of law and order react to these demonstrations? We do not have much information because the Chinese press is very discreet on this point. On June 10, 1957, however, a Peking publication will speak of the "machine guns which have been installed to suppress the disturbances," while an oppositionist will declare his certainty "that one day these machine guns will come back and fire in the opposite direction." Since autumn had the

bureaucracy been machine-gunning down the workers? No one knows. But what is absolutely certain is that the police tried everything in order to disorganize the vanguard which had organized itself spontaneously in the factories and the mines. The official press supported them by vicious denunciations of the activities of "troublesome elements," "agitators," "anarchists."

The demands put forward by those "anarchists," however, were very elementary and often at the beginning specific to each factory. The strikers demanded better canteens, the installation of lavatories; sometimes they protested against the high cost of transportation, the bad housing conditions, and also, of course the inadequate wages and food. But their criticism soon took on more scope. They attacked the arbitrariness of the bureaucrats who managed the factories, the way that they distributed premiums and bonuses, and classified the personnel in the different professional categories. From there it was only a step to challenging the very principle of the bureaucratic management of the factory and the privileges of the apparatus. This was launched in Kwantung, that old bastion of the revolutionary proletariat, where the workers protested against the tremendous increase in salaries which the managing personnel was enjoying. They demanded democratic administration of the factories: the idea emerged that the leading bodies of the factory ought to be elected by the workers. Events moved quickly. In the spring the proletarian struggle was on the verge of placing in question the very foundations of the bureaucratic society.

Confronted with the mounting danger, the bureaucracy and the Party itself emerged as a much less solid bloc than it had been previously thought to be. In their turn the intelligentsia and the youth had been subjected to the shock of de-Stalinization and the Hungarian Revolution. Under the pressure of events, the apparatus began to crack. . . .

The Party had spared no efforts to build in the universities a new generation of cadres and technicians

destined to take over gradually from the old layers impregnated with the ideological poisons of the old regime. The Chinese universities were like seminars. Everything had been planned so that students would not have a single moment for reflection or personal reading. . . . But these factories for the manufacture of right-thinkers had produced a resounding reaction. The youth, rebelling against this tremendous machine to mold their brains, swung in the opposite direction and became madly romantic, rabidly individualistic.

After November a large section of the youth passed from romantic declamations and gestures to the political struggle. For many Party youth the Khrushchev report had been the springboard for a kind of thawing of their minds. The events in the fall only precipitated the debacle of their "totalitarian ideology." The Hungarian Revolution and in China itself the grumbings of the peasantry—disorders and strikes broke out at the beginning of winter in the villages—upset them further. In these circles, throughout November and December, there were passionate discussions of what had happened in Poland, in Hungary, and in China. In January it was clear beyond a shadow of a doubt that opposition currents had appeared among the young Party intellectuals which went far beyond official de-Stalinization and the demands for a liberalization of the bureaucratic dictatorship. Simultaneous with a similar development in the factories, a revolutionary vanguard was taking form among the intelligentsia.

Very quickly, in the light of what was taking place in China and the news from Budapest, these militants arrived at the conclusion that "the Party is the incarnation of bureaucratic despotism" and that "socialism can develop only on the foundations of direct democracy." For them the struggle of the Hungarian workers was a struggle "for the principle of direct democracy" and "all power should be transferred to the Workers Committees of Hungary." In the course of January the Party leaders were disturbed by what they called "the tendencies to anarchism" and to "extreme democracy."

On January 25, an editorial writer in the official daily paper said how shocked he was by the ideas "professed by certain Party youth." One youth, the paper said, has defined democracy as follows: "On all matters, however important they may be, the masses must be able to vote. If the opinion of the masses is that a question ought to be resolved a certain way, the leadership then ought to resolve it in that way without any question." The theoretical magazine, Hsue-Hsi, on January 18 deplored that many youth "think that if you make state power the important factor in development and economic relations, then you cannot speak of communism. They believe that if socialist construction is directed by the state, then bureaucratic influences are inevitable."

... The decisive fact is that precisely at the moment when thousands of miles away Hungarian Workers Councils were being beaten into submission, the Chinese Communists of the younger generation had adopted as their own the essentials of the programme of the Hungarian Workers Councils.

Faced with this wave of agitation which was rising in the factories, villages, the universities, and beginning to decompose the totalitarian structure of the Party itself, the leading bodies hesitated and vacillated. In October and even in November the press denounced the activities as due to "counter-revolutionaries," "agents of Formosa," and of "the imperialists." The police suppressed the agitation, setting itself to the discovery of its leaders and the merciless destruction of the conspirators. But in December the official attack was already becoming more muted. The Peking leaders recognised the scope of the opposition and after what had happened in Budapest, they were careful not to repeat the mistakes of Gero and Farkas, afraid of ending up as these had. Thus the People's Daily will say "repression is a dangerous weapon because it not only cannot resolve the contradictions which are at the bottom of the disturbances but it can increase and aggravate them." Henceforth the workers' strikes, the growing agitation in the countryside, and the incidents in the universities are not only attributed to

hidden "counter-revolutionaries." "Bureaucratism" is now blamed for all the evils that the nation is suffering. In January the turn is made. The middle and lower cadres are attacked with an extraordinary viciousness. There is no crime of which they have not been guilty: dictatorial methods, arrogance towards the masses, arbitrariness, incompetence, corruption, laziness. If the people are dissatisfied, it is because the true policy of the Party has been betrayed by those entrusted with carrying it out. In defiance of all the instructions they had been given, the cadres had shown "no concern for the sufferings of the people," had "stifled the opinions of the masses," and used their authority "to oppress the workers and violate their interests."

This aspect of Marxism I have not stressed in the lectures. But those who really want such information will find their way to it. The world will choose between hydrogen bombs and guided missiles, and some form of Workers Councils. In 1960, the Marxist doctrine: either socialism or barbarism, seems to me truer than ever before.

C. L. R. James

I

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THE BLOCKED ROAD TO PICTORIAL COMMUNICATION

IN 1916 and 1917, when the department of prints of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York was being started, there was much talk and argument about what the character of its collection should be. In the course of those discussions I became aware that the backward countries of the world are and have been those that have not learned to take full advantage of the possibilities of pictorial statement and communication, and that many of the most characteristic ideas and abilities of our western civilization have been intimately related to our skills exactly to repeat pictorial statements and communications.

My experience during the following years led me to the belief that the principal function of the printed picture in western Europe and America has been obscured by the persistent habit of regarding prints as of interest and value only in so far as they can be regarded as works of art. **Actually the various ways of making**

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prints (including photography) are the only methods by which exactly repeatable pictorial statements can be made about anything. The importance of being able exactly to repeat pictorial statements is undoubtedly greater for science, technology, and general information than it is for art.

Historians of art and writers on aesthetic theory have ignored the fact that most of their thought has been based on exactly repeatable pictorial statements about works of art rather than upon first-hand acquaintance with them. Had they paid attention to that fact they might have recognized the extent to which their own thinking and theorizing have been shaped by the limitations imposed on those statements by the graphic techniques. Photography and photographic process, the last of the long succession of such techniques, have been responsible for one of the greatest changes in visual habit and knowledge that has ever taken place, and have led to an almost complete rewriting of the history of art.

As well as a most thoroughgoing reevaluation of the arts of the past. Although every history of European civilization makes much of the invention in the mid-fifteenth century of ways to print words from movable types, it is customary in those histories to ignore the slightly earlier discovery of ways to print pictures and diagrams. A book, so far as it contains a text, is a container of exactly repeatable word symbols arranged in an exactly repeatable order. Men have been using such containers for at least five thousand years. Because of this it can be argued that the printing of books was no more than a way of making very old and familiar things more cheaply. It may even be said that for a while type printing was little more than a way to do with a much smaller number of proof readings. Prior to 1501 few books were printed in editions larger than that handwritten one of a thousand copies to which Pliny the Younger referred in the second century of our era. The printing of letters, however, unlike the printing of words from movable types, brought a completely new thing into existence—it made possible for the first time pictorial statements of a kind that could be exactly repeated during the effective life of the printing surface.

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This exact repetition of pictorial statements has had incalculable effects upon knowledge and thought, upon science and technology, of every kind. It is hardly too much to say that since the invention of writing there has been no more important invention than that of the exactly repeatable pictorial statement.

Our failure to realize this comes in large measure from the change in the meaning and implications of the word 'print' during the last hundred years. For our great grandfathers, and for their fathers back to the Renaissance, prints were no more and no less than the only exactly repeatable pictorial statements they knew. Before the Renaissance there were no exactly repeatable pictorial statements. Until a century ago, prints made in the old techniques filled all the functions that are now filled by our line cuts and half tones, by our photographs and blueprints, by our various colour processes, and by our political cartoons and pictorial advertisements. If we define prints from the functional point of view so indicated, rather than by any restriction of process or aesthetic value, it becomes obvious that without prints we should have very few of our modern sciences, technologies, archaeologies, or ethnologies—for all of these are dependent, first or last, upon information conveyed by exactly repeatable visual or pictorial statements.

This means that, far from being merely minor works of art, prints are among the most important and powerful tools of modern life and thought. Certainly we cannot hope to realize their actual role unless we get away from the snobbery of modern print collecting notions and definitions and begin to think of them as exactly repeatable pictorial statements or communications, without regard to the accident of rarity or what for the moment we may regard as aesthetic merit. We must look at them from the point of view of general ideas and particular functions, and, especially, we must think about the limitations which their techniques have imposed on them as conveyors of information and on us as receivers of that information.

From very ancient times materials suitable for the making of

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prints have been available, and apposite skills and crafts have been familiar, but they were not brought into conjunction for the making of exactly repeatable pictorial statements in Europe until roughly about A.D. 1400. In view of this it is worth while to try to think about the situation as it was before there were any prints.

As it seems to be the usual custom to begin with the ancient Greeks when discussing anything that has to do with culture, I shall follow the precedent. There is no possible doubt about the intelligence, the curiosity, and the mental agility of a few of the old Greeks. Neither can there be any doubt about the greatness of their influence on subsequent European culture; even though for the last five hundred years the world has been in active revolt against Greek ideas and ideals. For a very long time we have been taught that after the Greeks there came long periods in which men were not so intelligent as the Greeks had been, and that it was not until the Renaissance that the so intelligent Greek point of view was to some extent recovered. I believe that this teaching, like its general acceptance, has come about because people have confused their ideas of what constitutes intelligence with their ideas about what they have thought of, in the Arnoldian sense, as culture. Culture and intelligence are quite different things. In actual life, people who exemplify Arnoldian culture are no more intelligent than other people, and they have very rarely been among the great creators, the discoverers of new ideas, or the leaders towards social enlightenment. Most of what we think of as culture is little more than the unquestioning acceptance of standardized values.

Historians until very recent times have been literary men and philologists. As students of the past they have rarely found anything they were not looking for. They have been so full of wonder at what the Greeks said, that they have paid little attention to what the Greeks did not do or know. They have been so full of horror at what the Dark Ages did not say, that they have paid no attention to what they did do and know. Modern research, by men who are aware of low subjects like economics and technology, is rapidly



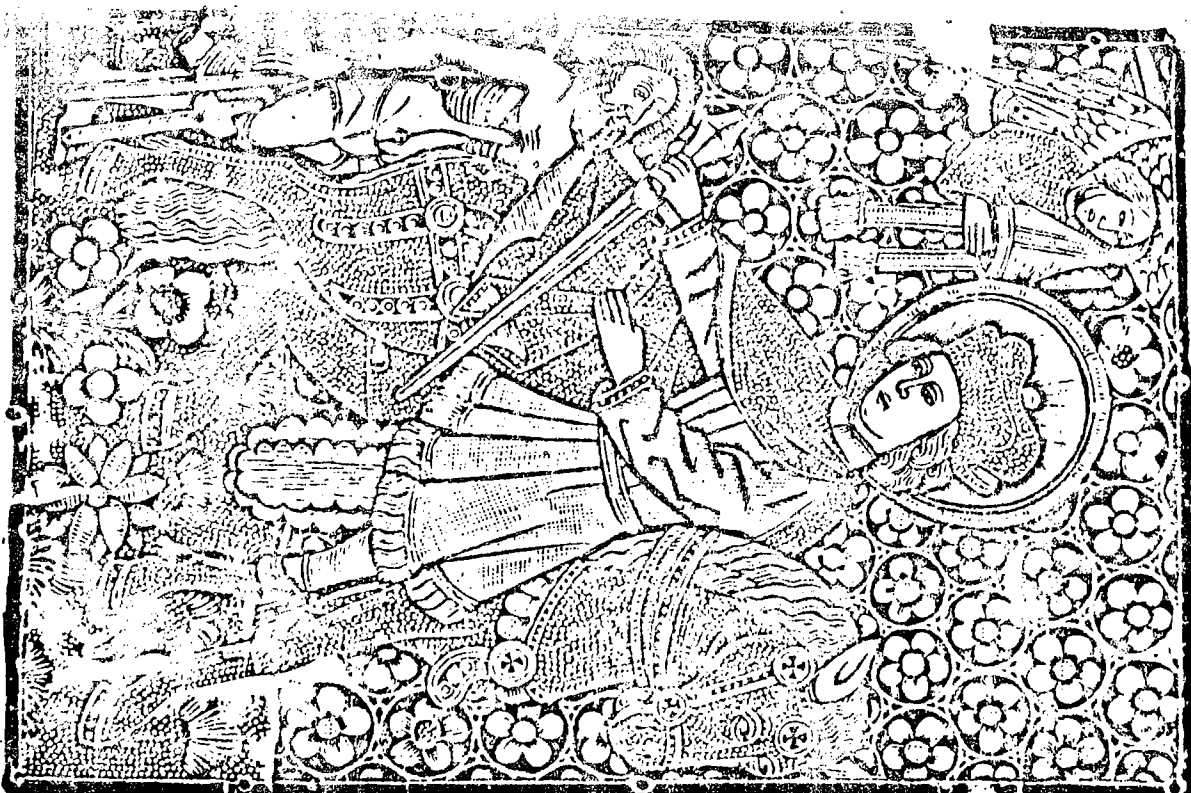
In einē hausz ey wifel ging. Die gar vil muose wig
Und kam zum lezē an die fact. Das sie auch re

1. Painted woodcut from Boner's *Der Edelstein*, Bamberg, 1461.
About actual size.

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changing our ideas about these matters. In the Dark Ages, to use their traditional name, there was little assured leisure for pursuit of the niceties of literature, art, philosophy, and theoretical science, but many people, nevertheless, addressed their perfectly good minds to social, agricultural, and mechanical problems. Moreover, all through those academically debased centuries, so far from there having been any falling off in mechanical ability, there was an unbroken series of discoveries and inventions that gave the Dark Ages, and after them the Middle Ages, a technology, and, therefore, a logic, that in many most important respects far surpassed anything that had been known to the Greeks or to the Romans of the Western Empire.

As to the notorious degradation of the Dark Ages, it is to be remembered that during them Byzantium was an integral part of Europe and actually its great political centre of gravity. There was no iron curtain between the East and the West. Intercourse between them was constant and unbroken, and for long periods Byzantium was in actual control of large parts of Italy. We forget the meaning of the word Romagna, and of the Byzantine arts of Venice and South Italy. These things should be borne in mind in view of the silent implication that Byzantium, from which later on so much of Greek learning came to the West, never lost that learning. This implication is probably quite an untrue one. Both East and West saw a great decline in letters. The Academy at Athens was closed in A.D. 529. At Byzantium the university was abolished in the first half of the eighth century. Psellos said that in the reign of the Emperor Romanos (1028-34) the learned at Constantinople had not reached further than the portals of Aristotle and only knew by rote a few catch words of Platonism. The Emperor Constantine (1042-54) revived the university on a small scale and made Psellos its first professor of philosophy. Psellos taught Platonism, which he personally preferred to the then reigning variety of Aristotelianism. So far as concerned intellectual activity there was probably much more in the West than in the East, though it depended on such different ends that it swayed the



2. Metal cut of St. Martin. Redwood.

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attention of students trained in the traditional classical lore. Where the East let so much of the inherited culture as it retained become gradually static and dull, the West turned from it and addressed its intelligence to new values and new things.

In spite of all this it was the Dark Ages that transmitted to us practically all we have of Greek and Roman literature, science, and philosophy. If the Dark Ages had not to a certain extent been interested in such things it is probable that we should have very little of the classical literatures. People who laboriously copy out by hand the works of Plato and Archimedes, Lucretius and Cicero, Ptolemy and Augustine, cannot be accused of being completely devoid of so-called intellectual interests. We forget that the Greeks themselves had forgotten much of their mathematics before the Dark Ages began, and it is easy to overlook such a thinker as Berengar, in the West, who, about the middle of the eleventh century, challenged much of what we regard as Greek thought by asserting that there is no substance in matter aside from the accidents.

The intelligence, as distinct from the culture, of the Dark and Middle Ages, is shown by the fact that in addition to forging the political foundations of modern Europe and giving it a new faith and morality, those Ages developed a great many of what today are among the most basic processes and devices. The Greeks and Romans had no thought of labour-saving devices and valued machinery principally for its use in war—just as was the case in the Old South of the United States, and for much the same reasons. To see this, all one has to do is to read the tenth book of Vitruvius. The Dark and Middle Ages in their poverty and necessity produced the first great crop of Yankee ingenuity.

The breakdown of the Western Empire and the breakdown of its power plant were intimately related to each other. The Romans not only inherited all the Greek technology but added to it, and they passed all this technology on to the Dark Ages. It consisted principally in the manual dexterity and the brute animal force of human beings, most of them in bondage. In the objects that have come down to us from classical times there is little evidence of any

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actively working and spreading mechanical ingenuity. As shown by Stonehenge, the moving and placement of heavy stones goes back of the beginnings of written history. The Romans did not, however, pass on to the Dark Ages in the West the constantly renewed supply of slaves that constituted the power plant about which the predatory Empire was built. In other words, the Dark Ages found themselves stranded with no power plant and with no tradition or culture of mechanical ingenuity that might provide another power plant of another kind. They had to start from scratch. The real wonder, under all the circumstances, is not that they did so badly but that they did so well.

The great task of the Dark and the Middle Ages was to build for a culture of techniques and technologies. We are apt to forget that it takes much longer to do this than it does to build up a culture of art and philosophy, one reason for this being that the creation of a culture of technologies requires much harder and more accurate thinking. Emotion plays a surprisingly small part in the design and operation of machines and processes, and, curiously, you cannot make a machine work by flogging it. When the Middle Ages had finally produced the roller press, the platen press, and the type-casting mould, they had created the basic tools for modern times.

We have for so long been told about the philosophy, art, and literature, of classical antiquity, and have put them on such a pedestal for worship, that we have failed to observe the patent fact that philosophy, art, and literature can flourish in what are technologically very primitive societies, and that the classical peoples were actually in many ways of the greatest importance not only very ignorant but very unprogressive. Progress and improvement were not classical ideals. The trend of classical thought was to the effect that the past was better than the present and that the story of human existence was one of constant degradation. In spite of all the romantic talk about the joy and serenity of the Greek point of view, Greek thought actually developed into a deeply dyed pessimism that coloured and hampered all classical activities.

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It is, therefore, worth while to give a short list of some of the things the Greeks and Romans did not know, and that the Middle Ages did know. For most of the examples I shall cite I am indebted to Lynn White's remarkable essay on Technology and Invention in the Middle Ages.¹ The classical Greeks and Romans, although horsemen, had no stirrups. Neither did they think to shoe the hooves of their animals with plates of metal nailed to them. Until the ninth or tenth centuries of our era horses were so harnessed that they pushed against straps that ran high about their necks in such a way that if they threw their weight and strength into their work they strangled themselves. Neither did the classical peoples know how to harness draft animals in front of each other so that large teams could be used to pull great weights. Men were the only animals the ancients had that could pull efficiently. They did not even have wheelbarrows. They made little or no use of rotary motion and had no cranks by which to turn rotary and reciprocating motion into each other. They had no windmills. Such water wheels as they had came late and far between. The classical Greeks and Romans, unlike the Middle Ages, had no horse collars, no spectacles, no algebra, no gunpowder, no compass, no cast iron, no paper, no deep ploughs, no spinning wheels, no methods of distillation, no place value number systems—think of trying to extract a square root with either the Greek or the Roman system of numerals!

The engineers who, in the sixth century A.D., brought the great monolith that caps the tomb of Theodoros across the Adriatic and set it in place, were in no way inferior to the Greek and Roman engineers. The twelfth-century cathedrals of France represent a knowledge of engineering, of stresses and strains, and a mechanical ingenuity far beyond anything dreamed of in classical times. The Athenian Parthenon, no matter what its aesthetic qualities, was but child's play as engineering compared to buildings like the cathedrals at Rheims and Amiens.

It is perhaps hard for us, who have been educated in the fag

¹ *Speculum*, vol. XV, p. 141 (April 1940).

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end of the traditional humanistic worship of the classical peoples, to realize that what happened in the ninth and tenth centuries of our era in North-Western Europe was an economic revolution based on animal power and mechanical ingenuity which may be likened to that based on steam power which took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It shifted the economic and political centre of gravity away from the Mediterranean with its technological ineptitude to the north-west, where it has been ever since. This shift may be said to have had its first official recognition in the two captures of Constantinople in 1203 and 1204. It is customary from the philological point of view to regard these captures as a horrible catastrophe to light and learning, but in fact they actually led to the wiping out of the most influential centre of unprogressive backward-looking traditionalism there was in Europe.

In view of the things the Greeks and Romans did not know, it is possible that the real reason for the so-called darkness of the Dark Ages was the simple fact that they were still in so many ways so very classical.

It is well to remember things of this kind when we are told about the charm of life in Periclean Athens or in the Rome of the Antonines, and how superior it was to that of all the ages that have succeeded them. The inescapable facts are that the Greek and Roman civilizations were based on slavery of the most degrading kind, that slaves did not reproduce themselves, that the supply was only maintained by capture in predatory warfare, and that slavery is incompatible with the creation of a highly developed technology. Although a few of the highly educated Greeks went in for pure mathematics and theoretical science, neither they nor the educated Romans ever lowered themselves to banalistic pursuits. They never thought of doing laborious, mechanical things more efficiently or with less human pain and anguish—unless they were captured and sold into slavery, and what they thought then did not matter. As all these things in the end are of great ethical importance, it should also be remembered that the so cultured Greeks left it to the brutal

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Romans to discover the idea of humanity, and that it was not until the second century of our era that the idea of personality was first given expression. If the educated Greeks and Romans had deemed themselves by going in for civil technology as hard as they did for a number of other things the story might have been different. But they did not, even in matters that would have been greatly to the advantage of the governing groups in society.

Thus, the Romans are famous for the military roads they built all over the Empire, and the Dark and Middle Ages are held up to scorn for having let those roads go to pieces. However, if we think that those roads were not constructed for civil traffic but as part of the machinery of ruthless military domination of subject peoples, it is possible to regard their neglect as a betterment. Those later Ages substituted other kinds of roads for the Roman variety, roads that were not paved with cemented slabs of stone for the quicker movement of the slogging legions, but roads that, if paved at all, were paved with cobbles, which in many ways and from many unmilitary points of view were more efficient. It is significant that the world has never gone back to the Roman methods of road-building, and that as late as the days of my own youth streets in both London and New York were still paved with cobbles.

To take another example: the Greeks were great seamen. The Athenian Empire was a maritime empire. But the Greeks rowed and did not sail. If you cannot beat up into the wind you cannot sail. All the Greeks' sails enabled them to do was to blow down the wind a little faster. They did not dare to venture beyond sight of land. The rudder at the end of the keel and the lateen and fore and aft sails, like the mariner's compass, were acquisitions of the Dark and Middle Ages. Actually, until the Renaissance and even later, the Mediterranean peoples never learned how to do what we call sailing. The Battle of Lepanto, in 1571, was fought by men in row-boats—large row-boats, to be sure—which grappled with each other so that their men could fight it out hand to hand. The test as between the thought based on the ancient row-boat techniques and

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that based on the mediaeval deep-water sailing came seventeen years after Lepanto, when the great Spanish Armada met the little English fleet. This was the crucial battle in the last long-drawn-out attempt of the Mediterranean to recover the hegemony it had lost before the end of the tenth century, and in it it went down to utter and disastrous defeat. Within a little more than a hundred years it was distant England that held Gibraltar and Port Mahon and was the great Mediterranean sea power.

On the intellectual and administrative side of ancient life we meet the same lack of mechanical ingenuity. Few people have been more given to books and reading than the upper classes of Greece and Rome. Books were made by copying by hand. The trade in them flourished at Athens, at Alexandria, and at Rome. Great libraries were formed in the Hellenistic period and in the early centuries of the Roman Empire. Plato says that in his time a copy of Anaxagoras could be bought for a drachma, which, according to the Oxford Dictionary, may be considered as being worth less than twenty-five cents. Pliny, the Younger, in the second century of our era, refers to an edition of a thousand copies of a text. Had the Romans had any mechanical way of multiplying the texts of their laws and their legal and administrative rulings and all the forms needed for taxation and other such things, an infinite amount of time and expense would have been saved. But I cannot recall that I have either read or heard of any attempt by an ancient to produce a book or legal form by mechanical means.

In its way the failure of the ancients to address their minds to problems of the kinds I have indicated is one of the most cogent criticisms that can be made of the kind of thought in which they excelled and of its great limitations. The Greeks were full of all sorts of ideas about all sorts of things, but they rarely checked their thought by experiment and they exhibited little interest in discovering and inventing ways to do things that had been unknown to their ancestors. They refined on ancient processes, and in the Hellenistic period they invented ingenious mechanical toys, but it is difficult to point to any technological or labour-saving

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devices invented by them that were of any momentous social or economic importance. This is shown in several odd ways. For one, the learned writers of accounts of daily life in ancient times have no hesitancy in mixing up details taken from sources that are generations apart, as though they all related to one unchanging state of affairs. For another, modern students have not hesitated to play up as a great and profound virtue the lack of initiative of the Greek craftsmen in looking for new subjects and new manners of work. Thus Percy Gardner, lauding the Greek architects and stone-cutters, in his article on Greek Art in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, says, 'Instead of trying to invent new schemes, the mason contents himself with improving the regular patterns until they approach perfection.' One can hear the unctious drip from that deadly word 'perfection'—one of the greatest inhibitors of intelligent thought that is known to man. The one epoch-making discovery in architectural construction that was made by the classical peoples seems to have been the arch—but the Romans had to bring it with them to Byzantium. Apparently there were no Greek voussoirs, i.e. stones so cut and shaped as to fit together in an arch or vault.

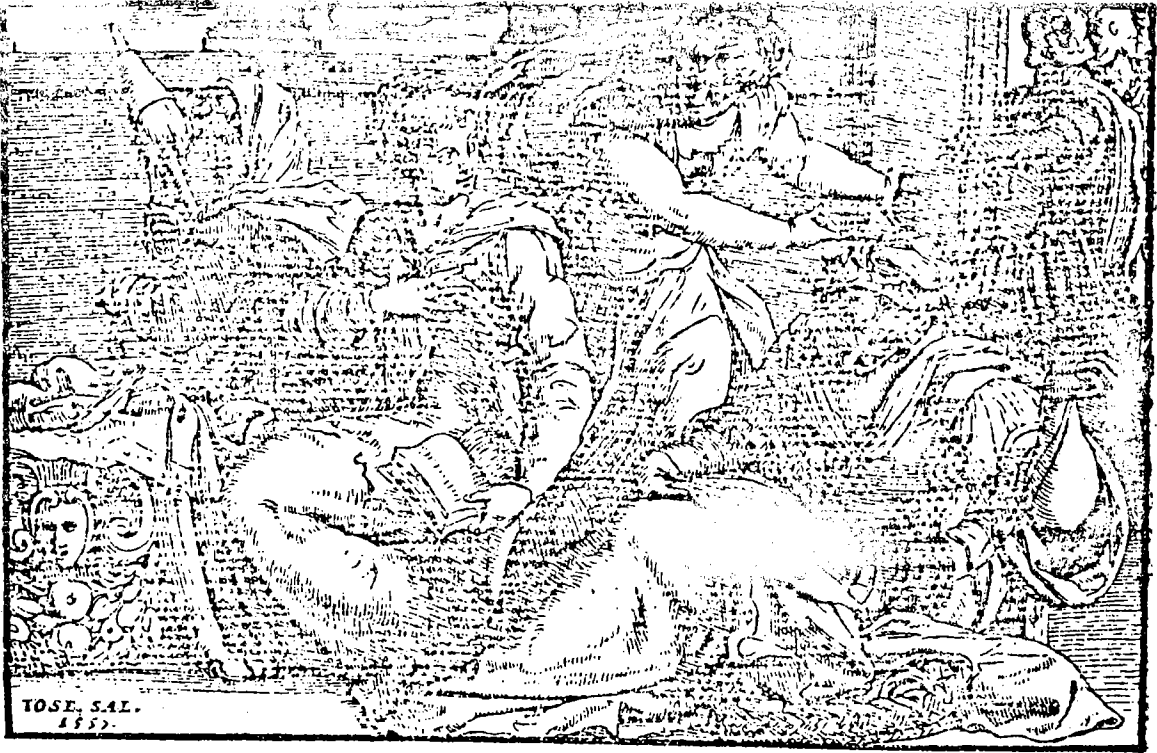
Learned men have devoted many large and expensive volumes to the gathering together of all the literary evidence there is about classical painting and drawing and to the reproduction of all the specimens of such drawing and painting as have been found. It appears from these books that there are no surviving classical pictorial statements, except such as were made incidentally in the decoration of objects and wall surfaces. For such purposes as those there was no need or call for methods to exactly repeat pictorial statements. From the point of view of art as expression or decoration there is no such need, but from that of general knowledge, science, and technology, there is a vast need for them. The lack of some way of producing such statements was no less than a road block in the way of technological and scientific thought and accomplishment.

Lest it be thought that in saying this I am merely expressing a

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3. 'The Duchess'. Wood blocks from Holbein's *Dance of Death*, c. 1520. About actual size, and enlarged head.



4. Woodcut from Osatus's *La vera perfezione del disegno*, Venice 1561.
Slightly enlarged.

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personal prejudice, I shall call your attention to what was said about it by a very great and unusually intelligent Roman gentleman, whose writings are held in particularly high esteem by all students of classical times. Some passages in the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder, a book that was written in the first century of our era, tell the story in the most explicit and circumstantial of manners. As pointed out by Pliny, the Greeks were actually aware of the road block from which they suffered, but far from doing anything about it they accommodated themselves to it by falling back into what can only be called a known and accepted incompetence. More than that, I believe, they built a good deal of their philosophy about this incompetence of theirs. In any case, what happened affords a very apposite example of how life works under the double burden of a pessimistic philosophy and a slave economy. There is nothing more basically optimistic than a new and unprecedented contrivance, even though it be a lethal weapon.

Pliny's testimony is peculiarly valuable because he was an intelligent eye-witness about a condition for which, unfortunately, all the physical evidence has vanished. He cannot have been the only man of his time to be aware of the situation and the call that it made for ingenuity. Seemingly his statement has received but slight attention from the students of the past. This is probably due to the fact that those students had their lines of interest laid down for them before the economic revolution that came to England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and did not reach Germany until after 1870, at a time when the learned and the gentry knew nothing and cared less about what they regarded as merely mechanical things. The preoccupation of the post-mediaeval schools and universities with classical thought and literature was probably the greatest of all the handicaps to technological and therefore to social advance. It would be interesting to see a chronological list of the establishments of the first professors of engineering. With rare exceptions the mechanical callings and knowledges were in the past as completely foreign to the thought and life of the students of ancient times as they were

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to the young elegants who attended the Academy or walked and talked with Aristotle. So far as I have been able to observe they still are.

In any event, according to Bohn, what Pliny said was this:

'In addition to these (Latin writers), there are some Greek writers who have treated of this subject (i.e. botany). . . . Among these, Crataeus, Dionysius, and Metrodorus, adopted a very attractive method of description, though one which has done little more than prove the remarkable difficulties which attended it. It was their plan to delineate the various plants in colours, and then to add in writing a description of the properties which they possessed. Pictures, however, are very apt to mislead, and more particularly where such a number of tints is required for the imitation of nature with any success; in addition to which, the diversity of copyists from the original paintings, and their comparative degrees of skill, add very considerably to the chances of losing the necessary degree of resemblance to the originals . . .' (Chap. 4, Book 25).

'Hence it is that other writers have confined themselves to a verbal description of the plants; indeed some of them have not so much as described them even, but have contented themselves for the most part with a bare recital of their names, considering it sufficient if they pointed out their virtues and properties to such as might feel inclined to make further inquiries into the subject' (Chap. 5, Book 25).

The plant known as "paeonia" is the most ancient of them all. It still retains the name of him who was the first to discover it, being known also as the "pentorobus" by some, and the "glycicide" by others; indeed this is one of the great difficulties attendant on forming an accurate knowledge of plants, that the same object had different names in different districts' (Chap. 10, Book 25).¹

It is to be noted that in his account of the breakdown of Greek botany, Pliny does not fall back upon general ideas of a woolly

¹ Quoted by permission of G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., the present publishers of Bohn's Library.

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kind. There is no Zeitgeist explanation, no historicism, no suggestion that things were not done simply because people in their wisdom and good taste preferred not to do them even though of course they could have done them if they had wanted to. Pliny's reason is as hard and brutal a fact as a bridge that has collapsed while being built. This essay amounts to little more than a summary account of the long slow discovery of ways to erect that bridge.

In view of this I shall rephrase what Pliny said: The Greek botanists realized the necessity of visual statements to give their verbal statements intelligibility. They tried to use pictures for the purpose, but their only ways of making pictures were such that they were utterly unable to repeat their visual statements wholly and exactly. The result was such a distortion at the hands of the successive copyists that the copies became not a help but an obstacle to the clarification and the making precise of their verbal descriptions. And so the Greek botanists gave up trying to use illustrations in their treatises and tried to get along as best they could with words. But, with words alone, they were unable to describe their plants in such a way that they could be recognized—for the same things bore different names in different places and the same names meant different things in different places. So, finally, the Greek botanists gave up even trying to describe their plants in words, and contented themselves by giving all the names they knew for each plant and then told what human ailments it was good for. In other words, there was a complete breakdown of scientific description and analysis once it was confined to words without demonstrative pictures.

What was true of botany as a science of classification and recognition of plants was also true of an infinite number of other subjects of the very greatest importance and interest to men. Common nouns and adjectives, which are the materials with which a verbal description is made, are after all only the names of vaguely described classes of things of the most indefinite kind and without precise concrete meanings, unless they can be exemplified by

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pointing to actual specimens. In the absence of actual specimens the best way (perhaps the only way) of pointing is by exhibiting properly made pictures. We can get some idea of this by trying to think what a descriptive botany or anatomy, or a book on machines or on knots and rigging, or even a sempstress's handbook, would be like in the absence of dependable illustrations. The only knowledge in which the Greeks made great advances were geometry and astronomy, for the first of which words amply suffice, and for the second of which every clear night provides the necessary invariant image to all the world.

All kinds of reasons have been alleged in explanation of the slow progress of science and technology in ancient times and in the ages that succeeded them, but no reference is ever made to the deterrent effect of the lack of any way of precisely and accurately repeating pictorial statements about things observed and about tools and their uses. The revolutionary techniques that filled this lack first came into general use in the fifteenth century. Although we can take it for granted that the making of printed pictures began some time about 1400, recognition of the social, economic, and scientific importance of the exact repetition of pictorial statements did not come about until long after printed pictures were in common use. This is shown by the lateness of most of the technical illustrated accounts of the techniques of making things. As examples I may cite the first accounts of the mechanical methods of making exactly repeatable statements themselves. Thus the first competent description of the tools and technique of etching and engraving was the little book that Abraham Bosse published in 1645; the first technical account of the tools and processes used in making types and printing from them was that published by Joseph Moxon in 1683; and the first similar account of woodcutting, the oldest of all these techniques, was the *Traité* of J. M. Papillon, which bears on its title page the date 1766. It is not impossible that Moxon's *Mechanick Exercises*, which were published serially in the last years of the seventeenth century, had much to do with England's early start in the industrial revolution.

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Anyone who is gifted with the least mechanical ingenuity can understand these books and go and do likewise. But he can do so only because they are filled with pictures of the special tools used and of the methods of using them. Parts of Moxon's account of printing can be regarded as studies in the economy of motion in manipulation. I have not run the matter down, but I should not be surprised if his book were not almost the first in which such things were discussed.

Of many of the technologies and crafts requiring particular manual skills and the use of specialized tools there seem to have been no adequate accounts until the completion of the great and well illustrated *Encyclopaedia* of Diderot and his fellows in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, just before the outbreak of the French Revolution. But the *Encyclopaedia* was a very expensive and very large set of volumes, intended for and limited to the use of the rich. Curiously, the importance of its contribution to a knowledge of the arts and crafts has attracted comparatively little attention as compared to that which has been given to its articles on political matters, although there is good reason to think that they had equally great results.

The last century is still so close to us and we are so busy keeping up with the present one, that it is hard for us to realize the meaning of the fact that the last hundred and fifty years have seen the greatest and most thoroughgoing revolution in technology and science that has ever taken place in so short a time. In western Europe and in America the social, as well as the mechanical, structure of society and life has been completely refashioned. The late Professor Whitehead made the remarkable observation that the greatest invention of the nineteenth century was that of the technique of making inventions. But he did not point out that this remarkable invention was based in very large measure on that century's sudden realization that techniques and technologies can only be effectively described by written or printed words when they are accompanied by adequate demonstrative pictures.

The typical eighteenth-century methods of book illustration

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were engraving and etching. Etchings and engravings have always been expensive to make and to use as book illustrations. The books that were fully illustrated with them were, with few exceptions, intended for the consumption of the rich and the traditionally educated classes. In the eighteenth century the title pages of these books sometimes described them as being 'adorned with elegant sculptures', or other similar words. The words 'adorned' and 'elegant' tell the story of their limitations, mental and financial alike. Lest it be thought that the phrase I have just quoted came from some polite book of verse or essays, I may say that it has stuck in my memory ever since at the age of ten I saw it on the title page of a terrifying early eighteenth-century edition of *Foxe's Martyrs*, in which the illustrators went all out to show just what happened to the Marian heretics. Under the circumstances I can think of few phrases that throw more light on certain aspects of eighteenth-century life and thought.

Although hundreds of thousands of legible impressions could be printed at low cost from the old knife-made woodcuts, the technique of woodcutting was not only out of fashion in the eighteenth century, but its lines were too coarse and the available paper was too rough for the woodcut to convey more than slight information of detail and none of texture.

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century a number of very remarkable inventions were made. I shall mention but three of them. First, Bewick, in the 1780's, developed the technique of using an engraver's tool on the end of the wood, so that it became possible to produce from a wood-block very fine lines and delicately graduated tints, provided it were printed on smooth and not too hard paper. Next, in 1798, Robert, in France, invented, and shortly afterwards, in England, Dardainier perfected, a paper-making machine, operated by power, either water or steam, which produced paper by a continuous process. It also made possible the production of paper with a wove surface that was smoother than any that had previously been made in Europe. When fitted with calendar rolls the

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machine produced paper that was so smooth it was shiny. Finally, just before 1815, Koenig, a German resident in England, devised for the (*London Times*) a printing press that was operated by power and not by the strength of men's backs. In connection with a revival of Ged's earlier invention of stereotyping, these inventions brought about a very complete revolution in the practice of printing and publishing. The historians of printing have devoted their attention to the making of fine and expensive books, and in so doing they have overlooked the great function of books as conveyors of information. The history of the cheap illustrated book and its role in the self-education of the multitude has yet to be written.

If I took but a comparatively short time for these three or four inventions to spread through the world. As they became familiar there was such a flood of cheap illustrated informative books as had never before been known. Nothing even approaching it had been seen since the sixteenth century. It took only a few decades for the publishers everywhere to begin turning out books of this kind at very low prices. In a short time the world ceased to talk about the 'art and mystery' of its crafts. In France they said that the Revolutionary law abolishing the guilds opened the careers to the talents, but it was actually these cheap illustrated informative books that opened the crafts to everyone, no matter how poor or unlearned, provided only that he knew how to read and to understand simple pictures. As examples of this I may cite the well-known *Manuel's Roret*, the publication of which goes back to 1825, and the English *Penny Cyclopaedia* which began in 1833. It is to be noted that for a long time in the nineteenth century the upper classes and the traditionally educated made few contributions to the rapidly lengthening list of new inventions, and that so many of those inventions were made by what in England until very recent years were condescendingly referred to as 'self-educated men'. The fact was that the classicizing education of the men who were not self educated prevented them from making inventions.

In the Renaissance they had found a solution of the dilemma

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of the Greek botanists as described by Pliny. In the nineteenth century informative books usefully illustrated with accurately repeatable pictorial statements became available to the mass of mankind in western Europe and in America. The result was the greatest revolution in practical thought and accomplishment that has ever been known. This revolution was a matter as momentous from the ethical and political points of view as from the mechanical and economic ones. The masses had begun to get the one great tool they most needed to enable them to solve their own problems. Today the news counters in our smallest towns are piled with cheap illustrated magazines at which the self-consciously educated turn up their noses, but in those piles are prominently displayed long series of magazines devoted to mechanical problems and ways of doing things, and it would be well for the cultured if they but thought a little about the meaning of that.

I think it can be truthfully said that in 1800 no man anywhere, no matter how rich or highly placed, lived in such physical comfort or so healthily, or enjoyed such freedom of mind and body, as do the mechanics of today in my little Connecticut town.

If any one thing can be credited with this it is the pervasion of the cheap usefully informative illustrated book.

George Plekhanov, *Unaddressed Letters* (1957), "First Letter."

Dear Sir,

The subject we shall be discussing is art. But in any exact inquiry, whatever its theme, it is essential to adhere to a strictly defined terminology. We must therefore say first of all what precise meaning we attach to the word *art*. On the other hand it is unquestionable that any at all satisfactory definition of a subject can only be obtained as a result of investigation. It follows, then, that we have to define something which we are not yet in a position to define. How can this contradiction be resolved? I think it can be resolved in this way: I shall take for the time being some provisional definition, and shall then amplify and correct it as the question becomes clearer in the course of the investigation.

What definition shall I take to begin with?

Lev Tolstoy in his *What is Art?* cites many definitions of art which seem to him mutually contradictory, and he finds them all unsatisfactory. Actually, ^the definitions^he cites are by ho means as different from one another and by no means as erroneous as he thinks. But let us assume that all of them ireally are very bad, and let us see if we cannot accept his own definition of art.

"Art," he says, "is a means of human intercourse.... The thing that distinguishes this means of intercourse from intercourse through words is that with the help of words one man communicates to another his *thoughts* (my italics); with the help of art, people communicate their *emotions* (my italics again).

For the present I shall only make one observation.

In Count Tolstoy's opinion, art expresses men's *emotions*, and words their *thoughts*. This is not true. Words serve men *not only* for the expression of their thoughts, but *also* of their emotions. Proof: *poetry*, whose medium is *words*.

Count Tolstoy himself says:

"To re-evoke in oneself an emotion once experienced and, having re-evoked it, to convey it through movement, line, colour, images expressed in words, in such a way that others may experience the same emotion—therein lies the function of art."¹

From this it is already apparent that words, as a means of human intercourse, cannot be regarded as something special and distinct from art.

Nor is it true that art expresses *only* men's emotions. No, it expresses both their emotions *and their thoughts*—expresses them, however, not *abstractly, but in live images*. And this is its chief distinguishing feature. In Count Tolstoy's opinion, "art begins when a man, with a view to conveying to others an emotion he has experienced, re-evokes it in himself and expresses it in certain outward signs".² I, however, think that art begins when a man re-evokes in himself emotions *and thoughts* which he has experienced under the influence of surrounding reality and *expresses them in definite images*. It goes without saying that in the vast majority of cases he does so with the object of conveying what he has rethought and refelt *to other men*. Art is a *social* phenomenon.

These, for the present, are all the corrections I should like to make in the definition of art given by Count Tolstoy.

But I would ask you, sir, to note also the following thought expressed by the author of *War and Peace*:

"Always, in every period and in every human society, there is a religious consciousness, common to all the members of that society, of what is good and bad, and it is this religious consciousness that determines the value of the emotions conveyed by art."³

Our inquiry should show, inter alia, how far this thought is correct. At any rate it deserves the greatest attention, because it brings us very close to the question *of the role of art in the history of human development*.

Now that we have some preliminary definition of art, I must explain the standpoint from which I regard it.

I shall say at once and without any circumlocution that I look upon art, as upon all social phenomena, from the standpoint of the materialist conception of history.

What is the materialist conception of history?

In mathematics, as we know, there is a method known as the *reductio ad absurdum*, that is, a method of indirect proof. I shall here resort to a method which might be called *indirect explanation*. That is, I shall first explain what is the *idealist* conception of history, and shall then show wherein it differs from its opposite, the *materialist* conception of history.

The idealist conception of history, in its pure form, consists in the belief that the development of thought and knowledge is the final and ultimate cause of the movement of human history. This view fully predominated in the 18th century, whence it passed into the 19th century. It was still strongly adhered to by Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte, although their views were in some respects the very opposite of the views held by the philosophers of the preceding century. Saint-Simon, for instance, asks how the social organisation of the Greeks arose.⁴ And he answers the question as follows: "With them, the religious system (le système religieux) served as the foundation of the political system.... The latter was patterned on the former." In proof, he cites the fact that the Olympus of the Greeks was a "republican assembly", and that the constitutions of all the Greek peoples, however much they may have differed from one another, had the common feature that they were all republican.⁵

Nor is this all. In Saint-Simon's opinion, the religious system that underlay the political system of the Greeks itself stemmed from the totality of their scientific concepts, from their *scientific world system*. Thus the scientific concepts of the Greeks were the underlying foundation of their social life, and the development of these concepts was the mainspring of its historical development, the chief reason which determined the replacement in the course of history of one form of social life by another.

Similarly, Auguste Comte thought that "the entire social mechanism rests, in the final analysis, on opinions".⁶ This is a mere reiteration of the views of the Encyclopaedists, according to whom *c'est l'opinion qui gouverne le monde* (it is opinion that governs the world).

There is another variety of idealism, one which found its extreme expression in the absolute idealism of Hegel. How is the history of man's development explained from his point of view? I shall illustrate this by an example. Hegel asks: what caused the fall of Greece? He gives many reasons; but the chief, in his view, is that Greece reflected only one stage in the development of the absolute idea, and had to fall when that stage was passed.

Clearly, in the opinion of Hegel—who however knew that "*Lacedaemon fell owing to property inequality*"—social relations and the whole history of man's development are determined in the end by the laws of logic, *by the development of thought*.

The materialist view of history is the diametrical opposite of this view. Whereas Saint-Simon, looking at history from the *idealist* standpoint, thought that the social relations of the Greeks were due to their religious opinions, I, a believer in the *materialist* view, would say that the republican Olympus of the Greeks was a reflection of their social system. And whereas Saint-Simon, in answer to the question of where the religious views of the Greeks came from replied that they stemmed from their scientific outlook on the world, I think that the scientific outlook of the Greeks was itself determined, in its historical development, by the development of the productive forces at the disposal of the Hellenic peoples.⁷

Such is my view of history in general. Is it correct? This is not the place to demonstrate its correctness. Here I would ask you *to assume* that it is correct and, with me, take it as *the starting-point of our inquiry on art*. Needless to say, this inquiry on the *particular question of art* will at the same time be a test of my *general view of history*. For indeed, if this general view is erroneous, we shall not, by taking it as our starting-point, get very far in explaining the evolution of art. But if we find that this evolution is better explained with its help than with the help of other views, we shall have a new and powerful argument in its favour.

But here I foresee an objection. In his *Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* Darwin, as we know, cites numerous facts showing that a fairly important role in the life of animals is played by the *sense of beauty*. These facts will be pointed to and the conclusion drawn that the origin of the sense of beauty must be explained *biologically*. I shall be told that it is impermissible ("narrow") to attribute the evolution of this sense in men *solely to the economic form of their society*. And inasmuch as Darwin's view of the evolution of species is unquestionably a materialist view, I shall also be told that biological materialism provides excellent data for a criticism of one-sided historical ("economic") materialism.

I realise the weightiness of this objection and shall therefore discuss it. This will be the more useful since, in answering it, I shall at the same time be answering a whole number of similar objections that might be borrowed from the psychical life of animals.

First of all, let us try to define as accurately as possible the conclusion that should be drawn from the facts adduced by Darwin. And for this purpose, let us see what inference he draws from them himself.

In Chapter II, Part I (Russian translation) of his book on the descent of man, we read:

“*Sense of Beauty*.—This sense has been declared to be peculiar to man. But when we behold a male bird elaborately displaying his graceful plumes or splendid colours before the female, whilst other birds, not thus decorated, make no such display, it is impossible to doubt that she admires the beauty of her male partner. As women everywhere deck themselves with these plumes, the beauty of such ornaments cannot be disputed. The nests of humming-birds, and the playing passages of bower-birds are tastefully ornamented with gaily coloured objects: and this shows that they have an idea of beauty. The same can be said about birds’ singing. The sweet strains poured forth by many male birds, during the season of love, are certainly admired by the females. If female birds had been incapable of appreciating the beautiful colours, the ornaments, and voices of their male partners, all the labour and anxiety exhibited by the latter in displaying their charms before the females would have been thrown away; and this it is impossible to admit.

“Why certain colours and certain sounds grouped in a certain way should excite pleasure cannot, I presume, be explained any more than why certain flavours and scents are agreeable. It can, however, be said confidently that man and many of the lower animals are alike pleased by the same colours and the same sounds.”⁸

Thus the facts given by Darwin indicate that the lower animals, like man, are capable of experiencing aesthetic pleasure, and that our aesthetic tastes sometimes coincide with those of the lower animals.⁹ But these facts do not explain the *origin* of these tastes. And if biology does not explain the origin of our aesthetic tastes, still less can it explain their *historical development*. But let Darwin speak again.

“The taste for the beautiful,” he continues, “at least as far as female beauty is concerned, is not of a special nature in the human mind; for it differs widely in the different races of man, and is not quite the same even in the different nations of the same race. Judging from the hideous ornaments, and the equally hideous music admired by most savages, it might be urged that their aesthetic faculty was not so highly developed as in certain animals, for instance, as in birds.”¹⁰

If the notion of the beautiful varies in the different nations of the same race, then obviously the reason for the variety is not to be sought in biology. Darwin himself says that our search should be directed elsewhere. In the second English edition of his book, we find in the paragraph I have just quoted the following words which are not in the Russian translation of the first English edition, edited by I. M. Sechenov: “With cultivated men such, (i.e., aesthetic) sensations are however intimately associated with complex ideas and trains of thought.”¹¹

This is an extremely important statement. It refers us from *biology to sociology*, for it is evident that, in Darwin’s opinion, it is social causes that determine the fact that with *cultivated* men aesthetic sensations are associated with many complex ideas. But is Darwin right when he thinks that such association takes place *only* with cultivated men? No, he is not, and this can easily be seen. Let us take an example. It is known that the skins, claws and teeth of animals hold a very important place in the ornaments of primitive peoples. What is the reason? Is it the combinations of colour and line in these objects? No, the fact is that the savage decks himself, say, with the skin, claws and teeth of the tiger, or the skin and horns of the buffalo as a hint at his own agility and strength: he who has vanquished the agile one, is himself agile; he who has vanquished the strong, is himself strong. It is possible that superstition is also involved here. Schoolcraft tells us that the Red Indian tribes of western North America are extremely fond of ornaments made of the claws of the grizzly bear, the most ferocious beast of prey in those parts. The Indian warrior believes that the ferocity and courage of the grizzly bear are imparted to whoever decks himself with its claws. For him, as Schoolcraft observes, the claws are partly an ornament, partly an amulet.¹²

In this case of course it is impossible to conceive that the skins, claws and teeth of animals pleased the Indians originally solely because of the combinations of colour and line characteristic of these objects.¹³ No, the contrary assumption is far more likely, namely, that these objects were first worn solely as a badge of courage, agility and strength, and only later, and precisely because they were a badge of courage, agility and strength, did they begin to excite aesthetic sensations and acquire the character of ornaments. It follows, then, that "with the savage aesthetic sensations *may* not only be associated" with complex ideas, but may sometimes *arise* precisely under the influence of such ideas.

Another example. It is known that the women of many African tribes wear iron rings on their arms and legs. Wives of rich men may sometimes be laden with thirty or forty pounds of such ornaments.¹⁴

This of course is most inconvenient, nevertheless these chains of slavery, as Schweinfurth calls them, are worn with pleasure. Why does the Negro woman take pleasure in wearing these heavy chains? Because, thanks to them, she seems *beautiful* to herself and to others. But why does she seem beautiful? This is the result of a fairly complex association of ideas. The passion for such ornaments is conceived by tribes which, in the words of Schweinfurth, are passing through the *iron age*, in other words, tribes with which iron is a precious metal. *Precious things* seem *beautiful* because they are associated with the idea of wealth. When a woman of the Dinka tribe puts on, say, *twenty* pounds of iron rings, she seems *more* beautiful to herself and to others than she did when she wore only *two* pounds, that is, when 'she was *poorer*: Clearly, what counts here is not the beauty of the rings, but the idea of wealth that is associated with them.

A third example. The Eatokas in the upper reaches of the Zambezi consider a man ugly if his upper incisors have not been pulled out. Whence this strange conception of beauty? It arose from a fairly complex association of ideas. The Batokas pull out their upper incisors because they wish to resemble *ruminant animals*. To our minds, a rather incomprehensible wish. But the Batokas are a pastoral tribe and almost worship their cows and oxen.¹⁵ Here again, that which is precious is beautiful, and, aesthetic concepts spring from ideas of quite a different order.

Lastly, let us take an example given by Darwin himself, quoting Livingstone. The women of the Makololo tribe perforate the upper lip and wear in the hole a large metal or bamboo ring; called a *pelele*. When a chief of the tribe was asked why the women wear these rings, he, "evidently surprised at such a stupid question", replied: "For beauty! They are the only beautiful things 'Women have. Men have beards, women have none. What kind of a person would she be without the pelele?" It is hard to say now with certainty where the custom of wearing the *pelele* came from; but, obviously, its origin must be sought in some very complex association of ideas, and not in the laws of biology, with which, apparently, it has not the slightest (direct) connection.¹⁶

In view of these examples, I consider myself entitled to affirm that the sensations excited by certain combinations of colours or forms of objects are associated even in the mind of primitive man with very complex ideas, and many, at least, of these forms and combinations seem beautiful only thanks to such association.

How is it evoked? And whence come the complex ideas which are associated with the sensations excited in us at the sight of certain objects? Evidently, these questions cannot be answered by the *biologist*; they can be answered only by the *sociologist*. And if the materialist view of history is better adapted to facilitate a solution than any other; if we find that the aforesaid association and complex ideas are, in the final analysis, determined and shaped by the state of the productive forces of the given society and its economy, it will have to be admitted that Darwinism in no way contradicts the materialist view of history which I have tried to describe.

I cannot dwell at length here on the relation between Darwinism and this view. I shall however say a few more words on the subject.

Consider the following lines:

"It may be well first to premise that I do not wish to maintain that any strictly social animal, if its intellectual faculties were to become as active and as highly developed as in man, would acquire exactly the same moral sense as ours.

"In the same manner as various animals have some sense of beauty, though they admire widely different objects, so they might have a sense of right and wrong, though led by it to follow widely different lines of conduct.

“If, for instance, to take an extreme case, men were reared under precisely the same conditions as hive-bees, there can hardly be a doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker-bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters; and no one would think of interfering. Nevertheless, the bee, or any other social animal, would gain in our supposed case, as it appears to me, some feeling of right or wrong, or a conscience.”¹⁷

What follows from these words? That man’s moral concepts are not *absolute*; that they change with changes in the conditions in which he lives.

But what creates these conditions? What causes them to change? Darwin says nothing whatever on this point, and if we affirm and demonstrate that they are created by the state of the productive forces and change in consequence of the development of these forces, far from coming into conflict with Darwin, we shall be supplementing what he says, clarifying what he has failed to clarify, and shall be doing so by applying to the study of *social* phenomena the same principle that rendered him such immense service in *biology*.

Generally, it would be very strange to draw a contrast between Darwinism and the view of history I defend. Darwin’s field was entirely different. He examined the descent of man as a *zoological species*. The supporters of the materialist view seek to explain the *historical* life of this species. Their field of investigation begins precisely where that of the Darwinists ends. Their work cannot replace what the Darwinists provide and, similarly, the most brilliant discoveries of the Darwinists cannot replace their investigations; they can only prepare the ground for them, just as the physicist prepares the ground for the chemist without his work in any way obviating the necessity for chemical investigations as such.¹⁸ It all boils down to this. The Darwinian theory was, in its time, a big and necessary advance in the development of *biological* science, and fully satisfied the strictest demands that could then have been made by this science of its devotees. Can this be said of the materialist view of history? Can it be affirmed that it was in its time a big and inevitable advance in the development of social science? And is it now capable of satisfying all the demands of this science? To this I reply: Yes, and yes again! And in these letters I hope to demonstrate, in part, that this confidence is not unfounded.

But let us return to aesthetics. It is apparent from the words of Darwin I have quoted that he regarded the development of *aesthetic taste* from the same standpoint as the development of the *moral sense*. Men, and many animals, have a sense of the beautiful, that is, they have the faculty of experiencing a particular kind of pleasure (“aesthetic”) under the influence of certain objects or phenomena. But exactly which objects and phenomena afford them this pleasure depends on the conditions in which they grow up, live and function. It is because of *human nature* that man *may have* aesthetic tastes and concepts. *It is the conditions surrounding him* that determine the conversion of this *possibility into a reality*; they explain why a given social man (that is, a given society, a given people, or class) possesses *particular* aesthetic tastes and concepts and *not others*.

This is the ultimate conclusion that follows automatically from what Darwin says on the subject. And this conclusion, of course, none of the believers in the materialist view of history would contest. Quite the contrary, they would all see in it a new confirmation of this view. It has surely never occurred to any of them to deny any of the generally known properties of human nature, or to interpret it in any arbitrary manner. All they said was that, if human nature is unchangeable, it cannot explain the historical process, which represents an aggregation of constantly *changing* phenomena, but that if, with the course of historical development, it *changes* itself, then obviously there must be an external reason for its changes. It therefore follows that in either case the task of the historian and the sociologist consists in something far more than discussing the properties of human nature.

Let us take such a property of human nature as the *tendency to imitate*. Tarde, who has written a very interesting essay on the laws of imitation, regards it as the soul of society as it were. As he defines it, every social group is an aggregation of beings who partly imitate one another at the present time, and partly imitated one and the same model in the past. That imitation has played a very big part in the history of all our ideas, tastes, fashions and customs is beyond the slightest doubt. Its immense importance was already emphasised by the materialists of the last century: man consists entirely of imitation, Helvetius said. But it is just as little to be doubted that Tarde based his investigation of the laws of imitation on a false premise.

When the restoration of the Stuarts in Britain temporarily re-established the rule of the old nobility, the latter, far from betraying the slightest *tendency to imitate* the extreme representatives of the revolutionary petty

bourgeoisie, the Puritans, evinced a very strong inclination for habits and tastes that were the *very opposite* of the Puritan rules of life. The strict morals of the Puritans gave way to the most incredible licentiousness. It became good form to like, and to do, the very things the Puritans forbade. The Puritans were very religious; high society at the time of the Restoration flaunted its impiety. The Puritans persecuted the theatre and literature; their downfall was the signal for a new and powerful infatuation for the theatre and literature. The Puritans wore short hair and condemned refinement in dress; after the Restoration, long wigs and luxurious costumes came into fashion. The Puritans forbade card games; after the Restoration, gambling became a passion, and so on and so forth.¹⁹ In a word, what operated here was not *imitation, but contradiction*, which evidently is likewise rooted in the properties of human nature. But why did this tendency to contradiction which is rooted in the properties of human nature manifest itself so powerfully in the relations between the bourgeoisie and the nobility in 17th-century Britain? Because it was a century of very acute struggle between the nobility and the bourgeoisie, or, more correctly, between the nobility and the "third estate" generally. We may consequently say that, though man undoubtedly has a strong tendency to imitation, it manifests itself only in definite *social relations*, for example, those which existed in France in the 17th century, when the bourgeoisie readily, though not very successfully, imitated the nobility: recall Moliere's *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*. In other social relations the tendency to imitation vanishes and gives place to its opposite, which for the present I shall call the tendency to *contradiction*.

But no, I am putting it incorrectly. The tendency to imitation did not vanish among the Englishmen of the 17th century: it probably manifested itself with all its former power in the relations between members of *one and the same class*. Beljame says of English high society of that period: "these people were not even unbelievers; they denied religion a priori, so as not to be taken for Roundheads, and so as to spare themselves the trouble of thinking."²⁰ Of these people it may be said without fear of error that they denied religion from *imitation*. *But in imitating* more serious *atheists*, they were *contradicting the Puritans*. Imitation was thus *a source of contradiction*. But we know that if the weaker minds among the English nobles *imitated* the atheism of the stronger, this was because atheism was good form, and it became so only by virtue of *contradiction*, solely as a reaction to Puritanism—a reaction which in its turn was a result of the aforesaid *class struggle*. Hence, *beneath 276 all this complex dialectic of mental phenomena lay facts of a social character*. And this makes it clear to what extent, and in what sense, the conclusion I have drawn from some of Darwin's statements is correct, the conclusion, namely, that it is because of human nature that man *may* have certain concepts (or tastes, or inclinations), but that the conversion of this *possibility into a reality* depends on the conditions surrounding him; it is because of these conditions that he has particular concepts (or inclinations, or tastes) and not others. If I am not mistaken, this is exactly what was said before me by a certain Russian partisan of the materialist view of history.

"Once the stomach has been supplied with a certain quantity of food, it sets about its work in accordance with the general laws of stomachic digestion. But can one, with the help of these laws, reply to the question of why savoury and nourishing food descends every day into your stomach, while in mine it is a rare visitor? Do these laws explain why some eat too much, while others starve? It would seem that the explanation must be sought in some other sphere, in the working of some other kind of laws. The same is the case with the mind of man. Once it has been placed in a definite situation, once the environment supplies it with certain impressions, it co-ordinates them according to certain general laws (moreover here, too, the results are varied in the extreme by the variety of impressions received). But what places it in that situation? What determines the influx and the character of new impressions? That is the question which cannot be answered by any laws of thought.

"Furthermore, imagine that a resilient ball falls from a high tower. Its movement takes place according to a universally known and very simple *law of mechanics*. But suddenly the ball strikes an inclined plane. Its movement is changed in accordance with another, also very simple and universally known *mechanical law*. As a result, we have a broken line of movement, of which one can and must say that it owes its origin to the joint action of the two laws which have been mentioned. But where did the inclined plane which the ball struck come from? This is not explained either by the first or the second law, or yet by their joint action. Exactly the same is the case with human thought. Whence came the circumstances thanks to which its movements were subjected to

the combined action of such and such laws? This is not explained either by its individual laws or by their combined action."

I am firmly convinced that the history of ideologies can be understood only by people who have thoroughly grasped this plain and simple truth.

Let us proceed. When speaking of imitation, I referred to the very opposite tendency, which I called the tendency to contradiction.

It must be examined more closely.

We know how great a role is played in the expression of the emotions in man and animals by what Darwin calls the "*principle of antithesis*". "Certain states of the mind lead ... to certain habitual movements which were primarily, or may still be, of service; and we shall find that when a directly opposite state of mind is induced, there is a strong and involuntary tendency to the performance of movements of a directly opposite nature, though these have never been of any service."²¹ Darwin cites many examples which show very convincingly that the "*principle of antithesis*" does indeed account for a great deal in the expression of the emotions. I ask, is not its action to be observed in the origin and development of *customs*.

When a dog throws itself belly upwards at the feet of its master, its posture is as completely opposite as possible to any show of resistance and is an expression of complete submissiveness. Here the operation of the principle of antithesis is strikingly apparent. I think, however, that it is equally apparent in the following case reported by the traveller Burton. When Negroes of the *Wanyamwezi* tribe pass by a village inhabited by a hostile tribe, they do not carry arms so as to avoid provocation. But at home every one of them is always armed with at least a knobstick.²² If, as Darwin observes, the dog which throws itself on its back seems to be saying to a man, or a strange dog, "Behold, I am your slave!"—the Wanyamwezi Negro, in laying aside his weapons at a time when arming would appear essential, thereby intimates to his enemy: "Nothing is farther from my thought than self-defence; I fully trust in your magnanimity."

The thought is the same in both cases—and so is its expression, that is, through an action that is the direct opposite of that which would have been inevitable if, instead of submissiveness, there had been hostile intent.

We also find the principle of antithesis manifested with striking clarity in customs which serve for the expression of grief. David and Charles Livingstone relate that no Negro woman ever appears in public without wearing ornaments, *except in times of mourning for the dead*.²³

The coiffure of a Niam-Niam Negro is the object of great care and attention on the part of both himself and his wives, yet he will at once cut his hair off in token of grief when an ear relative dies.²⁴ In Africa, according to Du Chaillu, many *Negro peoples put on dirty clothing* on the death of a man who held an important position in the tribe.²⁵ Some of the natives of Borneo express their grief by laying aside the *cotton sarong* they ordinarily wear and putting on *clothes of bark*, which used to be worn formerly.²⁶ With the same object, some of the Mongolian tribes turn their clothing *inside out*.²⁷ In all these cases, emotion is expressed *by actions which are the opposite of those that are considered natural, necessary, useful or pleasant in the normal course of life*.

In the normal course of life it is considered useful to replace dirty clothing by clean; but in time of mourning, by virtue of the principle of antithesis, clean clothing is changed for dirty clothing. The aforesaid inhabitants of Borneo found it gratifying to wear cotton clothes instead of clothes of bark; but the principle of antithesis induces them to wear bark clothing when they want to express grief. The Mongolians, like all other people, naturally wear their clothes the right way out, but for the very reason that this seems natural to them in the ordinary course of life, they turn them inside out when the ordinary course of life is disturbed by some mournful event. And here is an even more striking example. Schweinfurth says that many African Negroes express grief *by putting a rope round their neck*.²⁸ Here grief is expressed by an emotion that is the very opposite of that suggested by the instinct of self-preservation. Very many examples of this kind could be cited.

I am therefore convinced that a very substantial proportion of our customs owe their origin to the principle of antithesis.

If my conviction is justified—and I believe it is fully justified—we may presume that the development of our *aesthetic tastes* is likewise, in part, prompted by its influence. Is this presumption corroborated by the facts? I think it is.

In Senegambia, wealthy Negro women wear shoes so small that they cannot accommodate the whole foot, by reason of which these ladies are distinguished by a very awkward gait. But this gait is considered extremely attractive.²⁹

How could it have come to be so regarded?

In order to understand this, it must first be observed that such shoes are not worn by poor Negro women who have to work, and they have an ordinary gait. They cannot walk in the way the rich coquettes do because this would result in great loss of time; the awkward gait of the wealthy women seems attractive precisely because they do not value time, being exempted from the necessity of working. In itself, this gait has no sense whatever; it acquires significance *only by virtue of its contrast to the gait of the women burdened with work (and, hence, poor)*.

Here the operation of the "*principle of antithesis*" is plain. But mark that it is induced by *social causes*, namely, the existence of property inequality among the Senegambian Negroes.

Recalling what was said above about the morals of the British court nobility at the time of the Restoration, I hope you will readily agree that the tendency to contradiction they reveal represents a particular instance of the action of *Darwin's principle of antithesis in social psychology*. But here another point should be observed.

Such virtues as industriousness, patience, sobriety, thrift, strict domestic morals, etc., were very useful to the British bourgeoisie when it was seeking to win a more exalted position in society. But vices that were the opposite of the bourgeois virtues were useless, to say the least, to the British nobility in its struggle for survival against the bourgeoisie. They did not provide it with any new weapons in this struggle, and arose only as a psychological result. What was useful to the British nobility was not its inclination for vices that were the opposite of the bourgeois virtues, but rather the emotion that prompted this inclination, namely, hatred of a class whose complete triumph would signify the equally complete abolition of the privileges of the aristocracy. The inclination for vice was only a *correlative variation* (if I may here use a term borrowed from Darwin). Such *correlative* variations are quite common in social psychology. They must be taken into account. But it is just as necessary to bear in mind that they too, *in the final analysis*, are induced by social causes.

We know from the history of English literature how strongly the aesthetic concepts of the upper class were affected by the psychological operation of the principle of antithesis to which I have referred, and which was evoked by the class struggle. British aristocrats who lived in France during their exile became acquainted with French literature and the French theatre, which were an exemplary and unique product of a refined aristocratic society, and therefore were far more in harmony with their own aristocratic inclinations than the English theatre and English literature of Elizabethan times. After the Restoration, the English stage and English literature fell under the domination of French taste. Shakespeare was scorned in the same way as he was subsequently scorned, when they came to know him, by the French, who adhered to the Classical tradition—that is, as a "*drunken savage*". His *Romeo and Juliet* was considered "*bad*", and his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *ridiculous and insipid*"; his *Henry VIII* was "*a simple thing*", his *Othello*, "*a mean thing*".³⁰ This attitude did not fully disappear even in the following century. Hume thought that Shakespeare's dramatic genius was commonly overrated for the same reason that, deformed and disproportionate bodies give the impression of being very large. He accused the great dramatist of "total ignorance of all theatrical art and conduct". *Pope* regretted that Shakespeare wrote "for the people" and managed to get along without "the protection of his prince and the encouragement of the court". Even the celebrated *Garrick*, an ardent admirer of Shakespeare, strove to *ennoble* his "idol". In his performances of *Hamlet* he omitted the gravediggers' scene as being too coarse. *Pie* supplied *King Lear* with a happy ending. But the *democratic* section of the English theatre-going public continued to cherish the warmest regard for Shakespeare. *Garrick* was aware that in adapting his plays, he was incurring the risk of evoking the stormy protest of this section of the public. His French friends, in their letters, complimented him for the "courage" with which he faced this danger: "car je connais la populace anglaise," one of them added.³¹

The laxity of aristocratic morals in the second half of the 17th century was, as we know, reflected on the English stage, where it assumed truly incredible proportions. Nearly all the comedies written in England between 1660 and 1690 were almost without exception what *Eduard Engel* calls pornographic.³² In view of this, it might

be said a priori that sooner or later, in accordance with the principle of antithesis, a type of dramatic works was bound to appear in England whose chief purpose would be to depict and extol the domestic virtues and middle-class purity of morals. And in due course this type really was produced by the intellectual representatives of the English bourgeoisie. But I shall have to speak of this type of dramatic works later, when I discuss the French "*tearful comedy*".

As far as I know, the importance of the principle of antithesis in the history of aesthetic concepts was noted most keenly and denned most cleverly by Hippolite Taine.³³

In his witty and interesting *Voyage aux Pyrenees*, he describes a conversation he had with a "table companion", Monsieur Paul 281 who, to all appearances, expresses the views of the author himself: "You are going to Versailles," Monsieur Paul says, "and you cry out against 17th-century taste__ But cease for a moment to judge from your needs and habits of today.... We are right when we admire wild scenery, just as they were right when they were bored by such landscapes. Nothing was more ugly in the 17th century than real mountains.³⁴ They evoked in them many unpleasant ideas. People who had just emerged from an era of civil war and semibarbarism were reminded by them of hunger, of long journeys on horseback in rain and snow, of inferior black bread mixed with chaff, of filthy, vermin-ridden hostelrys. They were tired of barbarism, as we are tired of civilization. These ... mountains give us a respite from our sidewalks, our offices and our shops. Wild scenery pleases us only for this reason. And if it were not for this reason, it would be just as repulsive to us as it was to Madame de Maintenon."³⁵

A wild landscape pleases us because of its contrast to the urban scenes of which we are tired. Urban scenes and formal gardens pleased 17th-century people because of their contrast to wild places. Here the operation of the "principle of antithesis" is unquestionable. But just because it is unquestionable it is a clear illustration of the way psychological laws may serve as a key to the history of ideology in general, and to the history of art in particular.

The principle of antithesis played the same role in the psychology of the people of the 17th century as it plays in the psychology of our contemporaries. Why, then, are our aesthetic tastes the opposite of those of 17th-century people?

Because we live in an entirely different situation. We are thus brought back to our familiar conclusion, namely, that it is because of man's psychological nature that he may have aesthetic concepts, and that Darwin's *principle of antithesis* (Hegel's "contradiction") plays an extremely important and hitherto insufficiently appreciated role in the mechanism of these concepts. But why a particular social man has particular tastes and not others, why certain objects and not others afford him pleasure, depends on the surrounding conditions. The example given by Taine also provides a good indication of the character of these conditions; it shows that they are social conditions which, in their aggregate, are determined—I put it vaguely for the time being—by the development of human culture.³⁶

Here I foresee an objection on your part. You will say: "Let us grant that the example given by Taine does point to *social* conditions as the cause which brings the basic laws of our psychology into operation; let us grant that the examples you yourself gave point to the same thing. But is it not possible to cite examples that prove something quite different? Are we not familiar with examples which show that the laws of our psychology begin to operate under the influence of *surrounding nature*?"

Of course we are, I answer; and even the example given by Taine relates to our attitude towards impressions produced on us by *nature*. But the whole point is that the influence exerted upon us by these impressions changes as our attitude towards nature changes, and the latter is determined by the development of our (that is, social) culture.

The example given by Taine refers to *landscape*. Mark, sir, that landscape has not by any means occupied a constant place in the history of painting. Michelangelo and his contemporaries ignored it. It began to flourish in Italy only at the very end of the Renaissance, at the moment of its decline.

Nor did it have an independent significance for the French artists of the 17th, and even the 18th centuries. The situation changed abruptly in the 19th century, when landscape began to be valued for its own sake, and young artists—Flers, Cabat, Theodore Rousseau—sought in the lap of nature, in the environs of Paris, in Fontainebleau and Melun, inspiration the possibility of which was not even suspected by artists of the time of Le

Brun or Boucher. Why? Because social relations in France had changed, and this was followed by a change in the psychology of the French. Thus in different periods of social development man receives different impressions from nature because he looks at it from different viewpoints.

The operation of the general laws of man's psychical nature does not cease, of course, in any of these periods. But as in the various periods, owing to the different social relations, the material that enters man's head is not alike, it is not surprising that the end results are not alike either.

One more example. Some writers have expressed the thought that everything in a man's external appearance that resembles the features of lower animals seems to us ugly. This is true of civilised peoples, though even with them there are quite a number of exceptions: a "leonine head" does not seem unsightly to any of us. But notwithstanding such exceptions, it may be affirmed that when man comes to realise that he is an incomparably higher being than any of his kindred in the animal world, he fears to resemble them and even endeavours *to underline, to exaggerate* the dissimilarity.³⁷

But this assertion is not true of primitive peoples. We know that some of them pull out their upper incisors in order to resemble ruminant animals, others file them in order to resemble beasts of prey, still others plait their hair into the shape of horns, and so on almost ad infinitum.³⁸

Often this tendency to imitate animals is connected with the religious beliefs of primitive peoples.³⁹

But that does not alter things in the least.

For if primitive man had looked on lower animals with *our* eyes, they would probably have found no place in his religious ideas. He looks at them differently. Why differently? Because *he stands on a different level of culture*. Hence, if in one case man strives to resemble lower animals and in another to differentiate himself from them, this depends on the state of his culture, that is, again on those *social* conditions to which I have referred. Here, however, I can express myself more precisely: I would say that it depends on the degree of development of his productive forces, on his *mode of production*. And in order not to be accused of exaggeration and "one-sidedness", I shall let von den Steinen, the learned German traveller I have already quoted, speak for me. "We shall only then understand these people," he says of the Brazilian Indians, "when we regard them as the product of the hunter's way of life. The most important part of their experience is associated with the animal world, and it was on the basis of this experience that their outlook was formed. Correspondingly, their art motifs, too, are borrowed with tedious uniformity from the animal world. It may be said that all their wonderfully rich art is rooted in their life as hunters."⁴⁰

Chernyshevsky once wrote, in his dissertation on *The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality*: "What pleases us in plants is their freshness of colour and luxuriant abundance of form, for they reveal a life full of strength and freshness. A withering plant is unpleasant; so is a plant which has little vital sap." Chernyshevsky's dissertation is an extremely interesting and unique example of the application of the general principles of Feuerbachian materialism to aesthetic problems.

But history was always a weak point with this materialism, and this is clearly to be seen in the lines I have just quoted: "What pleases us in plants__"

Who is meant by "MS"? The tastes of men vary extremely, as Chernyshevsky himself pointed out many a time in this same work. We know that primitive tribes—the Bushmen and Australians, for example—never adorn themselves with flowers although they live in countries where flowers abound. It is said that the Tasmanians were an exception in this respect, but it is no longer possible to verify the truth of this statement: the Tasmanians are extinct. At any rate, it is very well known that the *ornamental art* of primitive—more exactly, *hunting*—peoples borrows its motifs from the *animal* world, and that plants have no place in it. And modern science attributes this, too, to nothing but the state of the productive forces.

"The ornamental motifs borrowed by hunting tribes from nature," says Ernst Grosse, "consist exclusively of animal and human forms. Thus they select those things which are to them of greatest practical interest. The primitive hunter leaves the gathering of plants, which is also of course necessary for him, to his womenfolk, as an inferior occupation, and shows no interest in it whatever. This explains why we do not find in his ornaments even a trace of the plant motifs which are so richly developed in the decorative art of civilised peoples. Actually, the

transition from animal to plant ornaments is symbolical of a great advance in the history of civilisation—the transition from hunting to agriculture."⁴¹

If all this is true, we can now modify as follows the conclusion we drew from Darwin's words: it is the psychological nature of the primitive hunter which determines that he may have aesthetic tastes and concepts generally, but it is the state of his productive forces, his hunter's mode of life, which leads to his acquiring particular aesthetic tastes and concepts, and not others. This conclusion, while throwing vivid light on the art of the hunting tribes, is at the same time another argument in favour of the materialist view of history.

(With civilised peoples the technique of production exercises a direct influence on art far more rarely. This fact, which would seem to testify against the materialist view of history, actually provides brilliant confirmation of it. But we shall leave this point for another occasion.)⁴²

I shall now pass to another psychological law which has also played a big role in the history of art and which has likewise not received the attention it deserves.

Burton says of certain African Negroes he knew that they had a poorly developed sense of music, but were nevertheless astonishingly sensitive to rhythm: "the fisherman will accompany his paddle, the porter his trudge, and the housewife her task of rubbing down grain, with song".⁴³ Casalis says the same thing of the Kaffirs of the *Basuto* tribe, whom he studied very thoroughly. "The women of this tribe wear metal rings on their arms which jangle at every movement. They not infrequently gather together to grind their corn on the handmills, and accompany the measured movement of the arms with a chant which strictly corresponds to the rhythmical sound emitted by the bracelets."⁴⁴ The men of this tribe, Casalis says, when they are at work softening hides, "at every movement utter a strange sound, whose significance I was unable to elucidate".⁴⁵ What this tribe likes particularly in music is rhythm, and they enjoy most those songs in which it is most strongly marked.⁴⁶ In their dances the Basutos beat time with their hands and feet, intensifying the sound thus produced with the help of rattles hung around their bodies.⁴⁷ The Brazilian Indians likewise reveal a strong sense of *rhythm* in their music, but are very weak *in melody* and apparently have not the slightest idea of *harmony*.⁴⁸ The same must be said of the Australian aborigines.⁴⁹ In a word, *rhythm* has a colossal significance with all primitive peoples. Sensitivity to rhythm, and musical ability generally, seem to constitute one of the principal properties of the psycho-physiological nature of man. And not only of man. Darwin says that the ability at least to perceive if not to enjoy musical time and rhythm is apparently common to all animals and is undoubtedly connected with the physiological nature of their nervous system.⁵⁰ In view of this, it might be presumed that the manifestation of this ability, which man shares with other animals, is not connected with the conditions of his social life in general, or with the state of his productive forces in particular. But although this presumption may appear very natural at a first glance, it will not stand the criticism of facts. Science has shown that such a connection does exist. And mark, sir, that science has done so in the person of a most distinguished *economist*—*Karl Biicher*.

As is apparent from the facts I have quoted, it is because of man's ability to perceive and enjoy rhythm that the primitive producer readily conforms in the course of his work to a definite time, and accompanies his bodily movements with measured sounds of the voice or the rhythmical clang of objects suspended from his person. But what determines the time observed by the primitive producer? Why do his bodily movements in the process of production conform to a particular measure, and not another? This depends on the *technological character of the given production process, on the technique of the given form of production*. With primitive tribes each kind of work has its own chant, whose tune is precisely adapted to the rhythm of the body movements characteristic of that kind of work.⁵¹ With the development of the productive forces the importance of rhythmic activity in the production process diminishes, but even with civilised peoples—the German peasants, for example—each season of the year, according to Biicher, has its own work sounds, and each kind of work its own music.⁵²

It should also be observed that, depending on *how* the work is done—whether by one producer or by a body—songs arise either for one singer or for a whole choir, and the latter kind are likewise divided into several categories. And in all cases, the rhythm of the song is strictly determined by the rhythm of the production process. Nor is this all. The technological character of the process has a decisive influence also on the *content* of the song accompanying the work. A study of the interconnection between work, music and poetry leads Biicher to the conclusion that "in the early stage of their development work, music and poetry were intimately connected with

one another, but the basic element in this trinity was work, the other elements having only a subordinate significance".⁵³

Since the sounds which accompany many production processes have a musical effect in themselves, and since, moreover, the chief thing in music for primitive peoples is *rhythm*, it is not difficult to understand how their simple musical productions were elaborated from the sounds resulting from the impact of the *instruments* of labour on their *object*. This was done by accentuating these sounds, by introducing a certain variety into their rhythm, and generally by adapting them to express human emotions.⁵⁴ But for this, it was first necessary to modify the *instruments of labour*, which in this way became transformed into *musical instruments*.

The first to undergo such transformation must have been instruments with which the producer simply *struck* the object of his labour. We know that the *drum* is extremely widespread among primitive peoples, and is still the only musical instrument of some of them. String instruments originally belonged to the same category, for the primitive musicians *play* upon them *by striking the strings*. Wind instruments hold a minor place with them: the most frequent to be met with is the flute, which is often played as an accompaniment of work performed in common, in order to lend it a rhythmic regularity.⁵⁵ I cannot discuss here in detail Bucher's views concerning the origin of poetry; it will be more convenient to do so in a subsequent letter. I shall only say briefly that Biicher is convinced that it originated from energetic rhythmical movements of the body, especially tho movements which we call work, and that this is true not only of poetical *form*, but also of *content*.⁵⁶

If Biicher's remarkable conclusions are correct, then we are entitled to say that man's nature (the physiological nature of his nervous system) gave him the ability to perceive musical rhythm and to enjoy it, while his technique of production determined the subsequent development of this ability.

The close connection between the state of the productive forces of the so-called primitive peoples and their art had been recognised by investigators long ago. But as the vast majority of them adhered to an idealist standpoint, they, as it were, recognised this connection despite themselves and explained it incorrectly. For example, the well-known historian of art, Wilhelm Liibke, says that the art productions of primitive peoples bear the stamp of *natural necessity*, whereas those of the civilised nations are infused with *intellectual consciousness*. This differentiation rests on nothing but idealist prejudice. In reality, the art of civilised peoples is no less under the sway of necessity than primitive art. The only difference is that with civilised peoples the *direct dependence* of art on technology and mode of production disappears. I know, of course, that this is a very big difference. But I also know that it is determined by nothing else than the development of the social productive forces, which leads to the division of social labour among different classes. Far from refuting the materialist view of the history of art, it provides convincing evidence in its favour.

I shall also point to the "law of symmetry". Its importance is great and unquestionable. In what is it rooted? Probably in the structure of man's own body, likewise the bodies of animals: only the bodies of cripples and deformed persons are unsymmetrical, and they must always have produced an unpleasant impression on physically normal people. Hence, the ability to enjoy symmetry was likewise imparted to us by nature. But we cannot say how far this ability would have developed if it had not been strengthened and fostered by the very mode of life of the primitive peoples. We know that primitive man was principally a hunter. One effect of this mode of life, as we have already learned, is that motifs borrowed from the animal world predominate in his ornamental art. And this induces the primitive artist—already from a very early age—to pay attentive heed to the law of symmetry.⁵⁷

That man's sense of symmetry is trained precisely on these models, is to be seen from the fact that savages (and not only savages) have a preference in their ornamental art for *horizontal*, rather than *vertical* symmetry⁵⁸: glance at the figure of the first man or animal you meet (not deformed, of course), and you will see that its symmetry is of the former, not the latter type. It should also be borne in mind that weapons and utensils often required a symmetrical shape because of their very character and purpose. Lastly, as Grosse quite rightly observes, if the Australian savage, when ornamenting his shield, is just as cognizant of the importance of symmetry as were the highly civilised builders of the Parthenon, then it is obvious that the sense of symmetry cannot in itself explain the history of art, and that we must say in this case as in all others: it is nature that imparts

an ability to man. but the exercise and practical application of this ability is determined by the development of his culture.

Here again I deliberately employ a vague expression: *culture*. You will, on reading it, exclaim with heat: "Nobody has ever denied this! All we say is that the development of culture is not determined solely by the development of the productive forces, by economics!"

Alas, I am only too well acquainted with this kind of objection. And I confess that I have never been able to understand why even intelligent people fail to observe the frightful logical blunder that lies at the bottom of it.

For indeed you, sir, would like the development of culture to be determined by other "factors" as well. I ask: is art one of them? You will, of course, say that it is, whereupon we get the following situation: the development of human culture is determined, among other things, by the development of art. and the development of art is determined by the development of human culture. And you will be constrained to say the same thing of all the other "factors": economics, civil law, political institutions, morals, etc. What follows? Why, this: the development of human culture is determined by the operation of all the foregoing factors, and the development of all the foregoing factors is determined by the development of culture. This is the old logical fallacy for which our forebears had so strong a propensity:—What does the earth rest on? On whales. And the whales? On water. The water? On the earth. And the earth? On whales—and so on in the same astonishing rotation.

You will agree that one must try, after all, to reason a little more seriously when investigating serious problems of social development.

I am deeply convinced that criticism (more exactly, scientific theory of aesthetics) can now advance only if it rests on the materialist conception of history. I also think that in its past development, too, criticism acquired a firmer basis, the nearer its exponents approached to the view of history I advocate. In illustration, I shall point to the *evolution of criticism* in France.

There its evolution was closely linked with the development of historical thought generally. As I have already said, the 18th-century Enlighteners looked upon history from an idealist standpoint. They saw in the accumulation and dissemination of knowledge the chief and most profound cause of man's historical progress. But if the advance of science and the development of human thought generally really are the chief and paramount cause of historical progress, it is natural to ask: what determines the progress of thought itself? From the 18th-century point of view, *only one answer* was possible: the nature of man, the immanent laws governing the development of his thought. But if man's nature determines the *whole* development of his thought, then it is obvious that it *also* determines the *development of literature and art*. Hence, man's nature—and it alone—can, and should furnish the key to the development of literature and art in the civilised world.

Because of the properties of human nature, men pass through various ages: childhood, youth, adulthood, etc. Literature and art. in their development, pass through the same ages.

"Was there ever a people that was not first a poet and then a thinker?" Grimm asks in his *Correspondance littéraire*,⁸⁸ wishing to say thereby that the heyday of poetry coincides with the childhood and youth of peoples, and the progress of philosophy with their adulthood. This 18th-century view was inherited by the 19th century. We even meet with it in the celebrated book of Madame de Stael, *De la litterature consideree dans ses rapports avec les institutions societees*, where at the same time there are quite substantial rudiments of an entirely different view. "Examining the three different periods in Greek literature." Madame de Stael says, "we observe a natural movement of the human mind. Homer is characteristic of the first period; in the age of Pericles, we remark the rapid progress of drama, eloquence and morals and the beginnings of philosophy; in the time of Alexander, a more profound study of the philosophical sciences became the principal occupation of men distinguished in literature. Of course, a definite degree of development of the human mind is required to attain the highest peaks of poetry; nevertheless this branch of literature is bound to lose some of its brilliance when the progress of civilisation and philosophy corrects some of the errors of the imagination."⁵⁹

This means that if a nation has emerged from its youth, its poetry is bound in one degree or another to pass into decline.

Madame de Stael knew that the modern nations, despite all their intellectual achievements, had not produced a single poetical work that could be ranked above the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. This fact threatened to shake

her confidence in the constant and progressive perfection of mankind, and she was therefore unwilling to discard the theory of the various ages she had inherited from the 18th century, with the help of which the difficulty in question could be easily resolved.

For as we see, from the standpoint of this theory the decline of poetry was a symptom of the intellectual adulthood of the civilised nations of the modern world. But when Madame de Stael abandons these similes as she passes to the history of the literature of modern nations, she is able to look at it from an entirely different standpoint. Particularly interesting in this respect are the chapters in her book which discuss French literature. "French gaiety and French taste have become proverbial in all the European countries," she observes in one of these chapters. "This taste and this gaiety were commonly attributed to the national character; but what is the character of a nation if not a result of the institutions and conditions which have influenced its prosperity, its interests and its customs? In these past ten years, even at the calmest moments of the revolution, the most piquant contrasts failed to prompt a single epigram or a single witticism. Many of the men who acquired great influence on the destiny of France possessed neither elegance of expression nor brilliance of mind; it may even be that their influence was in part due to their moroseness, taciturnity and cold ferocity."⁶⁰ Whom these lines are hinting at, and how far the hint accords with the facts, is not of importance to us here. The only thing we have to note is that, in Madame de Stael's opinion, *national character is a product of historical conditions*. But what is national character, if not human nature as manifested in the spiritual characteristics of the *given nation*?

And if the nature of any nation is a *product* of its historical development, then obviously it could not have been the *prime mover* of this development. From which it follows that *literature*, being a reflection of a nation's spiritual character, is a product of the same historical conditions that begot the national character. Hence, it is not human nature, nor the character of the given nation, but its history and its social system that explain its literature. It is from this standpoint that Madame de Stael considers the literature of France. The chapter she devotes to 17th century French literature is an extremely interesting attempt to explain its predominating character by the social and political relations prevailing in France at the time, and by the psychology of the French nobility, regarded from the standpoint of its attitude to the monarchical power.

Here we find some very subtle observations on the psychology of the ruling class of that period, and some very penetrating ideas concerning the future of French literature. "With a new political order in France, no matter what form it may take," Madame de Stael says, "we shall see nothing like it (the literature of the 17th century), and this will be a good proof that the so-called French wit and French elegance were only a direct and necessary product of the monarchical institutions and customs which had existed in France for many centuries."⁶¹ This new opinion, which holds that literature is a product of the social system, gradually became the predominant opinion in European criticism in the 19th century.

In France, it was reiterated by Guizot in his literary essays.⁶² It was also expressed by Sainte-Beuve who, it is true, accepted it only with reservations. Lastly, it was fully and brilliantly reflected in the works of Taine.

Taine was firmly convinced that "every change in the situation of people leads to a change in their mentality".

But it is the mentality of any given society that explains its literature and its art. for "the productions of the human spirit, like the productions of living nature, are only explicable in relation to their environment". Hence, in order to understand the history of the art and literature of any country, one must study the changes that have taken place in the situation of its inhabitants. This is an undoubted truth. And one has only to read his *Philosophie de l'art, Histoire de la littérature anglaise* or *Voyage en Italie* to find many a vivid and talented illustration of this truth. Nevertheless, like Madame de Stael and other of his predecessors, Taine adhered to the idealist view of history, and this prevented him from drawing from the unquestionable truth that he so vividly and so talentedly illustrated, all the benefit that might be drawn from it by an historian of literature and art.

Since the idealist regards the advance of the human mind as the ultimate cause of historical progress, it follows from what Taine says that the *mentality* of people is determined by *their situation*, and that *their situation* is determined by *their mentality*. This led to a number of contradictions and difficulties, which Taine, like the 18th-century philosophers, resolved by appealing to *human nature*, which with him took the form of *race*. What doors he sought to open with this key may be clearly seen from the following example. We know that the

Renaissance began earlier in Italy than anywhere else, and that Italy, generally, was the first country to end the mediaeval way of life. What caused this *change in the situation* of the Italians?—The properties of the Italian race, Taine replies.⁶³ I leave it to you to judge how satisfactory this explanation is and shall pass to another example. In the Sciarra Palace in Rome, Taine sees a landscape by Poussin, and he observes in this connection that the Italians, because of the specific qualities of their race, have a peculiar notion of landscape; to them, it is nothing but a villa, only a villa of enlarged dimensions, whereas the German race loves nature for its own sake.⁶⁴ Yet in another place Taine himself says in reference to Poussin's landscapes: "To really appreciate them, one must be a lover of (Classical) tragedy, Classical poetry, of ornate etiquette and signoral or monarchical grandeur. Such sentiments are infinitely remote from those of our contemporaries."⁶⁵ But_ why are the sentiments of our contemporaries so unlike those of the people who loved ornate etiquette, Classical tragedy and Alexandrine verse? Is it because the Frenchmen of the time of Le Roi Soleil, say, were people of a *different race* than the Frenchmen of the 19th century? A strange question! Did not Taine himself emphatically and insistently reiterate that the mentality of people changes when their situation changes? We have not forgotten this, and repeat after him: the situation of the people of our time is extremely unlike that of the people of the 17th century, and therefore their sentiments are very different from those of the contemporaries of Boileau and Racine. It remains to learn why the situation has changed, that is, why the ancien regime has given place to the present bourgeois order, and why the Bourse now rules in the country where Louis XIV could say almost without exaggeration "L'etat c'est moi". And this question is answered quite satisfactorily by the economic history of the country.

You are aware, sir, that Taine's opinions were contested by writers of very different views. I do not know what you think of their contentions, but I would say that none of Taine's critics succeeded in shaking the thesis which is the sum and substance of nearly everything that is true in his theory of aesthetics, namely, that art is the product of man's mentality, and that man's mentality changes with his situation. And similarly, none of them detected the fundamental contradiction which rendered any further fruitful development of Taine's views impossible; none of them observed that, according to his view of history, man's mentality is determined by his situation, yet is itself the ultimate cause of that situation. Why did none of them observe this? Because their own views of history were permeated by this same contradiction. But what is this contradiction? Of what elements is it composed? It is composed of two elements, one of which is called the *idealist* and the other the *materialist* view of history. When Taine said that people's mentality changes with a change in their situation, he was a materialist; but when this selfsame Taine said that the situation of people is determined by their mentality, he was repeating the idealist view of the 18th century. It need scarcely be added that it was not this latter view that suggested the best of his opinions on the history of literature and art.

What conclusion is to be drawn from this? It is that the contradiction which ruled out any fruitful development of the intelligent and profound views of the French art critics could have been avoided only by a man who said: The art of any people is determined by its mentality; its mentality is a product of its situation, and its situation is determined in the final analysis by the state of its productive forces and its relations of production. But a man who had said this would have been enunciating the materialist view of history....

But I see that it is high time to close. Well, until the next letter! Forgive me if I have chanced to annoy you by the "narrowness" of my views. Next time I shall deal with the art of primitive peoples, and I hope to show that my views are not at all as narrow as you thought, and probably still think.

Notes:

[1] «COHHH6HHH rp. IOJICTOpO. npOHBBefleHHH C8MHX HOCJiefHHX MockBa, 1898, cip. 78. [Works of Count Tolstoy. Latest Writings, Moscow, 1898, p. 78.]

[2] Ibid., p. 77.

[3] Ibid., p. 85.

[4] The Greeks had a special importance in Saint-Simon's eyes since, in his opinion, "c'est chez les Grecs que l'esprit humain a commence a s' occuper seieusement de l'organisation sociale" ["it was with the Greeks that the human mind first began to occupy itself seriously with the organisation of society"].

[5] See his *Memoire sur la science de Vhomme*.

[6] *Cours de philosophie positive*, Paris, 1869, t. I, pp. 40–41.

- [7] Several years ago there appeared in Paris a book by A. Espinas called *Histoire de la Technologic*, which is an attempt to explain the development of the world outlook of the ancient Greeks by the development of their productive forces. It is an extremely important and interesting attempt for which we should be very grateful to Espinas, despite the fact that his inquiry is erroneous *in many particulars*.
- [8] «ИпОHCxo}KneHHe qoJioDeKa», FJI. II, exp. 45. [Here and below Plekhanov is quoting from the Russian translation of Darwin's *The Descent of Man*, St. Petersburg, 1899; translation edited by Prof. I. M. Sechenov; Ch. II, p. 45.]
- [9] In the opinion of Wallace, Darwin greatly exaggerated the importance of the aesthetic sense in sexual selection of animals. Leaving it to the biologists to decide how far Wallace is right, I shall assume that Darwin's idea is absolutely correct, and you will agree, sir, that this assumption is the least favourable for my purpose.
- [10] JiapBHH, «<flponcxojKp,CHne iejioriCKa», Ch. II, p. 45.
- [11] *The Descent of Man*, London, 1883, p. 92. These words are probably in the new Russian translation of Darwin, but the book is not just now at my disposal.
- [12] Schoolcraft, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, Vol. III, p. 216.
- [13] There are cases when such objects please solely because of their colour, but of this later.
- [14] Schweinfurth, *Au cceur de l'Afrique*, Paris, 1875, t. I, p. 148. See also Du Chaillu, *Voyages et aventures dans l'Afrique equatoriale*, Paris, 1863, p. 11.
- [15] Schweinfurth, l. c., I, p. 147.
- [16] I shall later endeavour to explain it in relation to the development of the productive forces in primitive society.
- [17] «ИпОHCX05KfleHHe 'IOJ10BCKa», Vol. I, p. 52.
- [18] I must here make a reservation. When I maintain that Darwinian biologists prepare the ground for sociological inquiries, this must be understood only in the sense that the achievements of biology—in so far as it is concerned with the development of organic forms—cannot but contribute to the perfection of the scientific method in sociology, in so far as the latter is concerned with the development of the social organisation and its products'. human thoughts and emotions. But I do not share the social views of Darwinists like Haeckel. It has already been pointed out in our literature that the Darwinian biologists do not employ Darwin's method in their discussions of human society, and only elevate to an ideal the instincts of the animals (principally beasts of prey) which were the object of the great biologist's investigations. Darwin was far from being "sattelfest" ["well-grounded"] in social questions; but the social views which he conceived as deductions from his theory little resemble those which the majority of Darwinists deduce from it. Darwin believed that the development of the social instincts was "highly beneficial to the species". This view cannot be shared by Darwinists who preach a social struggle of each against all. True, Darwin says that "there should be open competition for all men; and the most able should not be prevented by laws or customs from succeeding best and rearing the largest number of offspring". But these words are quoted in vain by the believers in a social war of each against all. Let them remember the Saint-Simonists. They said the same of competition as Darwin, but in the name of competition they demanded social reforms which would hardly have been favoured by Haeckel and his followers. There is competition and competition, just as, in the words of Sganarelle, there are fagots and fagots.
- [19] Cf. Alexandra Beljame, *Le Public et les Hommes de lettres en Angleterre du dix-huitième siècle*, Paris, 1881, pp. 1-10. Cf. also Taine, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, t. II, p. 443 et seq.
- [20] l. c., pp. 7-8.
- [21] «0 BbipajKemiH omymeiiHii (3MOu,iiii) y HeJioseKa H JKHBOTHUX». PycCK. nep., Cn6., 1872, cip. 43. [Plekhanov is quoting from the Russian translation of Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, St. Petersburg, 1872, p. 43.]
- [22] *Voyage aux grands lacs de VArique orientate*, Paris, 1862, p. 610.
- [23] *Exploration du Zambeze et de ses affluents*, Paris, 1866, p. 109.
- [24] Schweinfurth, *Au cceur de l'Afrique*, t. II, p. 33.
- [25] *Voyages et aventures dans l'Afrique equatoriale*, p. 268.
- [26] Ratzel, *Volkerkunde*, B. I, Einleitung, S. 65.
- [27] Ratzel, l. c., B. II, S. 347.
- [28] *Au cceur de VArique*, t. I, p. 151.
- [29] L. J. B. Bérenger-Feraud, *Les peuplades de la Senegambie*, * ftns) io/yj p. 11,
- [30] Beljame, *ibid.*, pp. 40-41. Cf. Taine, l. c., pp. 508-12.
- [31] ["for I know the English mob"] On this point, see the interesting inquiry of J. J. Jusserand, *Shakespeare en France sous Vanclen regime*, Paris, 1898, pp. 247-48.
- [32] *Geschichte der englischen Literatur*, 3 Auflage, Leipzig, 1897, s. 264.

[33] Tarde had an excellent opportunity to investigate the *psychological* operation of this principle in his *L'opposition universelle, essai d'une theorie des contraires*, which appeared in 1897. But for some reason he did not utilise the opportunity, and confined himself to very few remarks on the subject. True, he says (p. 245) that this book is not a sociological essay. But he probably would not have coped with the subject even in an essay specifically devoted to sociology, if he did not abandon his idealist outlook.

[34] Do not forget that this conversation takes place in the Pyrenees.

[35] *Voyage aux Pyrenees*, cinquieme edition, Paris, pp. 190–93.

[36] Already on the lowest rungs of civilisation, the psychological principle of contradiction is brought into operation by division of labour between man and woman. V. I. Jochelson says that "typical of the primitive system of the Yukagirs is the opposition between men and women as two separate groups. This is likewise to be seen in their games, in which the men and the women constitute two hostile parties; in their language, certain sounds being pronounced by the women differently than the men; in the fact that descent by the maternal line is more important to the women, and by the paternal line to the men, and in that specialisation of occupations which has created a special, independent sphere of activity for each sex" («Ho penaM Hcainoii H KopKOflony, HpeBHHii ioKarnpCKnii 6yT n niiCbMenncCTb>>, Cno., 1898, cip. 5). [*On the Rivers Yasachnaya and Korkodon, Ancient Yukagir Life and Literature*, St. Petersburg, 1898, p. 5.]

Mr. Jochelson does not appear to observe that specialisation in the occupations of the sexes was the cause of the contrast he notes, not the other way round.

That this contrast is reflected in the ornaments of the different sexes, is attested by many travellers. For example: "Here as everywhere, the stronger sex assiduously tries to distinguish itself from the other, and the male toilet is markedly different from the female (Schweinfurth, *Au cceur de VAfrique*, I, p. 281), and whereas the men (of the Niam-Niam tribe) devote considerable labour to their hairdress, the coiffure of the women is quite simple and modest" (ibid., II, p. 5). For the influence on *dances* of division of labour between men and women, see von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvolkern Zentral-Brasiliens*, Berlin, 1894, S. 298. It may be said with confidence that man's desire to distinguish himself from *woman* appears earlier than the desire to contrast himself to the *lower animals*. Surely, in this instance, the fundamental properties of human psychology find rather paradoxical expres- sion.

[37] "In dieser Idealisierung der Natur liess sich die Sculptur von Fingerzeigen der Natur selbst leiten; sie uberhohte hauptsachlich Merkmale, die den Menschen vom Thiere unterscheiden. Die aufrechte Stellung fiihrte zu grosserer Schlankheit und La'nge der Beine, die zunehmende Steile des Schadelwinkels in der Thierreiche zur Bildung des griechischen Profils, der allgemeine schon von Winckelmann ausgesprochene Grundsatz, dass die Natur, wo sie Flachen unterbreche, dies nicht stumpf, sondern mit fintschiedenheit thue, liess die scharfen Rander der Augenhohle und der Nasenbeine so wie den eben so scharfgerandeten Schnitt der Lippen vorziehen." ["In its idealisation of Nature, sculpture was guided by the finger of Nature itself: it chiefly overvalued features which distinguish man from the animal. The erect stature led to greater slenderness and length of leg, the increasing steepness of the cranial angle in the animal kingdom, to the evolution of the Greek profile, while the general law, already formulated by Winckelmann, that when Nature breaks surfaces she does so not bluntly but decisively, led to a preference for sharply rimmed eye-sockets and nose bones, as well as for a sharply curved cut of the lips."] Lotze, *Geschichte der Aesthetik in Deutschland*, Miinchen, 1868, S. 568.

[38] The missionary Heckewelder relates that he once went to see an Indian of his acquaintance and found him preparing for the dance, which, as we know, is of great social significance with primitive peoples. The Indian had painted his face in the following intricate manner: "When we viewed him in profile on one side, his nose represented the beak of an eagle— When we turned round to the other side, the same nose now resembled the snout of a pig__ He seemed much pleased with his execution, and having his looking-glass with him, he contemplated his work with satisfaction and a kind of pride." *Histoire, mceurset continues des nations indiennes, qui habitaient autrefois la Pensylvanie et les etats voisins, par le reverend John Heckewelder, missionnaire morave, trad, de l'anglais par le chevalier Du Ponceau*, Paris, 1822, p. 324. I have written out the title of this book in lull because it contains much interesting information and I want to recommend it to the reader. I shall have other occasions to refer to it.

[39] Cf. J. G. Frazer, *Le Totemisme*, Paris, 1898, p. 39 et seq.; Schweinfurth, *Au coeur de l'Afrique*, I, p. 381.

[40] L. c., S. 201.

[41] *Die Anfange der Kunst*, S. 149.

[42] See Raoul Allier's interesting Introduction to Frederic Christol's *Au Sud de l'Afrique*, Paris, 1897.&rightangle;

[43] L. c., p. 602. A handmill is meant here.

[44] *Les Bassoutos par E. Casalis, ancien missionnaire*, Paris, 1863, p. 150.

[45] Ibid., p. 141.

[46] Ibid., p. 157.

[47] Ibid., p. 158.

- [48] Von don Steinen, 1. c., S. 326.
- [49] See E. J. Eyre, "Manners and Customs of the Aborigines of Australia", in *Journal of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia and Overland*, London, 1847, Vol. II, p. 229. Cf. also Grosse, *Anfänge der Kunst*, S. 271.
- [50] «np0Mcxo>K,neHHe HeJioB6Ka», Vol. II, p. 252.
- [51] K. Biicher, *Arbeit und Bhythmus*, Leipzig, 1896, S. 21, 22, 23, 35, 50, 53, 54; Burton, 1. c., p. 641.
- [52] Biicher, *ibid.*, S. 29.
- [53] *Ibid.*, S. 78.
- [54] *Ibid.*, S. 91.
- [55] Biicher. *Ibid.*, S. 91–92.
- [56] *Ibid.*, S. 80.
- [57] I say from a very early age, because with primitive peoples children's games likewise serve as a school for the training of artistic talent. According to the missionary Christol (*An Sud de l'Afrique*, p. 95 et seq.), children of the Basuto tribe themselves fashion from clay toy oxen, horses, etc. Needless to say, these childish sculptures leave much to be desired, but civilised children cannot compare in this respect with the little African "savages". In primitive society the amusements of the children are intimately associated with the productive pursuits of the adults. This throws vivid light on the relation of "play" to social life, as I shall show in a subsequent letter.^^87^^
- [58] See the designs of the Australian shields in Grosse, *Anjdnge der Kunst*, S. 145.
- [59] *De la litterature, etc.*, Paris, an VIII, p. 8.
- [60] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 1-2.
- [61] *De la litterature, etc.*, II, p. 15.
- [62] Guizot's literary views throw such vivid light on the development of historical thought in France that they deserve to be mentioned if only in passing. In his *Vies des poetes francais du siecle de Louis XIV*, Paris, 1813, Guizot says that the history of Greek literature reflects the natural development of the human mind, but that the problem is far more complicated in the case of modern peoples: here "a host of secondary causes" must be taken into account. When, however, he passes to the history of French literature and begins to investigate these "secondary" causes, we find that they are all *rooted in the social relations* of France, under whose influence the tastes and habits of her various social classes and strata were moulded. In his *Essai sur Shakespeare*, Guizot regards French tragedy as a reflection of class psychology. Generally, in his opinion, the history of drama is closely associated with the development of social relations. But the view that Greek literature was a product of the "natural" development of the human mind had not been discarded by Guizot even at the time the *Essay on Shakespeare* appeared. On the contrary, this view found its *pendant* [counterpart] in his views on *natural history*. In his *Essais sur l'histoire de France*, published in 1821, Guizot advances the idea that the political system of every country is determined by its "civic life", and civic life—at least in the case of the peoples of the modern world—'i', related to landownership in the same way as effect is related to cause. This "at least" is highly noteworthy. It shows that, in contrast to the civic life of the peoples of the modern world, the civic life of the antique peoples was conceived by Guizot as a product of "the natural development of the human mind", and not as a result of the history of landownership, or of economic relations generally. This is a complete analogy with the view that the development of Greek literature was exceptional. If it be added that at the time his *Essais sur l'histoire de France* appeared Guizot was ardently and resolutely advocating in his journalistic writings the thought that France had been "created by class struggle", there cannot be the slightest doubt that the class struggle in modern society became apparent to modern historians before the class struggle in the states of antique times. It is interesting that the ancient historians, such as Thucydides and Polybius, regarded the struggle of classes in the society of their time as something natural and self-understood, just as our communal peasants regard the struggle between the large and small landholders in their village communes.
- [63] "Comme en Italie la race esl precocce et que la crofite gennanique ne l'a recouverte qu'a demi, l'Sge modenic s'y developpo plus tot qu'aillcurs", etc. ["As the Italians are a precocious race, and as the Germanic crust only half covered it, the modern age developed there earlier than in other countries."] *Voyage en Italie*, Paris, 1872, t. I, p. 273.
- [64] *Voyage en Italie*, I, p. 330.
- [65] *Ibid.*, I, p. 331.

Ken Lawrence, "Behind Tutankhamun's Treasures," *Urgent Tasks* number four, summer 1978

Introduction

Some Marxist critics view popular culture as meaningful solely or primarily as political propaganda,¹ but a different aspect is far more important: because popular culture is a reflection of the status of the mass imagination - albeit shaped and distorted by the dominant ideas of the rulers of society - measurable *changes* in the cultural interests and activities of large numbers of ordinary people can provide an important index to the development of a world view which has not yet emerged as mass consciousness. Thus, in the early 1850's the rise of the runaway slave as the universal literary hero among white people in the Northern United States, Canada, and Europe was politically reified among whites only later - on the battlegrounds of Kansas, the campaigns of the Union Army and Navy, and the anti-Confederate solidarity struggles waged by European workers. Conversely, though the literary expression of the runaway slave protagonist received its most enduring portrayal from the pen of Mark Twain in *Huckleberry Finn*, as a hero she or he had already been replaced in North American lore by the ruthless and genocidal Western lawman. He became a fixture in books, film, radio and *television* whose prominence has been disturbed only recently. The grip of these ruffians on the American mind registered fairly accurately the degree of the mass commitment to imperialist expansionism.

More recent cultural trends in the United States are helpful in revealing the degree to which the fierce grasp of racism on the white masses is being eroded. Some evidence of this has been accumulating for a while - particularly in the spheres of popular music and professional sports² - but two recent events offer a qualitatively greater example of this trend, offering much clearer examples than are usually available to chroniclers of the mass mind. The first of these, obviously, is Alex Haley's *Roots*. All aspects of that presentation were important - the *Reader's Digest* preview, the book, the serials, the condensation - but the televised version was the most spectacular confirmation of our view. Even Pete Rozelle must have realized, along with most schoolchildren, that the saga of a Black family outdrew the Super Bowl. Despite the critics' reams of nonsense about *Roots* (both pro and con), this fact will be of pivotal importance to twentieth century North American culture for some time to come.³ The second of these events, and the one which is the subject of this review, is the traveling exhibit entitled *Treasures of Tutankhamun*. If the exhibit's meaning were as obvious as *Roots'* there would be little reason for this review; it is precisely the ambiguities, complexities, and contradictory features which merit a close look.

The Politics of the Exhibit

A collection of artifacts from the Cairo Museum is touring Washington, D.C., Chicago, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Seattle, and New York. As I write, the show has passed the midpoint of its two-and-a-half-year schedule. Bourgeois observers have been so awestruck by this exhibit that they have yet to utter their first critical remark about it. The *Wall Street Journal* was typical in calling it "spectacular," and describing individual items as "refined," "exquisite," and "superlatively worked." Quickly the *Journal* reviewer got to the point its readers cared most about: "fortunately, art exhibitions have proven to be great lubricants for easing international tensions." This exhibit is similar to a version that appeared in London in 1972 and in the Soviet Union in 1974. A U.S.

¹ Regular readers of the *Guardian* will recognize this as Irwin Silber's general approach.

² Of course these inroads are hesitant, incomplete, and deformed. Ted Williams, biting the hand that fed him, announced upon his admission to baseball's hall of fame that racial discrimination would be ended in major league baseball only when Satchel Paige was admitted to the hall of fame. He could not have imagined that the lords of the diamond would find a way to preserve the segregated and second class status of Paige, Josh Gibson, and other Negro League stars even within the sacred hall. Even Hank Aaron's home run record was marred by racist taunts and threats. And hundreds of other examples can be offered. We are not denying this bleak and ominous aspect when we argue that the changes we do see, even those too lean and paltry to call "progress," may be portents of a coming change in mass consciousness.

³ Here we are speaking of the objective contemporary importance, without judging the merits of various challenges to Haley's claim of originality and immortality. Margaret Walker, author of *Jubilee*, and Harold Courlander, author of *The African*, have both charged Haley with plagiarism and have filed lawsuits accordingly; presumably the merits of those claims will be decided officially by the courts. Regardless of the outcome of the litigation, no one who isn't equipped with a crystal ball can tell at this time whether or not Haley has produced a classic. This is no more (or less) shameful than the fact that the chief claimant for the title of greatest U.S. writer, Herman Melville, was properly recognized only a century after his time.

representative in Cairo first raised the possibility of a tour here in 1973, only a matter of weeks before Egypt and the U.S. resumed diplomatic relations in early 1974. It was then promised in a joint statement signed by Richard Nixon and Anwar Sadat when Nixon visited Egypt in June of 1974. Final details were negotiated by Foreign Ministers Ismail Fahmy and Henry Kissinger. The last time an exhibition from the Cairo Museum toured this country was from 1961 to 1963. Then, as now, the U.S. government's intended effect was to downplay the anti-Arab hatred that had been whipped up during the previous Middle East military confrontation, and to prepare the American public for "peace."

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A second, but important, purpose of the current tour is frankly commercial. The Metropolitan Museum of Art was chosen as coordinator of the exhibition because of its "expertise in marketing." The profits reaped from sales of the "extensive product line" of replicas and mementos of ancient Egyptian works of art will be spent on improving the Cairo Museum, while the gate swells the coffers of the hosts. Perhaps at long last Mohammad Hassan Abdul Rahman, Director of the Cairo Museum, will realize his goal of "a new building with modern features, including anti-air-raid protection." (Interestingly the West never seriously concerned itself with the possibility that the finest exhibit of ancient Egyptian civilization might be destroyed by Israeli bombs. But the threat posed by the Aswan High Dam to unexcavated relics in the south and to the temple of Ramses II at Abu Simbel offered an opportunity to vilify the Nasser regime which was seized upon by the academic world and the press here. Ultimately a worldwide effort in response to Egyptian initiatives excavated much of the area now submerged beneath Lake Nasser and the temple was moved to safety on high ground.)

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The New York Times called the exhibit "magnificent," with an "aura of myth and romance." Items are "sublime" and "splendid" - "sculpture that seems to be carved not so much of stone as of light." A television special said "the essence" of this show is "the true feeling that gives a sense of serene dignity." *Archaeology* magazine summed it up: "unique." These are simply promotions, not serious reviews. *ARTnews* came closer to a serious critique. An advance article predicted that the exhibition would include "a few works from the preceding Tell el Amarna, and immediately following, periods." Unfortunately this was not to be, because "the Egyptians have a firm policy of keeping the things from Tutankhamun's tomb separate from all others." Therefore the reviewer laments that the collection is "quite untypical of Egyptian art as a whole." Nonetheless, writes Sylvia Hochfield, the selection "is restrained and intelligent. It gives an excellent idea of the variety of the 5,000 objects found in the tomb."

This last statement just isn't true, as we shall see. The thrust of the *ARTnews* review, that the items in the show "don't, therefore, represent the Amarnq style at its finest," is correct in one sense, but is flawed by the author's imposition of present-day standards. (In any case, Chicago's Oriental Institute Museum has a small but excellent companion show called *The Magic of Egyptian Art*. Those who want to place the Tutankhamun exhibit in historical perspective should definitely try to see that exhibit. A more varied show from Cairo is being planned for a U.S. tour in 1980.)

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One of the minor ironies of today's young, ill-educated, and immature American left is that even its most simple-minded seat-of-the-pants wisdom is sometimes more profound than the most perceptive insights of the bourgeois critics. While the bourgeoisie mindlessly oohs and ahs its way through the exhibit, the grumblings of the left cynics will reveal another aspect. (So far I am unaware of any left commentaries on *Treasures of Tutankhamun*, but there will undoubtedly be some once the show reaches New York.)

Vulgar Marxists, particularly those unfamiliar with Marx's writings on art, will have an instant response to this show. For them a single line noting Exxon's sponsorship of the exhibit will suffice to toss it into the trash bin.⁴ Those who take even passing note of the thousands who stand in line for hours in the worst weather will

⁴ In a recent column allegedly reprinted by popular demand, Irwin Silber writes, "Basically there are two kinds of films - theirs and ours." ["What's in a Marxist film review?" *Guardian*, February 22, 1978) His seductive simplicity fails to explain how Exxon can repeatedly sponsor public television screenings of such revolutionary films as *Potemkin* or *Ten Days That Shook the World*.

have a more difficult time of it. Most likely they will conclude that Exxon is co-opting something with genuine appeal. Those who view the petroleum industry sponsorship as a badge of reaction will easily find "evidence" to support their view. Even for its own time, Tutankhamun's reign was profoundly reactionary. In contrast to the enlightenment introduced during the reign of his predecessor, Akhenaten - a genuine revolution by any standards - the boy-king's term represented a retreat toward the worst and most rigid qualities of earlier Pharaohs, insofar as that was possible. We shall return to this later.

(The most recent scholarship lends new support to this general conclusion. For fifty years it was assumed that all the tombs of all the pharaohs contained similar amounts of treasure until it was stolen by grave robbers. Now Egyptian archaeologist Labib Habachi has shown that Tutankhamun's tomb was probably many times richer than the others - it contained a great deal more gold than could have been mined during his reign, and most of it probably came from the destruction of Akhenaten's temples. Habachi concludes that a "grateful nation" overloaded Tutankhamun's tomb with extraordinary treasure. Substitute "grateful priesthood" and you probably reach close to the fact.)

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Despite evidence that the show features an exceptionally reactionary part of the distant past, this is not sufficient to dismiss its importance nor to account for its sponsorship, nor to explain its mass appeal. The bourgeoisie's taste in art is not limited to its most backward manifestations. It fears the revolutionary present, not the revolutionary past. The world's museums do not hesitate to display *the paintings* of Delacroix, to say nothing of more recent works by Cezanne or Picasso. Nor is the artistic product of a backward society necessarily a mirror image of the society's reactionary aspects. It is the various interpretations imposed upon the work which reveal, or conceal, its meaning, both for its own time and for later generations.

The Russian Marxist George Plekhanov wrote, "The belief in art for art's sake arises and takes root wherever people engaged in art are hopelessly out of harmony with their social environment." He added, "This is an old, but eternally new story. When a class lives by exploiting another class which is below it in the economic scale, and when it has attained full mastery in society, from then on its *forward movement* is a *downward movement*. Therein lies the explanation of the fact, which at first glance seems incomprehensible and even incredible, that the ideology of the ruling classes in economically backward countries is often far superior to that of the ruling classes in advanced countries." If Plekhanov is right, and I believe he is generally correct on these points, then it is possible to see a number of different meanings in the objects selected from Tutankhamun's grave, both for their own time and for today. In the context of the Eighteenth Dynasty of ancient Egypt, most of these represented a retreat from the revolutionary art of the preceding period. But they have a dual meaning for today: the bourgeoisie's crisis is expressed in its "art for art's sake" awe of the objects. The magnetism that this show has for the masses is the precise opposite: a declaration of the bankruptcy of the bourgeois view; a feeling that there is more universal significance in the African civilization of 3,000 years ago than in the mass culture of North America today.

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There is undoubtedly also a racial aspect. W. E. B. DuBois wrote that "The redemption of Egypt from the Hyksos came in the Eighteenth Dynasty through an Ethiopian power." Racially, "the Eighteenth Dynasty was Ethiopian paled by marriage." DuBois might have added that for a time it was *darkened* by marriage as well: Tutankhamun's grandmother - Akhenaten's mother - was the Black queen, Teye, daughter of a Nubian soldier.

The promoters have done their utmost to conceal the fact. Only one item in the exhibit is an approximation of the pharaoh's true bronze color - the very first in the exhibit. This work, titled "The Sun God on a Lotus" by the exhibitors, is sufficiently marred by peeling and missing paint to obscure the most characteristically African features of the very young king, while the accompanying description dwells on the specific location of the artifact in the tomb's antechamber and gives a dubious religious explanation of its significance. This need not have been so. Another item in the Cairo Museum could easily have been used instead - a statue of Tutankhamun also of painted and stuccoed wood which offers the most lifelike known portrayal of Tutankhamun in maturity. The flesh is dark reddish-brown with black eyebrows and pupils. Since the body is just a plain lifesize mannikin down to the waist and without forearms, it is presumed to be a clothes dummy. If so, its

purely utilitarian character may account for the lack of stylized embellishments found in most of the king's portraits.

The failure to include this or another more natural rendition of Tutankhamun means that, for most U.S. visitors to the exhibit, he "passes" for white. The show then takes on an aspect of the schizophrenia of real life: few Black visitors are fooled, but most whites are unaware of the deception. As a result, the most obvious bridge connecting the cultures of ancient Africa and modern America has been buried; a great opportunity for enlightenment is irrevocably lost. Attempts to obliterate the racial characteristics of the early Egyptians did not begin in modern times, however. In about 1380 A.D. Arab invaders attempted to destroy the face of Pharaoh Khafre on the Great Sphinx at Gizeh, and managed to inflict great damage before giving up. Later invaders used this grand monument as a target for their cannon. More recently, scholars at the University of Chicago who restored the colossus of Tutankhamun on permanent display at Chicago's Oriental Institute gave his face an almost Nordic appearance. Fortunately for lovers of historic accuracy, there is an identical statue in the Cairo Museum restored by Egyptologists working with greater care: its features are an excellent match with the broad nose and full lips shown in the famous death mask.

Treasures of Tutankhamun continues the racist tradition of the European and North American Egyptologists. There is sad irony in the fact that the archaeologists here, the most outspoken enemies of pseudo-scholars like Erich von Daniken and his imitators, are not as unlike him as they believe. Von Daniken, author of *Chariots of the Gods?* and a series of sequels, claims that the great accomplishments of antiquity were performed with the assistance of astronauts from outer space; he thinks our human ancestors were too stupid to erect great civilizations on their own. White archaeologists and museum curators who reject von Daniken's nonsense but who, in the name of "science," attempt to portray ancient African civilization as white are really substituting one form of chauvinism for another.

The "Science" of Archaeology

When the archaeologists of the future poke around in the rubble of our age 5,000 years hence, which will they consider the representative art of our age - paintings by Willem de Kooning or baby portraits on toilet tissue wrappers? Which will they regard as our most typical symbols of religious authority - crucifixes or Coca-Cola logotypes? Will the colossi at Rushmore and Stone Mountain, and the yet-to-be-completed Crazy Horse, be thought the wonders of the shortlived North American Empire? Will a Mercury Capsule be exhibited as an ocean-going pleasure craft? Will some curator of distant years ahead conclude that beer cans are the treasures of our age, to be separately spotlighted under Plexiglas domes and accompanied by an authoritative commentary on the primitive coarseness of the churchkey puncture contrasted with the graceful mathematical perfection of the pop-top hole? Questions like these ought to flash stubborn warnings to those who would offer confident interpretations of ancient civilization based on relics found in the trashheaps of old. Archaeological interpreters rarely heed such warnings. Describing their domain as a "science," few scholars of the ancient world exhibit an appropriate amount of humility. Instead, books informed by a great deal of nineteenth-and twentieth-century prejudice are presented as "history."

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It is certainly conceivable that to the ancients the foodstuffs packed into Tutankhamun's tomb were the "treasures," while the layers of gold coffins in the king's likeness may have served to protect and identify the young pharaoh during his journey to the hereafter. It seems doubtful to me that the Egyptians were as obsessed with gold as are the people who put together this show; their passion compares with that of Ian Fleming's Goldfinger. French Egyptologist Jean Yoyotte, noting that the Egyptians used sacks of barley for money as late as the Nineteenth Dynasty, has written, "The literary picture of wealth is not one of great treasure. It is always full granaries, fine herds, and marshes abounding in game. The economic life of the country was measured by the number of ships belonging to the Treasury taking grain to the royal granaries, or a fleet under the direction of an official taking grain from one nome to another which was suffering from famine."

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Egypt during the Eighteenth Dynasty reached the peak of territorial conquest. Her hegemony extended indefinitely westward through Libya into the encroaching Sahara; northward through Palestine, Syria, and most of Anatolia; and eastward across Arabia and into Mesopotamia. Perhaps even more significant is the fact that Egyptian merchants traded in places far beyond the empire, incorporating goods from as far away as the Kongo, the Balkan peninsula, the islands of the Mediterranean, and Afghanistan. Modern writers understand this. They know that the gold in Tutankhamun's death mask came from Kush while the lapis lazuli came from Afghanistan; cuneiform tablets unearthed at Tell al Amarna came from Asia Minor and Phoenicia; and so forth. But whenever the foreign origin of an object cannot be definitely shown, it is presumed to be of Egyptian manufacture if it is unearthed in Egypt.

For a variety of reasons many relics of antiquity have been better kept in Egypt than elsewhere. A dry tomb in solid rock may have been a better archive than a tropical rain forest for a wooden object, for example. Political or religious conditions may have created and preserved items in Egypt that were disdained, looted, or recycled in other countries. Furthermore, few areas of the Old World have been searched with the archaeologist's spade and sieve as Egypt has. With these considerations in mind - the large-scale commerce conducted by Egyptians during the era of empire; the possibility that some items may have survived the ages better in Egypt than elsewhere; and the degree to which studies of other ancient cultures (such as Kush) are still in their infancy - a proper appreciation of the findings of the archaeologists requires that each item be considered in the context of its time, broadly understood, and with severe qualifications.

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It is not especially surprising that the exhibitors of Tutankhamun's treasures have not done this, but it is unfortunate that the choice of objects for inclusion in the current exhibition actually interferes with the viewer's ability to make these judgments. In some cases it is the promoters' interpretation of an object that undermines a useful understanding.

Two items in the show are probably not Egyptian at all. A folding stool and a child's chair, both made of ebony, inlaid with ivory and decorated with gold, were probably imported from Punt (present-day Eritrea and Somalia) or collected as tribute from Kush (present-day Sudan and Ethiopia). Unlike other objects on display, neither of these is inscribed with hieroglyphs. Both are made of materials that were not found in Egypt, and both contain styles of art not usually attributed to Egyptians. The people who put together this display must be aware that they are pulling a fast one here. One of the advisors consulted by the show's coordinators was Christiane Desroche-Noblecourt, Curator of Egyptian Art for the Louvre. She refers to the folding stool as "probably of Nubian workmanship," as does David P. Silverman, listed as Project Egyptologist at the Oriental Institute and Field Museum of Natural History for *Treasures of Tutankhamun*. But their interpretation isn't given at the exhibit or in the catalog.

Two objects omitted from this show but displayed in the Cairo Museum clearly reveal the most likely interpretation. One is usually called the "ecclesiastical throne" and the other is a neckrest. The so-called ecclesiastical throne is actually a chair made from a folding stool almost identical to the one in the show. The modifications are strikingly incongruous. A back has been built on, and typically Egyptian decorations have been added. The easy grace of the original has been jarred by the virtuosity of detail in the add-on parts; hieroglyphs abound on the backrest. Perhaps because the modifying carpenter didn't fully understand the original design, or perhaps because the pharaoh ordered him to make the stool more comfortable, rigid rear legs defeat the scissors-action design. The creator of the stool would have considered these alterations an insult and an abomination. The neckrest, on the other hand, helps link the elements of design with cultures to the south of Egypt. Like the stool, it is made of ivory and ebony and has the scissors-legs carved into ducks' heads. It has no hieroglyphic inscription. The carvings of the god Bes are virtually identical to carvings unearthed in the excavations of Kushite sites in Sudan sponsored by UNESCO during the sixties prior to the inundation behind the Aswan High Dam. The child's chair is a similar example. It is simpler and sturdier than comparable furniture of definite Egyptian origin. The bas-reliefs of ibexes on the side panels are far more naturalistic than any similar Egyptian creation, even of the revolutionary Amarna period. (Paradoxically, the exhibit does include an Egyptian cosmetic vase carved in the

form of an ibex. This object displays all of the grace of Amarna art, yet is stiff and unnatural when viewed beside those on the child's chair.)

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One very impressive item is a golden double box, with each side in the shape of a cartouche. The designs are inlaid with various colored glasses and semiprecious stones. On the back of this case Tutankhamun is shown twice, wearing the blue *khepresh* war crown. [A picture of this item is on the back cover.] In one panel the king has a black face; in the facing panel he is white. No explanation whatever is offered for this in the narration that accompanies the exhibit; it isn't even mentioned. The exhibition catalog calls attention to the fact but makes no attempt to account for it - a posture which is clearly inconsistent with the author's willingness to provide pat explanations of other artifacts based on the thinnest strands of evidence.

Bearing in mind our inability to view these items through ancient Egyptian eyes, I believe this piece is not such a mystery. It was common throughout the years of the Egyptian empire to indicate that the pharaoh's rule extended *from* Black Africa in the south to Asia in the north and west. The extent of Egyptian hegemony was illustrated allegorically in various ways. One way was to show the pharaoh in the process of unifying the country by conquering the two lands - Upper and Lower Egypt. More than any other exploit, this characterized the Eighteenth Dynasty: driving out the white or Asian Hyksos invaders and restoring Egyptian hegemony over the entire Nile valley, then extending pharaonic rule to the far reaches of empire. Not only was the unified kingdom important, but the pharaoh was himself viewed as the embodiment and personification of his entire domain. This, I think, accounts for the depictions of his face as both Black and white. It is quite possible that the king was taught to view himself in this way.

Another item is probably even more puzzling to viewers, and they get even less help from the official explanation that accompanies the show. A gilded statue of the king standing on the back of a black leopard shows Tutankhamun, wearing the white crown of Upper Egypt, in a woman's body. One might be tempted to agree with David Silverman's explanation in *Archaeology* magazine that the "swollen hips and almost feminine breasts illustrate the more bizarre character" of a particular stage of Amarna art - except for two comparisons which can be made with other objects that are included in the exhibit. One is a similar statue of the king wearing the red crown of Lower Egypt standing on a reed boat, posed with an upraised harpoon in hand. This statue, showing Tutankhamun with "fleshy" pectoral muscles and a sagging abdomen, as Silverman says, is clearly typical of Amarna art, yet the body is clearly that of a man. The figure on the leopard is a much closer match to the body of the goddess Selket, also shown in a statue of gilded wood. All three statues are so similar in style and detail that they could easily have been carved by the same hands. We are not viewing different aspects of an earlier period of art; the problem here is that the Egyptologists are refusing to believe their own senses. Their fanciful accounts and evasions strain credulity when matched with the simpler and more obvious explanation: the sculptor(s), and probably the king himself, viewed Tutankhamun as the personal embodiment of Egyptian womanhood as well as manhood.

Another fact tends to fortify this conclusion. Like monarchs throughout history, each pharaoh had a string of no fewer than five titles to indicate his grandeur and authority. Some examples are King of Upper and Lower Egypt; Horus: Mighty Bull, Appearing in Thebes; the Son of Re; etc. One of the titles is Two Ladies, which historians interpret as embodying the tutelary goddesses of Egypt. This may account for the fact that the shrine in Tutankhamun's tomb contained a matching pair of statues of the king in a woman's body. (Some of the other commentary on this item is even more nonsensical than the explanation of the woman's body. In the catalog, I.E.S. Edwards discusses why the king is gold rather than black like the leopard: "It would have been inappropriate to depict the king in black because he was associated with the source of light, namely the sun god." Yet, as we have already seen, the king is depicted with a black face in one of the included items. Even more pertinent is the fact that the door of the tomb's burial chamber was "guarded" by two lifesize statues of Tutankhamun; both show his skin as all-black. Edwards himself has written of them in another book, suggesting that their color is associated with the fertile, life-giving soil of Egypt, again straining to avoid the obvious explanation.)

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Sometimes the commentary that accompanies a particular item makes me wonder if the exhibitors gave it more than a passing glance when they were preparing the display. Two items, for example, show scenes from nature in which predators are killing their prey - an ornate unguent jar and the scabbard for the king's golden dagger. Both are described as "the hunt" in ways that suggest glorification of Tutankhamun's prowess. But there are plenty of available scenes celebrating his hunting skills; these seem to be commentaries on the ways of nature. These are really just examples of carelessness and don't compare with a glaring flaw in the exhibit. Actually a pair of daggers were found wrapped with Tutankhamun's mummified body; the one included here, and a matching one, but with one significant difference. The show's dagger has a gold blade; its companion has an iron blade. The catalog asserts that gold daggers were "probably reserved for royalty," but there can be no doubt at all in the case of iron. In ancient Egypt, iron would have been the rarest of all known metals. Aside from a few beads made of meteoric iron, Tutankhamun's dagger is one of the earliest known iron implements.

Had the exhibitors been more concerned with the ancient concept of treasure and less with their own worship of gold, the other dagger would have been chosen instead. The enduring significance of Tutankhamun's iron dagger cannot be overstated. This most precious of all metals was not hammered into a belt buckle or a bracelet; it was fashioned into a plain, unadorned blade. A century before iron implements began to spread through the east, and a thousand years before the technique of iron extraction through smelting and forging was common among civilized peoples, marking the arrival of the Iron Age, an ancient craftsman prophesied that this rare material would leave its mark on the world as a weapon, to be used for defense, subjugation and dominion. It was largely because the Egyptians failed to heed this omen that their civilization ultimately fell to foreign conquest.

Catalog of the Exhibit

The exhibition catalog prepared for this show has achieved a unique distinction: it is the first one in history to be included in *The New York Times* listing of best sellers. (Besides the version that accompanies the exhibit, there is a Ballantine edition on sale as a popular but expensive paperback.) This attests to the same thing we have already mentioned in discussing the unexpectedly large attendance at the various museums where the collection has appeared: the show has captured the public imagination. The catalog shares most of the show's weaknesses and a few uniquely its own. The exhibit manages to tear Egypt out of its historic and geographic context by omission and misdirection. In the descriptive section of the catalog, I.E.S. Edwards, former Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities at the British Museum, reveals his imperial bias in the text. *Ebony*, he writes, is "a material that the Egyptians imported from Africa." While it comes as no surprise that the older generation of white Egyptologists doesn't consider Egypt a part of Africa, it is curious that the editors of this volume failed to excise such crude racism from the text.

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The book begins with a journalist's account of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb by the persistence of amateur archaeologist Howard Carter in 1922, written by Tom Buckley of *The New York Times*. This tale furnishes the rationale for nearly all the shortcomings of the book and the exhibit. The "chronology" of the exhibit, as well as the relation of the objects to one another (to the extent that any relation at all is acknowledged), is justified as being the order and approximate placement in which Carter found them - an absurdity, considering that, except for the shrines and the alabaster jars, the various items were packed in the tomb like so much junk piled in an attic. (Three of the four rooms had been burglarized in antiquity and resealed by caretakers. Even assuming that most of the tomb's contents weren't disturbed by the robbers, it seems likely that at the time of the king's funeral, after the walls had been decorated and the sarcophagus and canopic shrines were in place, the illuminating mirrors were probably removed, leaving most of the packing to be completed in semi-darkness. Remember that these items were packed for a trip to the hereafter, like cargo in a ship's hold, not arranged as furniture in a royal court.)

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The most unfortunate aspect of the catalog is paradoxically that which probably gets the greatest praise - the color photography by Lee Boltin. (The black-and-white pictures by Harry Burton, taken at the time of the

excavation, are magnificent, but they could not have sold to this audience by themselves. Boltin's Ektachromes are what put this book in the big time; they are also featured in the posters advertising the exhibit and in the postcards sold in the museum giftshops.) I am not really blaming Boltin for all the shortcomings of his photographs; some of the faults lie elsewhere, as I'll try to demonstrate. Generally speaking, Boltin is a fine craftsman with his camera, but he is no artist. Most of his pictures are technically outstanding, but they exhibit not the slightest bit of creativity. My guess is that Boltin's bread and butter comes from photographing merchandise, perhaps even food, for advertising agencies.

Even so, color is an easy medium that covers up a thousand sins. One can nearly always rely on just the presence of color to distract attention from grave faults in lighting and perspective. The most widely circulated pictures in this series - two views of Tutankhamun's death mask - would not pass muster in black-and-white. A catalog photographer for Sears and Roebuck would do a better job of eliminating distracting reflections without losing any of the shine. One might be tempted to excuse a lot of this by considering these as pictures "for the record," not essentially different from a laboratory photograph of a specimen. The trouble with that is that the major drawback in these illustrations is the way they distort the objects. Here, however, the major fault lies not with Lee Boltin but with the promoters of *Treasures of Tutankhamun*, the lords of Eastman Kodak Company, and the tsars of Madison Avenue.

These photos are selling *gold*. Everything else has been sacrificed to that end. The catalog's cover picture is a prime example: in order to make the golden mask look like a billion dollars' worth, the colors of the inlaid stone and glass have been muted or eliminated. Deep blues are recorded as black or grey; the whites of the eyes are bloodshot. Throughout the book, nearly every golden object is augmented with extra red or yellow. (In a switch, one alabaster vase has blue added to give an exaggerated coldness. This is a distinct exception though. Most of the pictures are warm enough to satisfy the creators of Coca-Cola commercials.) Elsewhere in the world the gaudiness of this catalog would be an embarrassment; here it is the almost unavoidable result of the available technology. High-gamma (contrasty) color photography is combined with snappy lithography to achieve the dazzling result. It is meant to overwhelm the viewer. Modern North American technique can easily reproduce a fully-saturated orange, but a pastel yellow or a powder blue is a near impossibility. Flashing strobe-lit day-glo posters and punkrock music are logical outgrowths of a culture based on this sort of hard-sell.

But this is just propaganda for the masses. A \$35 book using most of the same photographs is available to the rich: *Tutankhamun: His Tomb and Its Treasures*, also by I.E.S. Edwards. This one, however, is printed in Italy according to continental tastes. Its softened reproductions include detail that is lost in the catalog renderings. It is as if there are two separate shows one for the elite, the other for the masses. (Curiously, a picture of a headrest is flopped – reversed left-to-right - in the expensive version, with no explanation.) The rich go to the head of the line by buying a museum membership; the poor wait their turns outside for up to eight hours. The rich spend \$35 for a book that comforts them; the poor can buy a catalog intended to sell them a line, and if they can't afford even that they can buy its reproductions separately as postcards.

Quoting the proverb, "Man has a back and only obeys when he is beaten," a century ago, Gaston Maspero wrote: "It was the stick that built the Pyramids, dug the canals, won victories for the conquering Pharaoh, and made Egypt a great manufacturing nation." Other historians have suggested more recently that life was not so harsh for the masses, but the contemporary records indicate that the oppression suffered by the lower classes was severe. Below are excerpts from the writings of ancient scribes.

THE PEASANT:

When the waters of the inundation cover the land, he looks after his tools he spends the day making equipment for plowing, he spends the night making ropes, even at midday he works at his agricultural tasks; he prepares his tools for going out to the fields like a warrior would prepare himself. When his plot of land lies before him, dry, he goes to look for a team of oxen, and, after spending several days looking for the ox-herd, he gets the team. He comes back with the beasts and lays out the field for them. At dawn he goes out to attend to them and cannot find them. He spends three days looking for them and finally discovers them in the mud, but he cannot find their harness -- the jackals have consumed it. He goes out with his loin-cloth in his hand to get a new harness. He arrives at his plot and finds it ready for cultivation. He spends the whole of his time tending his corn.

The serpent follows him and destroys the seed thrown on the ground and the sower will never see a green shoot sprouting. He begins yet a third time with borrowed grain. His wife is at the mercy of merchants with nothing to give in exchange. Mice abound in the field, locusts descend and animals eat the crop. Sparrows plague the farmer. What remains on the threshing-floor is taken by thieves. The hire of the oxen is wasted because the animals have died from the strain of threshing and plowing. Then the scribe arrives at the river bank. He has come to register the tax on the harvest. The officials are armed with cudgels and the Nubians with palm-branches. They say: "Hand over the grain!" even when he has none to give. Then they beat the peasant roughly; he is bound and thrown head-first into a well. His wife is bound before his eyes and his children put in chains. His neighbours abandon him and take flight, removing their own grain.

THE TRADESMAN:

I have not seen a blacksmith on a commission, a founder who goes on an embassy. I have seen the blacksmith at his work at the mouth of his furnace, his fingers like the skin of a crocodile; he smells worse than the roe of a fish. Every carpenter carrying tools -- is he more at rest than the common laborers? His fields are of wood, his tools of metal; at night when he is free, he works his hands further in making at night the lighting of his house. The stone-cutter, he searches for employment in all kinds of hard stones. When he has completed his task, his arms are fatigued; when he is at rest, his knees and his back are broken. The barber is shaving till evening; when he places himself to eat, he reclines on his elbows. He betakes himself from street to street to seek after his shaving; he wearies his hands to feed his stomach, as bees feed by their labors.

The boatman, he navigates to At'hu that he may have his price. He has done beyond the power of his hands in doing, to kill geese and flamingoes; he has suffered his suffering; he approaches his orchard; he approaches his house at night, for he must go again to his labors on the morrow. The weaver inside the houses is more wretched than a woman; his knees are at the place of his heart; he has not tasted the air. Should he have done little in a day of his weaving, he is dragged as a lily in a pool. He gives bread to the porter that he may be allowed to behold the light. The maker of weapons suffers extremely, going forth to foreign countries. He gives a great deal for his asses, more than the labors of his hands; he, gives a great deal for their pasturing in a field. He gives on the road; he arrives at his garden; he reaches his house at night; he must be off in the morning. The courier, going to foreign countries, bequeaths his goods to his children, because of the fears of beasts and Asiatics. What happens to him when he is at Kam; he arrives at his garden; he goes to his house in the evening; he must be off on the morrow. His heavy bond comes forth; no joys come.

The dyer, his fingers smell -- the smell of bad fish. His two eyes are weary with very fatigue; his hand does not stop; he watches at the rent of the old garment - abominable are the clothes. The sandal-maker is very miserable, he is always begging; his health is as the health of a bad fish; he gnaws the leather. The washerman, washing on the quay, traverses the ground approaching the crocodiles. The father of the water brings out the dirt: his hand does not stop. A quiet employment is not before you, no easier than other employment. His draughts are mixed up with his clothes: not a limb of him is clean. There is given to him the bonds of women, for he is in misfortunes. I lament to thee that he passes his time with a bat. The fowler of birds suffers very much. The confines of Num are before thee, when he says, "Let the net refuse." The god will not show his forms; vain are his plans. I tell you the fisherman suffers more than any employment. Consider: is he not toiling on the river? he is mixed up with the crocodiles. Should the clumps of papyrus diminish, then he is crying out for help. If he has not been told a crocodile is there, terrors blind him.

THE SOLDIER:

He is taken away in childhood and put in a camp. A sickening blow is directed, against his stomach, a splitting blow against his eye and a stunning blow against his eye-brow. Then comes the march to Palestine, the battle in the desert, he must carry his food and drink on his back like a donkey. He has to drink brackish water and stops marching only to be on guard. When he reaches the enemy, he is like a bird in a trap, without any strength in his body. When he returns to Egypt he is like worm-eaten wood. He becomes ill, and has to lie down and is brought back on a donkey. His clothes are stolen and his servant runs away.

Class Struggles of Antiquity

The modern class struggle in the Marxist sense was probably invented in ancient Egypt. The oppression of the common people is well documented. One scribe wrote, "The little laborer with a field, he passes his life among rustics. He is worn down for vines and pigs, to furnish his kitchen with what his fields have. His clothes are heavy with weight; he is tied as a forced laborer; he goes into the air and he suffers though coming forth well from his fireplace. He is bastinadoed with a stick on his legs, but escapes with his life." The suffering of the oppressed tribes was often worse. Undoubtedly, the best-known example is the persecution of the Hebrews under the Nineteenth Dynasty pharaohs, Seti I and Ramses II. Furnished no straw with which to make bricks and forced to suffer other cruelties and indignities, they struck out for their freedom barely 50 years after the death of Tutankhamun. The Hebrew Exodus, though the most celebrated instance of ancient freedom struggles, is barely a footnote to the history of the times.

Egyptian craftsmen did not have the option available to a conquered pastoral people; they could not simply pick up and leave. Instead, they invented what we think of as a thoroughly modern form of proletarian struggle - the sitdown strike. Several such strikes are recorded during the reign of Ramses III, a century or so after the Exodus. One surviving account reads as follows: "Today the gang of workmen, have passed by the walls of the Royal Tomb saying; We are hungry, 18 days of this month have already gone by... They sat down behind the funerary temple of Thutmose III." Predictably the officials and overseers tried to persuade these masons to return to their work, building funerary temples. The workers refused, even when the request came in the form of a message from the pharaoh himself. Several days after the strike began, the workers told a scribe, "We have come here driven by hunger and thirst. We have no clothes, no fat, no fish and no vegetables (their payment was always in kind). Write this to Pharaoh, our good Lord, write to the vizier, our chief, so that we may be given the means to live." The strike ended when the workers were given food.

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These particular forms of struggle were exceptions, available only to select groups and classes in Egyptian society. The vast majority were "free" peasants who worked in the fields and were conscripted for the corvee - to build the pyramids, for example. (Slavery was an ambiguous relationship in Egypt: though slaves were chattel who could be bought, sold, bequeathed, or emancipated, they could also own and dispose of property; bequeath farmlands from father to son, have servants of their own, and marry free women. In the fields or on the corvee, oppression of "free" and slave was quite similar.)

Yet monumental struggles were waged for social hegemony during the 3,000 years of Egyptian civilization, some resulting in a transfer of power from one class to another, others resulting in "the common ruin of the contending classes," as the *Communist Manifesto* states. The end of the Sixth Dynasty is a good example of the latter. Though few records survive describing the actual events, it is clear that a social revolution shook the state apparatus to pieces and brought the collapse of all existing institutions. A scribe of that period lamented, "The poor of the hind have become rich and the owner of property has become a nonentity. The possessors of robes are now in rags, but he who wove not for himself [i.e. one who labored for others] is now a possessor of fine linens. He who could never build a boat for himself is now a possessor of ships, while he who once owned them looks upon them, but they are no longer his."

The revolution that overthrew the Old Kingdom - the Pyramid Age - and ushered in the 250-year First Intermediate Period lasted from the Seventh to the Eleventh Dynasties: Central state organization remained weak during these years in the north, but they were marked by great achievements in classical literature. Blacks in the south preserved and developed traditional civilization under local rulers. The Old Kingdom had been administered by a civil administration headed by a vizier, or chief executive officer. The power of the vizier grew as the undertakings of the state broadened. Originally his most important task was governing agricultural administration - filling the state granaries during years of abundance and distributing the stored grain during years of famine. Gradually his authority grew. Beneath the vizier grew the authority of the priests. By the time of the Fifth Dynasty, they controlled a large portion of the lands and were largely exempt from taxes. It is likely that the revolution that overthrew the old kingdom was in the form of a holy war, led by the priests. Perhaps the lack of records about the uprising is due to the fact that the scribes who would have written about it were the mainstay of

the civil administration which was being overthrown. The next consolidation of centralized authority took place in the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties under conditions where the priests were firmly in command of the apparatus, a situation which prevailed until the New Kingdom.

The New Kingdom began with the expulsion of light-skinned Hyksos invaders. In order to succeed in this, a war of liberation was undertaken by Pharaoh Sekenenre and completed by his successors, Kamose and Ahmose. They were the rulers of the Seventeenth Dynasty. Prior to this time soldiers had been conscripted only during brief periods of need, similar to the recruitment of corvee laborers to build a pyramid. But the expulsion of the Hyksos required an actual army. The power of that army was effectively used by the conquering pharaohs of the early Eighteenth Dynasty: Amenhotpe I, Thutmose I, and Thutmose II. After a generation of peace under Queen Hatshepsut, the Egyptian empire grew to its peak under Thutmose III and Amenhotpe II. By this time the standing army had existed for more than a century and had become a powerful social force. Even though the reigns of Thutmose IV and Amenhotpe III constituted a half

century of peaceful prosperity, these were probably years of fierce jockeying for position by two powerful social classes- the old priests, in command of the peasants, the artisans, and the civil administration, on the one hand; the military commanders, in charge of the standing army and the elite Nubian police, on the other.

The priests had ruled for almost a millennium; their rule was by this time totally backward and despotic, based on ignorance and mysticism. The army was a modern, cosmopolitan social group, literate in diplomacy and thoroughly acquainted with far-flung territories. The military leaders were ready to make their bid for power in their own right. The last years of Amenhotpe III's rule witnessed a delicate balance of power between these two contending social classes. The pharaoh sent his son and heir Amenhotpe IV to establish a new capital - Akhetaten - at Amarna, apparently as a concession to the military authorities. He himself remained at Thebes to placate the priests. His wife Teye mediated between the two centers of power. After Amenhotpe III died, the power struggle broke out into the open in the guise of a religious reformation. The new pharaoh changed his name to Akhenaten signifying a repudiation of the traditional gods worshipped by his predecessors at Thebes and the establishment of a new religion with a single god: Aten, the sun.

The worship of Aten provided the platform from which to articulate a new ideology. Whereas the traditional religion had celebrated the uniqueness of Egypt and its conquests over other nations, the new Amarna religion celebrated the unity of the Egyptian empire and the diversity of its people:

*In the hills from Syria to Kush, and the plain of Egypt,
Thou givest to every one his place, thou framest their lives;
To every one his belongings, reckoning his length of days;
Their tongues are diverse in their speech, Their natures in the color of their skin.*

Launching a revolutionary struggle against the old priesthood meant sweeping away the social rigidity on which it depended. Where the old order had stressed the similarity between individuals to the point of exaggerating them into a uniform "idealized" artistic representation portrayed according to an authoritative canon, the new movement stressed the distinctive traits of each individual. This is the "naturalism" of Amarna art. It is not naturalism in the modern sense; there is realism in detail, but no fluid motion. Tension is represented by pose, not by physical stress, for example.

OUTLINE OF EGYPTIAN HISTORY

Prehistoric period: before 3200 B.C.

Protodynastic period: 3200 - 2800 B.C.
First and Second Dynasties.

Old Kingdom (Pyramid Age): 2800 - 2250 B.C.
Third through Sixth Dynasties.

First Intermediate Period: 2250 - 2000 B.C.
Seventh through Eleventh Dynasties.

Middle Kingdom: 2000 - 1780 B.C.
Twelfth Dynasty.

Second Intermediate Period: 1780 - 1546 B.C.
Thirteenth through Seventeenth Dynasties.

New Kingdom (Egyptian Empire): 1546 -1085 B.C.
Eighteenth through Twentieth Dynasties.
[Tutankhamun ruled in the Eighteenth
Dynasty, from 1366 to 1357 B.C.]

The Decline: 1085-332 B.C.
Twenty-First through Thirtieth Dynasties,
to conquest by Alexander of Macedonia.

The revolution was led by Pharaoh Akhenaten himself. There were many attempts to divert him from it, usually complaints from the remote provinces of the empire that invading foreigners were threatening Egyptian hegemony and asking him to send troops. Akhenaten ignored them all, though he built new towns and temples in Kush; he single-mindedly pursued his chosen course. As a result, some modern historians, echoing the sentiments of the ancient priests, condemn him for allowing the empire to collapse, and for being a "pacifist." These writers err as much as their chief antagonist, James Henry Breasted, who praised Akhenaten as "the first *individual* in history." There can be no doubt that this remarkable man left his mark on history, but the revolution he led was a mass phenomenon. The language that historians call Late Egyptian first appeared during this period; in it the old word for poor came to mean free, and the old word for small came to mean normal. No single person or small group can transform the dialect of a whole people. Nor does such a transformation happen in a single moment. Even the obligatory artist's canon had been violated in previous dynasties; it was only in the representations of divinity and royalty that its observance had been absolute. Deviations were permissible in drawings of servants, artisans, and prisoners. Thus it was actually the lower class art form that was extended to the royal court at Amarna, and at times it exceeded the bounds of propriety. Some of the representations of Akhenaten border on caricature, ancestors of the political cartoon.

Had this revolution culminated in civil war as some of the earlier ones had, it would likely have resulted in the complete collapse of Egyptian society. But the military leaders had made their point, and the priests were ready to strike a bargain. Upon Akhenaten's death (and that of his co-regent Smenkhkara), his nine-year-old son, Tutankhaten, assumed the throne. Civil authority administered the delicate balance of power as the vizier Ay ruled through the boy-king. With decisive power now firmly established in military hands, the old priests were given back their bureaucratic positions. The pharaoh changed his name to Tutankhamun and returned the capital to Thebes. Much of the freedom of expression of Amarna was allowed to continue, but the Aten cult was gradually suppressed. After nine years the young king died; he may have been assassinated. Records survive showing that his wife, Ankhesenamun, sought a Hittite prince as her husband in order to prevent Ay from becoming pharaoh. But the prince was murdered on his way to Thebes, and she capitulated; she and Ay were married and Ay ruled in his own name.

By now the [revolutionary] energy of Amarna was dissipated. Ay was strictly a caretaker on the throne ruling for three or four years. Upon his death, General Haremhab succeeded to the throne. Having no further need for the political independence of his army, he fully restored the authority of the priesthood and the old gods, and systematically wiped out every monument to Akhenaten, Tutankhamun, and Ay. With the counter-revolution completed, the curtain fell on the Eighteenth Dynasty.

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The nutshell history by Professor Edward F. Wentz included in the exhibition catalog isn't very helpful for understanding any of this. Even though he limits his essay to the leading personalities, he misses nearly every opportunity to share insights into Egyptian society. For example, Amenhotep III's marriage to Teye, a so-called commoner, was probably a serious violation of Egyptian racial customs. Since the early dynasties, Egyptian painting had idealized the royal couple as consisting of a dark red- or brownskinned king and a lighter, yellowskinned queen. Brother-sister marriages probably made this a difficult distinction to achieve and may account for the strong importance of cosmetics to Egyptian royalty. Amenhotep III's marriage to Teye was a momentous departure from orthodoxy, since the Egyptian crown's authority and legitimacy had long been determined according to matriarchal criteria. Pretenders to the throne usually validated their claims by marriage to the most legitimate royal heiress. Wentz is certainly correct in guessing that this marriage expressed the increased power of the military class.

During this period Black Nubian soldiers from Kush were the elite troops of the Egyptian army; the word for Nubian was synonymous with the word for police (earlier it had meant gold). These additional facts would have illuminated Wentz's account considerably. His account of the Amarna period and its aftermath seems to be simply a summary of conventional scholarship, but sidestepping all the outstanding conflicts in interpretation. This section of the catalog reads as though Professor Wentz and his colleagues were trying to establish a point so important to *The New York Times*: this is "an exhibition of art, not of history." But is such a thing really possible?

Art and History

The idea that art can be separated from history implies that there exist universally applicable aesthetic values. (This is the most generous interpretation that can be accepted. Even the most foolish critic will accept the fact that art is dependent on technology - one cannot have a novel until printing has been invented, etc. William Ivins argued that a technique becomes a fine art only when it is historically obsolete.) Plekhanov took up this point in a debate with novelist Ivan Turgenev. Turgenev had pointed to Venus of Milo as an expression of a universal standard of artistic beauty. Plekhanov replied that if a Hottentot encountered Venus, he would certainly "have his doubts" about her. Venus is attractive "only to a part of the white race." True, he wrote, her appeal spans more than a single age of human development. "Venus of Milo is an ideal of the female form which corresponds to *many* stages in this development. Many, but not all." The problem, if we are to discover the full significance of *Treasures of Tutankhamun* – why has the attendance been double the predicted turnout? - can only be, explained by history. What is it about ancient Egyptian art that strikes such a responsive chord in the United States and other countries today? To answer properly we have to probe beneath the consciously articulated responses of individual viewers.

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Humans had inhabited some parts of the world for at least two million years prior to the Neolithic era without becoming civilized. About 7,000 years ago the land we know as Egypt became habitable. By 4000 B.C. settlers along the Nile were cultivating regular crops. In another 500 years they had state governments, and by 3200 B.C. Upper and Lower Egypt were unified under a single government and urban civilization had begun. From the earliest Nile settlements to the building of the Great Pyramid at Gizeh was a little over 2,000 years. Other peoples have accomplished as much in two millennia, but none have built a culture that endured like the Egyptian. For 3,000 years Egyptian civilization withstood every attack. It rose from the ashes following the expulsion of conquering invaders; it established order but did not disarm revolution. It laid the mathematical foundation for all of western civilization. It came to an end only when the successive waves of conquerors could no longer be militarily defeated - Persians, Macedonians, Greeks, and Romans. A culture which can erect civilization from ruin time and again for 3,000 years is a wondrous thing to behold. It suggests a harmony between people and their environment which has never been matched by any other. This, I think, is the magnetic force that draws millions to the long lines waiting to see *Treasures of Tutankhamun*.

The fact that they do not understand or articulate their quest in this way should come as no surprise, given the torrent of propaganda standing in the way of a full comprehension, and the shortcomings of the exhibit itself. Even so, if that were the limit of the "lessons" people seek from ancient Egypt, it would be necessary to beware of danger. In some ways Egyptian civilization was backward-looking and *conservative*. Despite knowledge of iron as early as Tutankhamun's day, the Egyptians never put it to work for them. Beyond a certain point of development they did not have to go, because the fertility of the Nile's alluvial plain, the abundance of labor, and the availability of draft animals provided everything they required. This was not so farther south. Tsetse flies prevented the use of livestock in agriculture, and the soil was not as fertile as the lower Nile valley. Iron was needed if hoe cultivation was to provide a successful foundation for civilization. And so the Kushites at Meroe, standing on the shoulders of the Egyptians, led much of the world into a flourishing Iron Age. If we learn well, we will some day admire the accomplishments of that society as today we esteem the Egyptians.

At that point we will permanently part company with the bourgeoisie in matters of culture. By adding a coat of *white-wash*, the ruling class has found a way to absorb, or co-opt, Egyptian civilization as an acceptable ancestor to its own, thus predating the Greeks who were long credited with being the originators of all that is good in the bourgeois social order. But I don't think they can grant the same status to undeniably Black Africans without calling into question their most basic, white-supremacist assumptions. Nonetheless, the welcome the masses have shown to *Treasures of Tutankhamun* has taken them a long step in that direction. It has also, for the first time, indicated the limits of present-day culture and entertainment by providing a firm standard of comparison. Who would care to suggest the aspects of modern U.S. society which will provide value to anyone

for the next 300 years, never mind the next 3,000? Yet what people can resist for long the challenge to do something that will legitimately be treasured by generations of people in the distant future?

Up to now the main ideological barrier has been white chauvinism, which has permeated the very deepest layers and outlying corners of our culture. Sooner or later the force of the national liberation struggles in the United States and around the world had to have sufficient impact to register changes that would be reflected in mass culture - not only quantitatively (more Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, etc. in more important roles), but also qualitatively, elevating the overall meaning and content of what mass culture *is*. The unprecedented response to *Treasures of Tutankhamun* indicates that that process has begun.

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