ALSO BY MARCEL H. VAN HERPEN

Marx en de mensenrechten – Politiek en ethiek van Rousseau tot Marx

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BECOMING MARX

How the Young Karl Marx Became a Marxist

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Marcel H. Van Herpen

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We have to reinterpret the world in order to change it.

– MARCEL H. VAN HERPEN

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Introduction

Philosophers don't live in heaven, where their ideas enjoy eternal glory and recognition. Like all mortal people they live on earth, where their ideas are discussed and criticized – not only by their contemporaries, but also by later generations. In their lifetime their fate may be glory and fame, or, on the contrary, rejection and shame. However, the value of their ideas is never definitively settled. Even those who are famous in their lifetime cannot escape the inevitable passing of time which causes their ideas, once so revered and admired, becoming unfashionable, if not being squarely rejected. Sometimes this process can be slow, sometimes it happens quickly - cruelly suggesting that a whole life's work has been in vain. Marx was conscious of this process. It happened, for instance, to Hegel, the leading German philosopher of his time, who, soon after his death in 1831, fell into disgrace. Marx, although himself a critic of Hegel, reproached his contemporaries for unfairly treating Hegel like a 'dead dog' (*ein toter Hund*).

Marx did not seem to suffer Hegel's fate. On the contrary, his fame, already great during his lifetime, would only increase after his death, when his ideas began to conquer the world. They instigated bloody revolutions and led to civil wars and armed confrontations. Marx's ideological success resembled that of another modern prophet, Martin Luther, whose ideas revolutionized the world and led to a century of religious wars. Like Luther, whose teachings led to a multiplicity of protestant churches and sects, Marx's ideas also incited his followers to engage in heated, sectarian fights. Undoubtedly, Marx would have been perplexed had he known the way in which Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin, would later interpret his ideas, founding a totalitarian "workers' state" in Russia, a country he himself had often criticized for its eternal despotism and imperialism.

It was Marx's fate that for more than seventy years 'Marxism' would be identified with the official state ideology of the Soviet Union, where it had become a legitimation theory for a repressive and murderous regime. The demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 seemed not only to mean the end of the Russian empire, but also to sound the death knell of its official state ideology: Marxism. In the successor states of the Soviet Union - including the Russian Federation – concepts, such as 'proletariat', 'revolution', and 'socialism', which had structured political life for over seventy years, were thrown into the dustbin of history. They were replaced by new, Western concepts, such as 'market', 'profit', and 'efficiency'. Ultra-liberal ideas and policies, instigated by Milton Friedman's 'Chicago Boys', were given free rein. The pendulum had started to swing the

other way and there seemed no way back. Apparently, by 1990 Marx himself had become definitively a 'dead dog' - like Hegel, before him, in the 1840s.

But had he? Maybe not quite. Because there were three circumstances that 'saved' Marxism from falling into oblivion and becoming completely irrelevant. The first circumstance was that the demise of the Soviet Union, instead of leading to the end of Marxism *tout court,* meant only the end of a particular interpretation of Marxism, called "Marxism-Leninism." This was an official, state sponsored ideology, which, in a very selective way, had picked certain elements of Marx's theory to legitimate the practices of a totalitarian, oppressive state. These elements included Marx's insistence on central planning, his criticism of the market, and a historicist view of history, which proclaimed the 'inevitability' of the socialist world revolution. This official version of "Marxism-Leninism" tended to neglect other, important aspects of Marx's thinking, in particular his criticism of alienated labor and exploitative working conditions, as well as his rejection of the unlimited accumulation of riches by one class. His early critique of bureaucracy, privilege, and censorship, as well as his emphasis on democratic self-management and his aversion to imperialism should also be mentioned here. The disappearance of Soviet-style "Marxism Leninism," instead of announcing Marxism's death knell, was, therefore, rather a sudden, unexpected opportunity to rediscover the hidden riches of the original Marx. Because, in his heart, Marx was a real son of his time: a romantic, who, as a student, wrote lyrical poems. In his early writings the young Karl Marx vehemently attacked the censorship of the authoritarian Prussian state and he criticized man's alienation. Appalled by the miserable fate of the proletariat, he wanted to improve their living conditions.

There was a second circumstance that favored a re-emergence of Marx's ideas. This was the fact that after the demise of the Soviet Union most successor states introduced reforms which led to the emergence of a new class of superrich oligarchs, a development which was accompanied by a huge increase in economic inequality. Most successor states, the Russian Federation being in first place, became models of precisely those 19th century unbridled capitalist societies which Marx had so vehemently attacked in his writings. Marx, therefore, notwithstanding his fate of having recently been thrown into the dustbin of history by Russian oligarchs and *siloviki*, was certainly still capable of making some critical remarks about the new situation in the former 'socialist' countries.

Another, third, circumstance that 'saved' Marxism from oblivion was the fact that things in the West also had begun to change. Thanks to Keynesian politics, the emergence of the welfare state, and full employment policies, Western capitalism had 'softened' after the Second World War. The 'socialist class struggle' seemed to have subsided definitively. Welfare state capitalism was based on a broad consensus,

reconciling the working class with the capitalist market economy, a reconciliation which was for a great part due to the policies of social-democratic parties, which represented a softer version of Marx's ideas. However, from the early 1990s this began to change, and this change took dramatic forms after the Great Recession of 2008. What began as a banking crisis, developed into an economic crisis and a debt crisis, leading to mass unemployment and deep cuts in the provisions of the welfare state. The 'social compromise' of the welfare state seemed no longer to function and the result was a legitimation crisis of the existing system, accompanied by a political crisis, characterized by the emergence of extremist and populist parties.

It was no coincidence that in these circumstances the French economist, Thomas Piketty's book, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century,* published in 2013, became a worldwide bestseller. Piketty convincingly showed how in recent decades economic inequality in Western societies, after having significantly diminished in the postwar period, had reached new heights. According to him, the new situation resembled the period around the turn of the twentieth century, which, in the United States, was the high tide of the ruthless 'robber barons' of the *Gilded Age.* In this period the increasing inequality led to a growing polarization between the haves and the have-nots. The new inequality, observed by Piketty, came as a surprise. After all, since the 1960s it had become an accepted idea for politicians and economists alike that in the West the fundamental problems of capitalism had been definitively resolved. Even the two oil crises of 1973 and 1979 had not been able to change this perception. Surprisingly, the new situation, analyzed by Piketty, seemed to confirm Marx's predictions that the unbridled forces of capitalism would lead to a further polarization between the capitalist class and the working classes - notwithstanding the fact that for more than half a century this theory had been refuted by leading economists in often condescending commentaries. It no longer seemed so certain that the class cleavages of capitalism had been definitively abolished and that economic growth would guarantee that, in the end, everybody would be better off. Of course, the modern working class no longer resembles the industrial proletariat of the 19th century, and, of course, the modern state no longer resembles the minimal 'night watchman state' of that period. However, nobody could deny that some fundamental problems of capitalism, which were thought to have been definitively overcome, were resurfacing.

This does not mean that Marx's analysis and the solutions offered by him should be accepted unquestioningly, because in Marx's thinking there are also some important blind spots. One of these blind spots is his lack of insight into the *political* significance of the emergence of the modern market economy. In his early works Marx tends to see

only the negative sides of the market: he considered the market as the central mechanism which enabled the exploitation and oppression of the working classes - a reason for him to plead for its abolition. Marx completely neglected the positive sides of the market: not only its economic function as an efficient system of allocation of goods and services, but also its benign political effects. These were, for instance, the emergence of a modern civil society which emancipated itself from the tutelage of the feudal lords, thereby opening a unique historical opportunity for individual citizens to enhance their personal freedom, creating possibilities for their participation in political decision-making.

Marx's blind spot for the positive effects of the market is accompanied by a blind spot for the intricacies of the workings of political power. In this respect he could have learned a lot by reading Montesquieu, who, in 1748 - almost a century before Marx became a student - published his *Spirit of the Laws,* a revolutionary work which stated that power should not reside in one seat, but should be shared among the different branches of the *Trias Politica:* the legislative, executive, and judiciary power. Montesquieu was an opponent of the absolutist state and an early adept of the modern saying: "power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Montesquieu's theory of the separation of powers was an important source of inspiration for the fathers of the young American republic's constitution and in the U.S., more than two centuries later, the fundamentals of this constitution are still in place, guaranteeing that no part of the political system can usurp the powers of the other branches. The young Karl Marx, however, although critical of the authoritarian Prussian state, did not share this liberal distrust of centralized political power. In fact he had no developed theory of power. He tended to consider political power simply as a function of economic power. According to him the proletariat would in a revolution expropriate the capitalist class and thereby acquire its political power. Marx remained vague on how the proletariat would use this power and kept silent on the question of what kind of institutional guarantees should be put in place in order to avoid an abuse of power by the leaders of the future socialist state, assuming that the organization of its 'self-government' by the proletariat would be a smooth process. The dire fate of political freedom in the states of 'real existing socialism' would prove that this was not the case.

However, despite these important shortcomings it is still sensible to acquaint oneself with Marx's ideas, in particular with the ideas which he developed in his early years. Here we can still find some rare pearls, reflecting the humanistic origins of his thinking, a thinking which is anchored in the solid ground of German and French philosophy. The title of this book, "Becoming Marx – How the Young Karl Marx Became a Marxist" has been chosen on purpose. Marx *became* a Marxist: nothing in his biography

predestined him to become the founder of a new, revolutionary ideology which would conquer the world. On the contrary, born in 1818 into a bourgeois family in the quiet, provincial German town of Trier, it would have been more logical for him to prepare himself for a career as *Regierungsreferendar,* a well-paid civil servant employed by the Prussian state. However, he chose not to and became instead the instigator of a global movement that would fundamentally change the world, a movement which has left deep marks on today's world. Why? This is one of the questions this book seeks to answer. Although "Becoming Marx" does not pretend to give definitive answers, it offers the necessary building blocks for a deeper understanding of the development of the young Karl Marx, showing the different stages in his early development that led him to become the prophet of a new creed: Marxism. These building blocks are:

- his early interest in the problems of human alienation
- an intellectual environment in which the prominent philosophers of his time developed important theories of alienation
- his deep personal sense of justice, accompanied by an unshaken belief in man's innate equality
- his encounters with leading figures of the emerging workers' movement

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book consists of three parts.

Part I: "Alienation: The Young Karl Marx's Sources of Inspiration – Rousseau, Schiller, Hegel, Feuerbach" (chapters 1-4)

This part starts with an outline of the theories of the different philosophers, who were a source of inspiration when the young Karl Marx developed his theories of alienation. This is in the first place Jean-Jacques Rousseau. It is shown how Marx adopted the theories of alienation, which Rousseau developed in the *Discourse on the Arts and the Sciences* and the *Discourse on Inequality*. In the first essay Rousseau described alienation as man's loss of freedom, in the second as man's loss of equality. However, it is in particular *The Social Contract* which had a great influence on Marx. In this groundbreaking text Rousseau described a third kind of alienation: the loss of man's *political* freedom, which would have been caused by man's split existence. Modern man, according to Rousseau,

was living a selfish life as a *bourgeois* in civil society, and therefore no longer capable of living an ethical life as a *citoyen,* a citizen of the state, who should be committed to the realization of the general good. Rousseau wanted to heal this inner division of man by a social contract, which created a 'general will' which would force the egoistic bourgeois to behave ethically. Marx, although not adopting Rousseau's contract theory, was to adopt his *bourgeois-citoyen* dichotomy and make it a key element of his theory of alienation.

Another theory of alienation that inspired Marx was developed by the German writer and dramatist Friedrich Schiller. Schiller defined alienation as an inner disharmony of man, which was caused either by a one-sided emphasis on the intellect or by a one-sided emphasis on the senses. In order to overcome this alienation man needed to avoid one-sided activities, manual as well as intellectual, and focus on creative activities which combined both. A third theory of alienation which influenced Marx, was developed by Wilhelm Friedrich Georg Hegel. Unlike Rousseau and Schiller, who focused on *man's* alienation, Hegel made alienation into a driving, dynamic force of a cosmological, metaphysical process. He described alienation (*Entäusserung*) as a dialectical process through which a supposed divine Reason came to self-consciousness in the world. In order to gain self-consciousness Reason had to objectify itself in nature and in human history. Ultimately Reason achieved this self-consciousness in the reflection of the philosopher (Hegel), who, in his philosophy, brings this cosmological process of alienation to an end. Although Marx accepted Hegel's dialectics, a theory which assumes that history develops itself to higher stages through negations of earlier stages, he criticized Hegel's theory of metaphysical alienation for being a new form of theology, considering it as a variant of religious alienation. Marx would go on to develop this critique of Hegel under the influence of Ludwig Feuerbach, who considered religion the product of man's alienation. According to Feuerbach man projected in religion his own positive qualities onto a metaphysical deity. In order to end this alienation, he argued, man had to overcome religion.

Part II: "From Alienation to Revolution – How the Young Marx Became a Marxist" (chapters 5-11)

Part II analyzes in more detail how the influences, described in Part I, worked out in Marx's theoretical development. It describes how Marx's father, who was an adept of Schiller's theory of alienation, transmitted this theory to his son. Schiller's theory of alienation was Marx's first theory of alienation, to which he adhered when he was still

in high school and during the first year of his study, a period in which he cherished literary ambitions and wrote poems which were inspired by Schiller. After leaving university, Marx became a journalist and editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* - a paper, financed by the liberal bourgeoisie. He began to criticize the rich landowners, who used the parliament to vote for laws that protected their private interests. In this period he adopted Rousseau's theory of alienation, seeking ways to overcome the split between the selfish *bourgeois* and the moral *citoyen.* From 1843, when the *Rheinische Zeitung* is banned by the authorities, we can observe a radicalization of Marx's position. No longer satisfied with his former journalistic activities, he wanted to attack the supposed roots of man's alienation: the misery and poverty of the working classes. This brought a new, practical orientation in Marx's thinking. In this transformation his friend Arnold Ruge, a leftist Young Hegelian, played a prominent role. Ruge had criticized Hegel's philosophy, emphasizing that it was a task for man and not for an imaginary divine 'World Spirit' to reform society. Marx, following Ruge, accused Hegel in his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* of defending the political status-quo. Unlike Hegel, who restricted the realization of the general interest to the sphere of the state, Marx adopted the radical point of view that the realization of the general good should take place in the sphere were people live their daily lives: in civil society. His position shows therefore a *prima facie* similarity to the positions of Bernard Mandeville, developed in his *Fable of the Bees* and of Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations.* These authors argued that selfish behavior in civil society could lead to the realization of the general good. However, Marx did not expect the general good to be the result of egoistic*,* but rather of genuine moral behavior. This extreme moralist position is not only different from Smith and Mandeville, but even from Kant, who expected a moral improvement of man only after a successful inner struggle between *Pflicht* (duty) and *Neigung* (impulse). Marx did not expect a moral improvement from such an inner struggle, but rather from a change of society. The author argues therefore that Marx's ethics are pre-Kantian, rather resembling the ethics of Helvétius, a philosopher of the French Enlightenment, who, similarly, argued that man's moral improvement would result from a change of society.

This radical position led Marx not only to underestimate moral problems, it led also to an ambiguous position concerning human rights. In *The Holy Family* Marx criticized human rights, because, according to him, these would only represent the rights of the selfish *bourgeois* of civil society. Although the author shows that Marx will change his concept of human rights after 1845, Marx does not change the content of his critique, but only the theoretical foundation. Therefore this does not lead to a reassessment of his early - negative - view of human rights and Marx continues to underestimate the importance of these rights, denying that they play a fundamental role in defending the

rights of the individual against infringements on the part of the state. Marx's critique of human rights – together with his primitive theory of political power – were later used by the leaders of communist states to justify political oppression and human rights violations. However, the author emphasizes that Marx's critique of human rights, far from being inspired by a wish to legitimate political oppression, was inspired by a sincere wish to create a virtuous and just society of morally behaving citizens. To create this virtuous society, the existing capitalist society needed to be radically changed. The question, however, was: by whom? In this early period Marx is desperately seeking for a subject, capable of such a change.

In 1844, in the "Introduction" to a critique of Hegel's philosophy of the state, Marx suddenly presented the proletariat as this revolutionary subject. By emancipating itself, he wrote, the proletariat would emancipate mankind as a whole. But why did Marx so unexpectedly and suddenly 'discover' the proletariat as a revolutionary actor? The author indicates three causes. In the first place Marx's radicalization after his paper, the *Rheinische Zeitung,* was banned by the authorities. Secondly, his move to Paris at the end of 1843, where, for the first time, he came into contact with a revolutionary proletariat. And, thirdly, the influence of contemporary social critics and theorists. One of these was Lorenz von Stein, a German sociologist who analyzed the revolutionary potential of the proletariat and predicted a violent upheaval. Von Stein proposed solutions in order to prevent such a violent overthrow. However, for Marx Von Stein's 'worst case scenario': a polarization, leading to a revolution, was the 'best case scenario'. Because for Marx the proletariat, by its revolution, would abolish private property, which he considered the source of man's alienation.

PART III: "The Polarization Thesis: Was Marx, Maybe, Right After All?" (chapters 12-14)

In this part Marx's suppositions concerning the growing polarization in society and his equation of the proletarian revolution with the emancipation of mankind are critically analyzed. One of Marx's suppositions was that the middle classes would disappear and that the increasing polarization between the capitalist class and the proletariat would ultimately lead to a revolution. Another supposition was that the proletariat was intellectually capable of understanding the socialist philosophy and, therefore, capable of putting Marx's philosophy into practice. A third supposition was the thesis that by its revolution the proletariat would not only emancipate itself, but mankind as a whole.

All three suppositions, however, seem to be lacking in pertinence. In this part the contradictions in Marx's theory of the state are also analyzed. On the one hand, Marx wanted a merger of state and civil society, after which the state is supposed to 'fade away'. However, he also argued that after the revolution the proletariat should maintain the state to exercise a 'dictatorship' over the bourgeoisie, forcing it 'to be free'. The latter argument would later be used by Lenin to install a dictatorial regime.

Another bone of contention is Marx's evaluation of the market. Marx criticized the market for its supposed negative influence on man's moral behavior: it would stimulate competitiveness, greed, and selfishness. He clearly did not pay enough attention to the historical function of the market as the cradle of civil freedoms, democracy, and legal equality. However, Marx undoubtedly had a point when he criticized the process of unlimited commodification in modern capitalist society. The Great Recession of 2008 showed the dangers of an unbridled, unregulated market. As authors, such as Thomas Piketty, have shown, in recent decades we are witnessing in the West a growing economic inequality, which is undermining the middle classes. A growing polarization between the rich and the poor could, therefore, reemerge. The young Karl Marx, as a critic of economic inequality, capitalist greed, and alienated labor, seems, therefore, still to have a valid message for our epoch and remains a source of inspiration. However, history has taught us that Marx's solutions, due to its many blind spots, cannot be taken for granted. According to the author the search for solutions should rather be inspired by a reinvigorated, European-style liberal, social democracy.

English quotes from original French, German, Russian, Italian, and Dutch have been translated by the author. The author would like to thank Rona Heald for her valuable comments which helped to improve the text.

Part I

Young Marx's Sources of Inspiration

Rousseau, Schiller, Hegel, Feuerbach

Chapter One

Rousseau's Search for the Moral Citizen

ROUSSEAU: A RADICAL CULTURAL CRITIC

In 1750 the Academy of Dijon organized a prize competition in which authors were invited to write an essay on the question, whether "the reconstitution of the arts and the sciences has contributed to the improvement of morals." In eighteenth century France such prize competitions focusing on a societal or philosophical problem were *en vogue.* Every self-respecting intellectual circle – often proudly calling itself an *Académie* – regularly tested the creativity of the local intelligentsia with a prize competition. The Académie of Dijon's competition was to make history – not so much because of its subject, but because of the name of the winner, an unknown stranger from the Swiss town of Geneva, who would soon become world famous: Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

What is so special about the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (Discourse on the Arts and Sciences) with which he won the competition? Rousseau reveals himself to be a radical cultural critic and, as such, he went against the grain of the dominating spirit of his time. On the question of whether the renaissance of the arts and the sciences after a period of decay in the Middle Ages also elevated the morals of the people, Rousseau not only gives a negative answer, but he goes on to postulate a *negative* relationship between the two. This radical point of view is even more surprising if one takes into account that it was formulated in a time characterized by a great optimism for the future. The majority of Rousseau's contemporaries were not only convinced that scientific progress had no limits, they were also convinced that humanity was on its way toward greater moral perfection. The French economist and statesman Turgot, for instance, was an example of this kind of thinking. In 1750, the same year in which the Académie of Dijon organized its competition, he delivered a speech in the Sorbonne in which he envisaged "… that mankind can continuously make further strides in the development of truth! Even better, that they can continuously become better and happier."[1]

With his Discourse Rousseau was throwing a huge stone into the smooth pond of contemporary self-satisfaction.[2] Culture is no blessing, but a curse for humanity, was his somber message. The advancement of the arts and the sciences leads not to the moral progress, but to the moral downfall of the people. What was the foundation of Rousseau's provocative thesis? In his "Discourse on the Arts and Sciences" he confronts contemporary society with a fictitious 'natural society' in which men would originally have lived. In this 'natural society', wrote Rousseau, "our morals were primitive, but natural," while, on the contrary, "today … in our morals a mean and deceptive uniformity dominates … There are no longer true friendships, no real esteem, no well-founded trust. Suspicion, fears, coolness, aloofness, hate, and treason are continually hidden under the uniform and wicked mantle of good manners … One no longer dares to present oneself as the person one is."[3] According to Rousseau modern civilization has subjugated man under a yoke of social conventions. Man is no longer the master of his own behavior, rather his behavior is determined by 'the others', by the impersonal power of 'society'. In Rousseau's cultural criticism we can see what later will become the central problem of sociology: the relationship between the individual and society. What the sociologist Émile Durkheim one and half centuries later will call *la contrainte sociale* – the impersonal pressure exercised by society on the individual, is already present in Rousseau. He called it *contrainte perpétuelle* – perpetual constraint.

In contrast to later sociological theories on social roles, which – rightly – explain that in his societal roles also an individual can remain himself, or even *become* himself,[4] Rousseau had a purely negative attitude toward the social roles played by civilized man. 'Natural man', man without continuous social contact, is for him free and authentic, while, on the contrary, *l'homme policé* – civilized man – has become unfree and unauthentic. Modern man can only regain his natural freedom and authenticity by liberating himself from these imposed roles. Rousseau deliberately left the possibility of doing this open: people *could* withdraw from their roles when they were driven by 'stronger motives'. However, these 'stronger motives' were only present when there were *grandes occasions* – extraordinary events which upset everyday life. Rousseau, however, did not want to wait for these extraordinary events: he wanted to solve the conflict between the individual and society immediately, here and now. The conflict between individual and society is diagnosed by him as the source of the alienation from which modern man suffers. He presents this alienation as the result of a foreign body, which has crept into modern man, threatening his freedom and authenticity: the system of social habits and conventions. Although Rousseau does not use the term 'alienation'[5] the term can be usefully employed here. We will see that the loss of freedom is an essential part of later theories of alienation. Rousseau also considers freedom a characteristic which

is essential for human beings. The absence of this essential characteristic – whether because one has lost it, or because one has not yet developed it in an adequate way – is characteristic of a situation of alienation.

One can eradicate this alienation only when one regains humanity's lost freedom and authenticity. Freedom means autonomy, which means: listening to rules and laws formulated by oneself. As long as man allows his behavior to be determined by the expectations of society he is not free. Such external determination is, according to Rousseau, incompatible with an authentic human existence, because man, in this case, is merely the *object* of norms that are imposed on him from without. Man is only free, when he himself is the maker of the rules which he imposes on himself. 'Natural man', the ideal man whom Rousseau opposes to cultural man, therefore obeys only himself. Cultural man, on the contrary, adapts himself to the pressure of society and lives therefore 'outside himself'.[6] However, all hope is not forlorn, because cultural man has kept a remnant of his original freedom: it is still possible for him to liberate himself from the total determination by society.

HOW DID INEQUALITY AND UNFREEDOM EMERGE?

How did the alienation of modern, civilized man emerge? Rousseau tried to answer this question four years later, in 1754, with another essay, the "Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men" with which he – again – enters a prize competition organized by the Académie of Dijon. In this text he depicted the 'natural situation' in which 'natural man' would have lived in more detail. In this 'natural situation' man roamed, lonely, through the woods, without speaking and without lasting relations with other people. This 'natural man' is ethically neutral: he is neither good, nor bad, neither happy, nor unhappy. He follows his instincts as an animal. However, soon this *homme sauvage* will leave the natural situation because he has two qualities which an animal lacks: freedom and 'the almost unlimited capacity to improve himself'. One would expect this capacity for self-improvement to be a source of happiness, but the contrary is true. This capacity, said Rousseau, makes man 'in the long run a tyrant over himself and nature'. It leads man to undertake new activities which necessitate cooperation with others – which, in its turn, leads to the *division of labor.* The division of labor is for Rousseau the actual Fall of Man, because it leads to a generalized *interdependence.* After man has left the realm of freedom which characterized the natural situation his original freedom is transformed into slavery: "… equality disappeared, ownership

was introduced, labor became necessary and the extensive woods were transformed into beautiful fields that had to be irrigated with the sweat of people and where soon, alongside the harvests, slavery and misery took root and developed."[7] Man's alienation, therefore, is for Rousseau directly linked with the division of labor.

The emergence of the division of labor, however, is only the beginning of man's alienation: after the introduction of the division of labor human society develops an internal dynamic which raises alienation to unknown heights. The division of labor, which, according to Rousseau, begins with the invention of agriculture, brings with it the earliest forms of *private property* and the first rules of law which codify the right of ownership of one's own produce and of the land one has occupied. Private property, in its turn, leads to the establishment of the *state.* Rousseau depicts the state as an invention of the rich to legitimate and defend their property: "That was or must have been the origin of society and of laws, which imposed new restrictions on the weak and gave new powers to the rich, which irrevocably destroyed natural freedom, established forever the law of property and inequality, transformed wily usurpation into a definitive right and subjected the whole human race to labor, slavery, and misery for the profit of a few ambitious men.[8]

This new political authority would originally have had a legitimate character, because it would have been established with the consent of all, rich and poor, even though the rich had cheated the poor by presenting their own private interest as the general interest. However, this legitimate power of the state was short-lived. The chosen rulers were mostly old and wise men. However, the high death rate had dire consequences: "The more often older men were elected, the more often elections took place and the more the difficulties, associated with elections, were felt; cliques emerged, factions began to form, parties became mutually embittered, civil wars broke out and finally the blood of citizens was sacrificed for what was claimed to be the happiness of the state and [in this way] one stood on the verge of a return to the anarchy of earlier times."[9] According to Rousseau a few powerful families would have profited from this situation – pretending to restore order – taking power and keeping it in their family. In this way the state lost its legitimacy and became an instrument of the arbitrary rule of a clique. The emergence of the arbitrary state was the climax of the development of inequality. The first phase was the introduction of private property, which eternalized the inequality between *rich* and *poor.* The installation of a chosen executive was the second phase: it established the inequality between the *powerful* and the *powerless.* The subsequent transformation of the legitimate state power into the arbitrary rule of a despot was the third and last phase: it introduced the inequality between *master and slaves.* In his "Discourse on Inequality" Rousseau saw a parallel development of man's inequality with man's unfreedom. The total inequality of the third phase coincides with total unfreedom – the unfreedom of

the slave. However, not only is the slave not free, but neither is the master. In his *Lettres écrites de la Montagne* (eighth letter) Rousseau wrote: "Freedom consists less in doing what one wants, than in not being subjected to the will of another, it further consists in not subjecting another's will to our [will]. All those who are master cannot be free …"[10] Rousseau uses here a *negative* concept of liberty. To be free means to be free from subjection to the will of another person, but also to be free from subjecting another person to one's own will, because in the latter case also one is dependent on others.

In Rousseau's Second Discourse (on Inequality) the development of inequality in society culminates in its last phase in a universal human unfreedom. This indicates an important shift compared with his First Discourse (on the Arts and the Sciences) which has important consequences for his theory of alienation. In his First Discourse alienation – the loss of man's 'natural' freedom - was still considered to be caused by a system of *role expectations* and the existing constraints associated with life in society. However, in the Second Discourse the emergence of human alienation is developed differently. Alienation, which, in the First Discourse was presented as an abstract social constraint, is now presented as the product of a process which is caused by economic and political relations in society. This means that Rousseau's *cultural* criticism changes its focus: it becomes increasingly a criticism of *politics*.

POLITICAL ALIENATION

Man's loss of freedom begins from the moment that he enters into social relations. From that moment on man, who was free and independent, becomes subjected to his equals, "whose slave he becomes … even if he becomes their master; rich, he needs their service; poor, he needs their help …"[11] In the first phase of social inequality, namely between the rich and the poor, alienation already exists. This alienation is deepened in the second phase, when the inequality between the powerful and the powerless is established. However, in this second phase there is still no political alienation, because the political power of the rulers is still legitimated by a decision of the whole people, rich and poor: laws are *de jure* expressions of the people's will. This changes, however, in the third phase: the decisions of the despot are not mandated by the people. They are purely arbitrary decisions which are *imposed* on the people, without their consent. The culmination point of social inequality is at the same time the culmination point of unfreedom, here taking the form of *political alienation.* In the despotic state the people are not assertive citizens, but merely, in a literal sense, *subjects*, subjected to the will of the despot.

At this point Rousseau develops a kind of dialectical about turn. The greatest inequality that can exist among people, transforms itself into its opposite: an absolute equality.[12] The inequality between master and slaves transforms itself into a general equality, because not only are the slaves – as slaves – equal, but also the master, because of his dependence on his subjects. Therefore in a despotic state *all* are unfree. This state is no longer ruled by moral principles, but only by the right of the strongest. Right is defined only by might. The despot has the same right to oppress his subjects, as they have the right to rebel and throw off their yoke. In this way the despotic state restores the natural state: the original condition of mankind was also one in which the right of the strongest prevailed. This does not mean, of course, a restoration of the 'natural situation' as such. In the natural situation men were also equal, but as men, not as slaves. The original freedom, which man possessed in the natural situation, is transformed into a shared unfreedom. We can, therefore, refer here to a corrupted natural situation, a situation of almost complete alienation. Almost, because for Rousseau there is still hope for humanity: deep in itself it has kept the disposition and the will to be free.

ERADICATION OF POLITICAL ALIENATION THROUGH THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

It is characteristic of Rousseau's thinking that political alienation is for him the most extreme form of alienation. This explains why in another theoretical work, titled *Du contrat social* (The Social Contract) he tries to develop a proposal for abolishing political alienation. Abolition of political alienation is for him only possible when the state is organized in such a way that there no longer exists a need to obey laws which are imposed from outside as an external coercion. Does this mean that Rousseau is pleading for a situation in which everyone can do as one wishes and that a regulated social life is no longer possible? No, because a law-giving body on the level of the state remains necessary if society is not to degenerate into chaos and anarchy. However, abolition of political alienation, while keeping the law-giving bodies at state level, is only possible, when the cleavage between lawgiver and people is abolished and the people become their own lawgiver. The laws which one obeys are in that case no longer external rules, dictated from outside, but rules one has imposed on oneself. One subjects oneself to decisions of one's own making: heteronomy makes place for autonomy. Political alienation is abolished to be replaced by a recovered political freedom.

But can man recover his political freedom and if so, how? Rousseau gives a

positive answer: "There has to be found a form of community which defends the person and the goods of each member with the power shared by all, and through which everyone, although united with the rest, obeys only himself and remains as free as before."[13] This form of community becomes a possibility when the citizens sign a *social contract.* In this contract they should transfer all their individual rights – without exception – to the community. This transfer should not be considered as a unilateral transfer of rights by the individual to an alien body, because that would merely prolong political alienation. The individuals, who transfer their rights to the community, are themselves members of this community. Collectively they make, therefore, a contract with *themselves.* It "seems that the act of union includes a reciprocal obligation between the state community and individuals and that each individual, by making so to speak a contract with himself, has imposed upon himself a double obligation; namely as member of the sovereign vis-à-vis the individual persons, and as member of the state vis-à-vis the sovereign."[14]

Individuals, who subject themselves to the sovereign power created by the social contract, subject themselves to their *own* sovereign power and are, therefore, free. The contract creates a *volonté générale,* a 'general will' of the parties to the contract. Although this general will consists of a huge number of individual wills, it cannot be considered the mere sum of these individual wills. In contrast to these individual wills, which, as a rule, are oriented toward their own interest, the 'general will' is a totally new entity with its own identity and its own way of willing, which is characterized by a *moral* character. The freedom enjoyed by the people after making the social contract is therefore not only the freedom which emerges after the abolition of external constraint. It is not only a *negative* freedom, but also a *positive* freedom. By obeying the general will, one acquires a *moral* freedom. This, wrote Rousseau, "is a freedom which is the only one that can really make man his own master; because the impulse of passions is slavery and obedience to the law which one has prescribed oneself, is freedom."[15]

HOW CAN THE EGOISTIC *BOURGEOIS* BE TRANSFORMED INTO AN ETHICAL *CITOYEN?*

Rousseau mentioned also 'the impulse of passions'. There is not only alienation which threatens man from the outside, but also *within* man there is also an alienating agency which robs him of his freedom: his passions. Freedom means for Rousseau in its positive sense a purely spiritual instance which can only develop by emancipating itself from

passions and natural inclinations.[16] For Rousseau, therefore, 'nature', has a double meaning. On the one hand he gives it the connotation of 'the essential'. In this sense human 'nature' is his freedom. On the other hand does 'nature' also mean man's natural inclinations, the passions which tend to influence his actions. Within man these two 'natures' are constantly on a war footing. Man can only become really free when he no longer allows his actions to be determined by his passions, but when he domesticates them, which means that he transforms himself from an egoistic *bourgeois* into an ethical *citoyen*.

Freedom from external pressure is, therefore, not enough to end alienation. Man is only really free if he no longer lets himself be led by his egoistic inclinations. In the state which would be erected by the social contract, both political and moral alienation would be abolished. Therefore this contractual state would present a higher form of freedom than the 'state of nature', because although in the latter no political alienation existed, people were still wholly determined by their passions. In the contract state both kinds of alienation are abolished by obeying the 'general will'. This 'general will' is, certainly, the product of a myriad of individual wills as its constituent elements, but as with a chemical compound, which has new properties, different from those of its constituent elements, so the general will has properties that differ from the individual wills (*volontés particulières*). Individual wills are focused on the egoistic self-interest, the general will, on the contrary, is focused on the general interest.

The problem is how Rousseau lets this transformation happen. He formulates some conditions. According to him, the general will is not just a product of an addition of individual wills, because this would only lead to a 'will of all' (*volonté de tous*): just a collection of individual wills which are focused on their self-interest. No, the general will can only manifest itself if one subtracts from the casted votes those votes which contradict each other: "If one deducts of these [individual] wills the pluses and the minuses which neutralize each other, then appears as the sum of the differences the general will."[17]

Rousseau's first assumption is here that the private interests, expressed in the votes, would be each other's opposites, so that they neutralize and abolish each other. The second assumption is that the remaining rest is focused on the general interest,[18] which means that in the individual wills already a focus on the general interest must be present. The question, however, is whether private interests can be additioned and deducted in such a mathematical way, as Rousseau assumes. The modern game theory shows that apart from *zero sum games,* in which the profit of the one is the loss of the other, there exist also *non-zero sum games*, in which private interests are *not* opposed. Even more important is the question whether Rousseau's second assumption can be

uphold. He assumes that the individual wills do not only express private interests, but also the general interest. But why would a majority of these individual wills, which he earlier said to be focused on the private interest, suddenly be focused on the general interest? Rousseau tries to defend this metamorphosis by representing the general interest as an *enlightened self-interest*: "Why all want the happiness of each of them, if it is not because there is no-one who does not relate that word *each* with himself and who does not think of himself when he casts his vote for all?"[19]

Rousseau makes it here a bit easy for himself to solve the problems. Because it is far from sure that the individuals will identify their egoistic interests with the general interest. Rousseau's construction will only have some plausibility if at least a number of citizens subordinate their private interest to the general interest – and this not only when making the social contract, but also afterwards. Also for Rousseau it seemed no foregone conclusion that such a vanguard group of ethical *citoyens* could be found. In the first book of *Du contrat social,* for instance, he describes the moralization of the individuals – the suppression of the private interest in favor of the general interest – as a *fact*: "This change from the natural to the civil state brings about a remarkable change in man: he replaces in his behavior instinct by justice and gives to his actions the moral character it was lacking before."[20] Here it is the *actual* behavior and the *factual* actions which would get an ethical character in the contract state. However, in the fourth book, he sketches a situation in which the state is no longer the sphere of the general interest, but has become an instrument of different group interests. Does this mean, he asks that the general interest is destroyed or corrupted? His answer is "No, it is always constant, unchangeable, pure,"[21] although it has been muted. In this case the individuals no longer obey the general will and the latter is reduced to a kind of Kantian categorical imperative which, in the form of a collective conscience, appeals to the individual conscience of the people – even if it has lost its influence on the actual behavior of the people.

The ethical contract state which Rousseau wants to build is, therefore, no guarantee for the transformation of the egoistic *bourgeois* into an ethical *citoyen.* The realization of the 'general will' by the individuals remains uncertain. Rousseau wanted to solve this problem *by force.* He wrote that "all who refuse to obey the general will, will be forced to do so by the whole body," adding that one "will force him to be free."[22] The question, of course, is whether you can *force* someone to be free. "In his ideal of society and the state he [Rousseau] leaves so little space for any personal decisions of the individual," wrote Ernst Cassirer, "that he seems to look upon such decisions as a sin against the real spirit of all human society."[23] Another question is *who* decides whether the repressive force, used by the state, represents a genuine 'general will' or is only an

instrument used by group interests? These questions make clear that the social contract provides no magic solution for Rousseau's central problem: the transformation of the *bourgeois* into a *citoyen.* Finally the success of the contract state depends on a very uncertain factor, namely the moral behavior of the people. In his early manuscripts Marx will try to solve this problem.

NOTES

[1] Turgot, "Tableau philosophique des progrès successifs de l'esprit humain," in Turgot, *Oeuvres,* Tome 1, (Paris: Édition Schelle, 1913), 235.

[2] And in France this was not appreciated. A sign of this is the late reception of his ideas in this country, contrary to Germany where the *Sturm und Drang* embraced his criticism of culture. Cf. my article (in Dutch) "Rousseau en de 'Sturm und Drang' – de vroegste receptie van Rousseau's cultuurkritiek in Duitsland," (Rousseau and the 'Sturm und Drang' – the earliest reception of Rousseau's criticism of culture in Germany), *De Gids,* 142, No. 4, 1979, 230-237. http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_gid001197901_01/_gid001197901_01_0027.php

[3] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discours sur les sciences et les arts," in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Œuvres complètes, Tome III, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 8.

[4] Cf. Ralf Dahrendorf, *Homo sociologicus – de categorie van de sociale rol,* (Hilversum: Brand, 1965), 23: "Homo sociologicus stands on the intersection of the individual and society, man as the carrier of socially preformed roles. The individual *is* his social roles, but these roles *are,* in their turn, the irritating fact of society."

[5] Rousseau used the term 'alienate' (aliéner) still only in its original, *juridical,* meaning. In *Du contrat social,* (op. cit., 355) for instance, he wrote: "Aliéner c'est donner ou vendre," (alienate is to give or sell). The term 'alienation' has its origin in civil private law in which it indicated the sale or gift of goods. Hegel will be the first to transform this juridical concept of alienation into a philosophical concept, when he applies the concept of alienation on philosophical categories, such as 'spirit', 'freedom', 'human essence', etcetera.

[6] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens [sic] de l'inégalité parmi les hommes," in Œuvres complètes, Tome III, Collection Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 193: "… the savage lives in himself; sociable man always outside himself … "

[7] Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine,* 171.

[8] Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine,* 178.

[9] Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine*, 187.

[10] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Lettres écrites de la Montagne," in *Œuvres complètes*, Tome III, op. cit., 841-842.

[11] Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine,* 175.

[12] Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine*, 191: "This is the last phase of the inequality and the last point which closes the circle and touches the point from where we departed: it is here that, again, all individuals become equal, because they are nothing, and because the subjects have no other law than the will of the master, nor the master another rule than his passions, the notions of the good and the principles of justice disappear once again."

[13] Rousseau, *Du contrat social,* 360.

[14] Rousseau, *Du contrat social,* 362.

[15] Rousseau, *Du contrat social,* 365.

[16] Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine,* 142: "… in the capability to will or rather to choose, and in the sentiment of this capability, one finds only purely spiritual acts that one cannot explain by mechanic laws."

[17] Rousseau, *Du contrat social,* 371.

[18] Cf. Iring Fetscher, *Rousseaus politische Philosophie – Zur Geschichte des demokratischen Freiheitsbegriffs,* (Neuwied am Rhein: Luchterhand, 1968), 122: "when [Rousseau] was asked for the meaning he attributed to the general will, [he answered that] for instance, a citoyen had expressed a mixture of genuine general will (which focuses on the general interest) and supposed general will (in reality a particular will – maybe unconscious for himself - which focuses on the private interest). By adding several of such 'impure' mixtures, one would subtract the impure admixture of the private wills and the 'pure general will' would result."

[19] Rousseau, *Du contrat social,* 373.

[20] Rousseau, *Du contrat social,* 364.

[21] Rousseau, *Du contrat social,* 438.

[22] Rousseau, *Du contrat social,* 364.

[23] Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Enlightenment,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), 262.

Chapter Two

Friedrich Schiller's Theory of Alienation

As a writer, poet, and dramatist, Friedrich Schiller enjoys an international renown. Together with Goethe, who was a personal friend, he belongs to the immortals of German literature. But Schiller also developed important philosophical ideas. He was one of the first to discuss the problem of alienation in German philosophy. In 1795 Schiller published a series of letters in his journal *Die Horen* titled "On the aesthetic education of man."[1] In these letters Schiller turns against his peers' attempts to try to protect and guarantee human freedom through elaborate projects to reform the state. Any such project is, in itself, according to Schiller – however fine it may appear on paper – insufficient to guarantee real freedom. Real freedom should start with the individual: "… the state, as it is now constituted, has brought about the evil, and the state as Reason conceives it in idea, instead of being able to establish this better humanity, must first be itself established by it."[2] "All improvement in the political sphere," he continued, "is to proceed from the ennobling (*Veredelung*) of the character..."[3] This 'ennoblement of the character' is for Schiller, however, not identical to the suppression of passion. Schiller is very much against this negative evaluation of human passionate nature. It is proof of a defective education (*mangelhafte Bildung*), he says, if "the moral character can assert itself only through sacrifice of what is natural..."[4] Alienation[5] is according to him not only the result of excessive *satisfaction* of the human passions, but also of their excessive *suppression.* Man can therefore be alienated in two ways, namely "… either as a savage, if his feelings rule his principles, or as a barbarian if his principles destroy his feelings."[6] For Rousseau it was only the *bourgeois* – man who allows himself to be ruled by his passions – who was alienated. He confronted him with the ideal of the *citoyen* – the citizen who suppresses his passions to the benefit of the general interest. For Schiller not only was the bourgeois – referred to as 'savage' by him – alienated, but also the ethical citoyen, who controls his inclinations completely. He calls the latter a 'barbarian'.

In Rousseau's dual view of the world, man is torn apart in an irreconcilable opposition of spirit and matter, of freedom and necessity: Rousseau's man was a 'split'

man. He was *bourgeois* and *citoyen* at the same time: on the one hand tied to his duty, on the other hand at the mercy of his passions and desires. The way in which Rousseau wanted to abolish human alienation – through suppression of the passions – in Schiller's eyes only made the alienation greater. Each unilateral suppression was according to him fundamentally wrong, whether it concerned the passions or the spirit. The non-alienated man is for Schiller no 'citoyen' who suppresses his passions, but a man in whom spirit and nature go together harmoniously. The ideal which he has in mind is the man of Greek Antiquity, just as his contemporary Winckelmann saw him: a harmonious unity of feelings and intellect, of passion and reason: "At that time, in that lovely awakening of the intellectual powers, the senses and the mind had still no strictly separate individualities, for no dissension had yet constrained them to make hostile partition with each other and determine their boundaries."[7] How different this all became in the modern world. We no longer see harmonious individuals, he laments, on the contrary, "… we see not merely individual persons, but whole classes of human beings developing only a part of their capacities, while the rest of them, like a stunted plant, shew only a feeble vestige of their nature."[8]

THE HARMONY OF FEELING AND REASON

Why have people lost their original harmony and started to develop themselves purely one-sidedly? According to Schiller the cause is the splitting up of human knowledge into sensuous knowledge on the one hand and intellectual knowledge on the other, and the separate further development of both. In ancient Greece, he said, human knowledge was still a unity of senses and reason, but in the modern world both kinds of knowledge would have developed one-sidedly. Followers of the concept of logical thought nourished a repugnance toward sensuous knowledge and treated only abstract thinking as the only reliable source of knowledge. Followers of sensuousness, on the other hand, developed a one-sided preference for the direct observation of the world around them. Their abhorrence of generalization and deductive thought led to their getting trapped in the direct given experience, not being able to cross it to higher levels of abstraction. The result was, Schiller said, a 'crumbling of their essence' (*Zerstückelung ihres Wesens*). The one part of their talent was developed excessively and beyond all proportion by them, while they left the other part barren. The abstract rationalist became therefore a 'stranger in the world of the senses', the concrete empiricist fell, on the other hand, prey to 'pedantic narrowness'. Schiller's attack – directed at the one-sidedness of both rationalism and

empiricism – was in fact directed at rationalism in the way it was developed particularly by Descartes and Leibniz.[9]

In Germany toward the end of the eighteenth century a reaction to this primacy of rational knowledge arose, however. Sensuous knowledge was no longer conceived as inferior to or as a mere first stage of abstract thought, but as a source of knowledge which is of equal value. This 'rehabilitation of the senses' is not a coincidence, but accompanies a resurrected pantheism from Goethe's day in which the Romantic Movement had already been introduced.[10] Matter and nature became a foreign reality through the rationalistic approach. The real reality lay, according to the rationalists, behind the nature that was observed by the senses. This 'true' nature was only accessible to the intellect. It was 'intelligible nature', from which all concrete characteristics were stripped; a nature which was formalized as a system of mathematical formulas. This 'intelligible nature', which had to be accessed through thought, was part of the richness of the spirit and was, therefore, seen as useful. Nature that was observed by the senses was degraded by rationalism to the status of raw material which lacked each immanent sense.

The pantheism of Goethe's day was a reaction to this rationalism. The strict separation of the intellect and the senses, of mind and nature, was attacked. Pantheism is an attempt to rehabilitate nature, which was seen as 'de-spirited' (*entgeistet*) by rationalism to a cold, chilly matter. In pantheism the rationalistic dualism of spirit and matter is replaced with a monism: intellect and senses, mind and matter are not opposites, but are aspects of the same meaningful totality. Nature, which is exposed to the senses, is not a dead mass, but it is the embodiment of God's spirit. This immanent godlike meaning of nature would often be better exposed through the sensibility of the senses than through emotionless thought. The place of the senses would, therefore, definitely not be subordinate to the intellect, but at least of equal value. From this pantheistic rehabilitation of nature and senses Schiller develops his theory of alienation.

THE DIVISION OF LABOR AS A CAUSE OF ALIENATION

As the central mechanism through which man had lost his inner harmony,[11] Schiller points to the separation and segregated subsequent development of intellectual knowledge and sensuous knowledge. The main cause of this alienation is not sought by him in the social development – unlike Rousseau in his *Social Contract* – but in the two-pronged development of science.[12] Yet, after due consideration, it is actually the alienation of

society which he appears to criticize, because the mechanism which he suggests is the cause of alienation of the subject is the *division of labor.* According to him it is due to the division of labor that "whole classes of people develop only one part of their talents." His critique of the division of labor in science hides a criticism of the division of labor in society. But it is not the division of labor as such that he points to as cause of the alienation, as this division already existed in ancient Greece which he admired so much. In fact it is – although he does not state this explicitly – the division of labor in developing *industrial* society which he criticizes.

This becomes clear when he illustrates his criticism of the one-sided development of modern man with the following example: "Eternally chained to only one single little fragment of the whole, Man himself grew to be only a fragment; with the monotonous noise of the wheel he drives everlastingly in his ears, he never develops the harmony of his being …"[13] Despite using the word 'eternally' this example is unmistakably borrowed from the eighteenth century textile industry, where the division of labor, the separation of the labor process in different partial actions, had reached greater heights.[14] The worker in the textile industry became as it were a living spoke in the work process. Of all the processes necessary for the making of a product, only a few were carried out by him in endless repetition. For him work was no longer – as for the artisan and earliest textile workers[15] – a useful whole of logical, connected, successive actions, but a merely physical effort, which was devoid of every immanent sense.

The division of labor not only led to a blunting and a one-sided development of the individual, but also had other consequences: "… enjoyment was separated from labour, means from ends, effort from reward."[16] Does Schiller here turn out to be a forerunner of Marx? Because this statement that the reward is separated from the effort can be considered as a rudimentary form of Marx's later theories of surplus value and exploitation. In spite of this criticism of society, which appears pre-socialist, Schiller definitely does not come to a conclusion which criticizes the capitalist mode of production as such: his criticism has mainly an aesthetic character. Thus he sees the proletariat, which he calls the 'lower and more numerous classes', not primarily as in need of emancipation and certainly not – unlike Marx – as the emancipator of mankind. These 'lower classes' he actually sees as a *danger,* because, according to him, they are afflicted with 'raw and law-breaking passions', which, during a decomposition of civil society, "hasten themselves with unbridled fury to their animal gratification."

INDIVIDUAL ALIENATION AS THE PRICE FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS

Schiller's theory of alienation takes an unexpected course when he portrays the division of labor, the mechanism through which alienation exists, as something that is undeniably disadvantageous for the individual, but is of *positive* significance for mankind as a whole: "There was no other way of developing the manifold capacities of Man than by placing them in opposition to each other. This antagonism of powers is the great instrument of culture..."[17] Individual alienation appears here thus as the price for social progress. Human alienation is a necessary phase in society's further development at a higher level. From this it again appears again that the division of labor which confronts Schiller as the cause of alienation, is not the division of labor as such, but the division of labor in the capitalist world of competition. The opposition of powers which is disadvantageous for the individual, but advantageous for society as a whole, is capitalist competition, which is diverted by Schiller in the inner life of individuals. Also in this competition the individual entrepreneur experiences economic ruin, while on the other hand society as a whole progresses economically.

He does not describe, however, the process by which individual alienation becomes the engine of social progress as something normative, but as something *factual.* Schiller is not of the opinion that this is the only proper way for society to develop further. He also wonders whether man should sacrifice individual welfare for a progressive social development. "But can Man really be destined to neglect himself for any end whatever?"[18] His answer is negative. "It must be false that the cultivation of individual powers necessitates the sacrifice of their totality …"[19] Schiller's theory of alienation now takes the form of a fundamental criticism of the competition society. Although he recognizes the progressive character of this society, he rejects it on account of its destructive influence on separate individuals.

ERADICATION OF ALIENATION IN ART

The problem now is how alienation at the individual level can be abolished. How can the 'separation of the inner man' (*Trennung in dem inneren Menschen*) be abolished and inner harmony restored? According to Schiller in order to achieve this the antagonism *within man* must be uprooted. This antagonism, which was expressed in the opposition

of intellect and senses, mind and matter, freedom and lack of freedom, he sees as the consequence of the antagonism between the two fundamental passions of man: 'form impulse' (*Formtrieb*) and 'sense impulse' (*Stofftrieb*). The form impulse is an active passion which corresponds with the intellect, the spiritual, it is pointed toward *freedom;* the sense impulse is a passive passion, which corresponds with the senses and with matter, it is a passion through which man participates in the realm of *necessity.*

These two fundamental passions are originally, according to Schiller, not opposites, but they each have their own area. Alienated antagonism came into existence because they encroached on each other's terrain and tried to suppress each other. Man's inner harmony can be restored when man, instead of satisfying one passion and not the other – or satisfying both, one after the other – satisfies them *both together,* in a mutual interaction. Is such an interaction possible? Such a harmonious, concerted, cooperation of both passions is, according to Schiller, possible in the 'play impulse' (*Spieltrieb*). This 'play impulse' is a *creative* passion, which is aimed at the creation of beauty. It is a combination of the 'form impulse' and the 'sense impulse', because man in art reaches the spiritual through his senses, and reaches matter through his mind. In art the sensuous is always coupled with the spiritual. With brush, paint, and canvass the painter creates a new, personal reality. The poet does the same with words, rhythm, and sounds. Both one-sided rationality and one-sided sensuousness are abolished in beauty. Through beauty, through creative expression, the inner harmony of man is restored, the division between both impulses is abolished, so that alienation disappears: "… Man shall *only play* with Beauty, and he shall play *only with Beauty.* For, to declare it once and for all, Man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man, and *he is only wholly man when he is playing.*"[20]

Because the 'form impulse' tends toward production and the 'sense impulse' tends toward reception, man can only satisfy them simultaneously in the 'play impulse': man then receives what he himself has produced. Through the senses man enjoys the product of his own creativity. Through this harmonious union of 'sense impulse' and 'form impulse' in the 'play impulse' man is again a whole human being (*ganz Mensch*), he is again an undivided unity: alienation is abolished.

Why does Schiller seek a solution in *art* and not – as Rousseau – in politics? Schiller is fully aware that the solution which he wants to reach at a time when freedom is moving not only toward an aesthetic realization, but also toward a political realization, must appear strange and perhaps would be conceived as the personal idiosyncrasy of an artist. In the Second Letter he writes therefore: "Is it not at least unseasonable to be looking around for a code of laws for the aesthetic world, when the affairs of the moral world provide an interest that is so much keener, and the spirit of philosophical enquiry is, through the circumstances of the time, so vigorously challenged to concern itself with the most perfect of all works of art, the building up of true political freedom?"[21] It is political freedom, he says, which finally concerns him. But this can only be realized, according to him, through art. He states, "… that we must indeed, if we are to solve that political problem in practice, follow the path of aesthetics, since it is through Beauty that we arrive at Freedom."[22]

At first glance Schiller's notion of alienation differs a lot from that of Rousseau. Alienation was for Rousseau identical to *loss of freedom,* for Schiller it is identical to loss of *inner harmony.* Nevertheless, the abolition of disharmony in the satisfaction of the 'sense impulse' and the 'form impulse' is not Schiller's final goal. Just like Rousseau he is also concerned in the last instance with human *freedom*. Because it is this freedom which suffers in a one-sided satisfaction, either of the 'form impulse' or of the 'sense impulse'. According to Schiller, when mainly the 'sense impulse' is satisfied, man allows himself to be determined by *physical* necessity and is therefore not free, while man is also not free when man one-sidedly satisfies the 'form impulse', because then he allows himself to be wholly determined by *moral* coercion. If man really wants to be free, then both the coercion of the human passions and of the ethical imperative must be abolished. Through the 'play impulse' this freedom will be realized. "The play impulse… will therefore … set man free both physically and morally."[23]

Abolition of alienation, for Schiller, also means the final abolition of slavery and lack of freedom. His notion of freedom differs, however, fundamentally from that of Rousseau. For Rousseau the *citoyen,* the man who suppressed his egoistic inclinations and listened to the ethical imperative of the 'general will', was the truly free man. Rousseau's ethical *citoyen* is for Schiller, however, just as alienated as Rousseau's egoistic *bourgeois.* The citoyen is for him a 'barbarian' who excessively suppresses his passions and one-sidedly satisfies his 'form impulse'. He is the victim of moral coercion.

Free man is for Schiller neither the hedonistic bourgeois, nor the moral citoyen, but a 'third character' (*dritte Charakter*), man who is bourgeois and citoyen *at the same time*. This unity of bourgeois and citoyen is realized in *art,* because here the satisfaction of the senses and of the spirit go together. According to Schiller we relish sensuous enjoyment only as individuals. This enjoyment rests on an individual, egoistical satisfaction of the passions, from which others are excluded. The *rational* joys we relish, on the other hand, as representatives of the species, because these have a general character and therefore are accessible to everyone. Because we find in art both a sensuous and a spiritual satisfaction, we are confirmed in it as both individual and a community person at the same time – as bourgeois and as citoyen: "It is only the Beautiful that we enjoy at the same time as individual and as race, that is, as *representatives* of the race. Sensuous good can make only *one* man happy, since it is based on appropriation, which always implies exclusion … Beauty alone makes all the world happy..."[24]

THE 'EMPIRE OF BEAUTY': A UTOPIA?

The problem now is, why Rousseau's citoyen appears to Schiller as alienated. Is it in Schiller's conception wrong to suppress the egoistic passions and to turn to the general interest? The explanation for this rejection of the moral citoyen must be looked for in his pantheistic world vision, from where he hoped to overcome the dualism of spirit and the senses – a dualism which Rousseau had also taken for granted. Schiller strove after emancipation of the senses from the rationalist one-sided emphasis on the intellect. Due to an idiosyncrasy of the German language, this emancipation of the senses implied at the same time the emancipation of human *passionate life.* Marcuse points out that the German word *Sinnlichkeit* has both the meaning of cognitive sensuousness, as well as of the instinctive passionate life.[25] Schiller uses both meanings interchangeably, through which a positive evaluation of sensuousness and a positive evaluation of passionate life is the consequence.

This does not yet mean that he, therefore, also automatically comes to a positive evaluation of the *egoistical* passionate nature. On the contrary, he recognizes that the natural characteristic of man is egoistical and violent (*selbstsüchtig und gewalttätig*). But it is exactly through a harmonious satisfaction of the 'sense impulse' and the 'form impulse' in the 'play impulse' that the asocial and egoistical characteristics of the 'sense impulse' would disappear. In playing, by creative activities, man leaves traces of his intellect and reason not only in the material he works upon, but he changes himself

too. According to Schiller, "just as form gradually approaches him from without, in his dwelling, his furniture, his clothing, it begins finally to take possession of Man himself, to transform at first only the outward but ultimately the inward man."[26] Art does not only turn crying into singing and the 'wild jump of joy' into dancing, but it also ennobles the inner man: "Desire extends and exalts itself into love."[27] "Unsocial desire must renounce its selfishness …."[28]

According to Schiller Rousseau's moral citoyen, as well as Kant's category of duty (*Pflicht*) go beyond the oppression of individual egoism, because they would lead to the annihilation of each subjective feeling, of every personal spontaneity and emotion. Freedom is for Kant in the last instance dependent on the suppression of the passions. Schiller, on the other hand, wants to make room for human passionate life, but at the same time wants to deprive it of its egoistic character. In this way Schiller's theory is also more 'realistic' than that of Rousseau. The latter supposed that the egoistic bourgeois in his capacity of citoyen would experience a chameleon-like change where he would suddenly reveal himself to be a moral citizen. Schiller, on the other hand, tried to resolve the problem of political alienation through an 'ennoblement' of individuals by means of beauty. When a majority of individuals develops creatively while playing, there exists according to him an 'Empire of Beauty' (*Reich des schönen Scheins*). This is a state which has little in common with the ethical contract state of Rousseau where people have to suppress their passions and desires in order to manifest the 'general will', or, where they – when the 'general will' is already manifested – can be forced by it to suppress their passions.

This 'Empire of Beauty' is an *aesthetic* state where not only the natural urge of the egoistic passions, but also the moral urge of duty is abolished, so that man is truly free. In this state there is no autocratic government, but 'taste governs' (*der Geschmack regiert*). Freedom and equality are there for everyone. "Everything in the aesthetic State, even the subservient tool, is a free citizen having equal rights with the noblest … Here, then, in the realm of aesthetic appearance, is fulfilled the ideal of equality …"[29] But does such a state exist in reality, Schiller then asks, and if so, where? "As a need, it exists in every finely tuned soul; as an achievement we might perhaps find it … only in a few select circles…"[30] Thus, for Schiller too the abolition of alienation remains the most important task facing humanity.

NOTES

[1] Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen – in einer Reihe von Briefen*, (Herford: Verlag die Arche, 1948).

[2] Schiller wrote these letters in 1793 to Duke Friedrich Christian von Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg in Copenhagen. The originals of these letters were destroyed by fire on December 26, 1794, in his Copenhagen castle. Schiller published the letters – shortened and rewritten – in 1795 in two issues of his journal *Die Horen.*

[3] Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man,* Translated with an Introduction by Reginald Snell, (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, Inc., 2004), 7th Letter, 45.

[4] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 9th Letter, 50.

[5] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 4th Letter, 32. Schiller does not at this stage use the term 'alienation'. However, the phenomenon he describes completely fits with this concept. As a rule, one speaks of 'alienation' - in a strict sense - in the case of the *loss* of the 'essence' or of a quality which is considered to be essential. Usually this is human freedom or human reason (*Vernunft*). Alienation takes place not only in the case of a loss, but also in the case that one does not live up to one's potentialities. In this – broader - sense one speaks of 'alienation' when the (human) essence cannot develop itself adequately (note that we don't discuss here whether man has such a thing, called 'essence': we are merely clarifying the concept). If Schiller speaks about a *Zerstückelung des Wesens* (fragmentation of the essence), one may, therefore, rightfully, speak about Schiller's theory of alienation.

[6] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 4th Letter, 32.

[7] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 4th Letter, 34.

[8] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 6th Letter, 38.

[9] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 6th Letter, 38.

[10] This exaggerated rationalistic mistrust of the senses becomes clear in the famous example of the piece of bee wax that Descartes gives in his *Méditations métaphysiques.* With an increase in temperature the shape, color, hardness, etcetera, of the wax changes, which, according to Descartes, proves that one can never trust sensuous knowledge. (Cf. René Descartes, *Méditations métaphysiques,* (Paris: P.U.F., 1970), 46.

[11] Cf. Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus,* Werke Band 3, Carl Hinrichs (ed.), (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1965), 411.

[12] 'Harmony' is a catchword of the German Romantic movement in which each one-sided development is criticized. This is not always appreciated by literary and scientific giants, whose success is due to the cultivation of one, or only a few talents. Thus Goethe said: "The poet should not want to be a painter, but satisfy himself with recreating the world through the word …" (Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens,* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1988), 133). Goethe added: "[It] is finally the greatest art to restrict and isolate oneself." (Ibid., 134). His contemporary Wilhelm von Humboldt wrote - almost apologetically: "Every human being … can act with only one dominant faculty at a time: or rather, one whole nature disposes us at any given time to some single form of spontaneous activity. It would, therefore, seem to follow that man is inevitably destined to a partial cultivation, since he only enfeebles his energies by directing them to a multiplicity of objects." (Quoted in John Rawls, *Political Liberalism,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 320). Humboldt, however, added that – if a harmony in man's activities cannot be realized here and now in the present, it could, possibly, be established over his *whole lifetime:* "But man has it in his power to avoid one-sidedness, by attempting to unite distinct and generally separately exercised faculties of his nature, by bringing into spontaneous cooperation, at each period of his life, the dying sparks of one activity, and those which the future will kindle …" (Ibid.)

[13] Schiller is here even more clearly influenced by Rousseau's earlier essay *Discours sur les sciences et les arts.* But while Rousseau criticizes science *as such,* Schiller criticizes only the *specific* – two-pronged – *development* of science and consequently remains a son of the Enlightenment.

[14] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 6th Letter, 40.

[15] As Adam Smith makes clear in the first chapter of his *Wealth of Nations* with the example of the nail factory.

[16] Cf. H. Grossmann, "Mechanistische Philosophie und Manufaktur," in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung,* IV, 2, Paris, 1935, 183-84.

[17] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 6th Letter, 40.

[18] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 6th Letter, 43. Most probably Schiller is here strongly influenced by the historical philosophy of Kant. Kant had written eleven years earlier (in 1784) in his "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht," on the fact that nature uses antagonism in society as a means of developing all its talents.

[19] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 6th Letter, 45.

[20] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 6th Letter, 45.

[21] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 15th Letter, 80.

[22] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 2nd Letter, 25.

[23] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 2nd Letter, 27. Schiller recoils from a revolutionary realization of political freedom. He is a convinced opponent of the French Revolution, which he equates wholly with terror and violence. This critique of the French Revolution can for example be found in his essay "Über die Gefahr ästhetischer Sitten" (1793-1795), (On the danger of aesthetic ethics), in *Schillers Sämtliche Werke*, Band 12, (Munich: Georg Müller, 1913).

[24] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 14th Letter, 74.

[25] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 27th Letter, 138-139.

[26] Cf. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization – A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud,* (New York: Beacon Press, 1955), 166: "In German, sensuousness and sensuality are still rendered by one and the same term: *Sinnlichkeit.* It connotes instinctual (especially sexual) gratification, as well as cognitive sense-perceptiveness and representation (sensation). This double connotation is preserved in the use of the term *Sinnlichkeit* for the foundation of aesthetics… In Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education,* the stress is on the impulsive, instinctual character of the aesthetic function."

[27] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 27th Letter, 136. This motive, that man, through changes in his surroundings at the same time changes himself, we find later with Marx. Cf. "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *Marx and Engels Collected Works,* Vol. 3, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 301: "Only through the objectively unfolded richness of man's essential being is the richness of subjective *human* sensibility (a musical ear, an eye for beauty of form – in short, *senses* capable of human gratification, senses affirming themselves as essential powers of *man*) either cultivated or brought into being."

[28] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 27th Letter, 136.

[29] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 27th Letter, 139.

[30] *On the Aesthetic Education*, 27th Letter, 140. The terminology used by Schiller ('taste', 'harmony', 'grace', 'beautiful soul') has a *double* meaning: on the one hand aesthetic, on the other, ethical. When Schiller for example says 'taste governs', then that does not only mean that the aesthetic *goût* is realized, but also that 'Reason' is realized. There is here talk of an influence of the English moral philosophers Shaftesbury and Hume, who were the first to join ethics and aesthetics when they talked of *moral grace.* A few years later, under the influence of Kant, Schiller was to distance himself from this mixture of aesthetics and morals. Thus he denies in his paper "Über den moralischen Nutzen ästhetischer Sitten" (On the moral utility of aesthetic ethics) of 1796 that good taste would deserve in itself any independent ethical value.

Chapter Three

Hegel:

The Metaphysics of Alienation

THE 'CUNNING OF REASON' IN HISTORY

On April 16, 1795, the twenty-five year old Hegel wrote a letter to Schelling. In the letter he commented on Schiller's philosophical series of letters 'On the Aesthetic Education of Man', calling it 'a masterpiece'.[1] Without a doubt this work had a great influence on the young Hegel. And, indeed, many elements of Hegel's later philosophical system were already present in Schiller. This is the case, in particular, for Schiller's theory of alienation, to which Hegel would give a totally new turn. Before Hegel alienation was treated as a *human* phenomenon: for Rousseau it was about the *human* loss of freedom, for Schiller it was about the fragmentation of the *human essence*, which resulted in a disharmony within man. Alienation was considered a worldly phenomenon. However, the metaphysician Hegel was to elevate the concept of alienation far above this worldly level and make it into the dynamic principle of a metaphysical development. This does not mean that Hegel would not be interested in man's alienation. He certainly makes a place for it in his system. However, he will never consider this human alienation as a phenomenon which stands alone, but will always consider it as part of a more encompassing process. This more encompassing process is in the first place human *history.* However, ultimately, neither is human history the last frame of reference in which he understands the alienation. Human history is for him the history of a divine principle, which he calls 'Reason' (*Vernunft*), 'Spirit' (*Geist*), or 'World Spirit' (*Weltgeist*).

Hegel considers human history as an – apparently – chaotic process, in which individuals, groups, and classes have their own objectives which they want to realize, their own interests which they want to pursue, and their own ideals which they want to

put into practice. However, because of opposition from others these objectives, interests, and ideals, can seldom be completely and permanently implemented. Does this mean, asks Hegel, that human history is the accidental result of all these opposing tendencies? This is, according to him, not the case, because, apart from the individual meaning men attribute to their deeds, there exists a *supra-individual* meaning, which realizes itself through their actions. That is why human history – despite the discrepancy between the intentions of the people and the final result – is a *meaningful* process. The historical reality is, therefore, never meaningless and absurd, but it is *always* – even in the most turbulent and bloody periods – meaningful and 'rational'.[2] Human freedom is for Hegel subordinated to historical necessity. It is not man's freedom, but historical necessity which finally determines the course of history. Hegel's philosophy of history is a new variant of the old adage: man proposes, but god disposes. Whatever man does or plans to do, there exists a principle which precedes him, and of which he – unconsciously – is the instrument. Kant called this principle the *Absicht der Natur* (the Purpose of Nature). Hegel calls it Reason (*Vernunft*), which, by its 'cunning' lets human passions do its work, and in this way reaches its goal.[3]

REASON: AN ALIENATED GOD?

Who or what is Hegel's Reason? For Hegel it is a metaphysical principle, which is the basis of history. This metaphysical principle is an infinite and absolute being: Reason – also called by him *Geist* (Spirit), or *Weltgeist* (World Spirit). Reason is in fact the equivalent of the Christian god. God, as well as Reason, are absolute and infinite: both are neither dependent on, nor determined by, something else. Outside them there exists nothing. However, between both there is an important difference. The Christian god is a being whose qualities are already perfect: he is almighty, infinite, eternal, merciful, omniscient, etcetera. In short, he is *totally perfect.* Any further development to a greater perfection is precluded. Hegel's Reason, on the contrary, is an *imperfect god.* Because Reason, although it is infinite and absolute and it has, therefore, divine qualities, lacks one important perfection: *self-consciousness*. Because Reason has no self-consciousness, it cannot know itself, and it is, therefore, not omniscient. Reason is an *incomplete god.* This is the most important innovation of Hegel's metaphysics. Both the old Greeks and Christianity founded the world on a spiritual principle which was presented as a *subject.* For the old Greeks the gods were *persons,* and the same was true for Christianity: Jesus was a *person*, a being with self-consciousness. Because god had self-consciousness he

could be omniscient. Hegel's world principle is also a 'Spirit', but this Spirit still lacks self-consciousness and is, therefore, no subject, no person: "The basis of the world is in the beginning an unreflected, vague (*dumpf*) Reason which does not know itself."[4]

However, Reason has in principle (*an sich*) the capability of becoming a self-conscious Reason, a Spirit which can reflect on itself. Within Reason exists, therefore, a *discrepancy* between its *factual* situation and its *essence.* According to its essence Reason is perfect: it is not only infinite and absolute, but it possesses also an 'absolute knowledge' (das *absolute Wissen*), which is necessary for the perfection of omniscience. However, *in reality* Reason is not perfect, because it has not yet reached this 'absolute knowledge'. Essence and existence of Reason fall apart: there is a *rift* between the norm, its vocation - and reality. Alienation, which, in Rousseau and Schiller was exclusively a *human* affair, gets in Hegel *supra*-human dimensions: Reason is an *alienated god.* Alienation was for Rousseau and Schiller in the last instance identical to a *loss of freedom.* Also for Hegel the abolition (*Aufhebung*) of alienation is a question of freedom, in this case the freedom of Reason. The difference with Rousseau and Schiller, however, is that the alienation, from which Reason suffers, does not consist of a *loss* of an *original* freedom which has to be regained, but of not yet having realized an *ideal* of freedom which did not exist before. Reason has to generate its own essence, which is freedom. This does not mean that Reason, in its original situation, is totally unfree. It already has a *negative* freedom, because it is not subjected to any external force. Reason is namely the totality of all that is. Nothing exists outside it that could determine or influence it. However, absence of external dependence is not yet identical to real freedom. Real freedom means *positive, conscious self-determination*. Reason only becomes really free, when it has developed itself into a *subject,* a being which has self-consciousness, because, as Hegel wrote: "freedom is only real as will, as subject."[5] And "I am free when I am with me. This being-with-myself of the spirit is self-consciousness, the consciousness of oneself."[6]

OBJECTIFICATION AND ALIENATION

Reason, therefore, is internally split: qua essence it is perfect and free, in reality it is *not* perfect and *not* really free. However, Hegel assumes an 'infinite power' in Reason to overcome this situation. When human beings try to get rid of their alienation, says Hegel, they usually do not realize their good intentions. Their intentions remain abstract ideals, a powerless *Sollen.* However, it is different for Reason, which is "… not so powerless to bring it only to the ideal, to the *Sollen* ..."[7] Because Reason disposes of

an ‘infinite power’ the alienation will necessarily be abolished. How can this internally split Reason overcome its alienation? It can only abolish its alienation by becoming an omniscient and free subject. Omniscience, however, implies knowledge of all that exists, knowledge of the totality. Because Reason is *itself* this totality, it has to learn to know *itself.* One can only achieve knowledge of oneself by making oneself the object of one’s own consciousness. This means that one has to step back from oneself, has to *objectivate* oneself. Self-knowledge implies splitting oneself into a knowing subject and a known object.

If Reason wants to know itself, it has to do the same: it has to objectivate itself, make itself an object. As long as it remains a massive totality, which contains all that exists, it is impossible for it to achieve the necessary distance. This why Reason begins to objectivate itself: “… it steps outside itself and is for itself the material which it handles …” It steps “outside and does not only appear as a natural universe, but also as a spiritual [universe] – in world history.”[8] Reason objectivates itself in space and in time: an act of creation takes place through which the natural universe and human history come into being. In this way Hegel translates the biblical creation narrative into the language of his metaphysical philosophy. Hegel attributes a totally new place to human history. Human history, of course, already played a role in the Christian narrative. In this narrative god became man in the person of Jesus and Jesus structured human history in a pre-Christian epoch and a post-Christian epoch, of which the latter was characterized by a promise of salvation (which, however, would take place in the afterlife – outside history).

OBJECTIFICATION AS PLAY IN SCHILLER AND LABOR IN HEGEL

The eradication of alienation through objectification in Hegel’s metaphysics shows a great similarity with Schiller’s elimination of alienation through *creative activity.* Abolition of alienation meant for Schiller a simultaneous, harmonious satisfaction of the active, rational ‘form impulse’ and the passive ‘sense impulse’, which would take place in the creative ‘play impulse’. In the ‘play impulse’ one would receive passively what one had produced actively. The abolition of alienation (inner disharmony) was here achieved by an *artistic objectification,* which was appropriated by the senses. For Schiller this artistic objectification, although it resembles work, is quite different from work. Because artistic activity is a free expression of *abundance,* while work is born out of necessity. Schiller points to this difference even in the case of animals: “The animal *works* when a need is the motive of his activity, and it *plays,* when the plentiful life incites it to be active.”[9] The

Greek gods were 'playing' gods. Therefore the Greeks let "disappear the seriousness and labor … from the foreheads of the blissful gods … and made idleness and indifference the envied fate of the gods…"[10]

Objectification through *play* was for Schiller an activity which was the fruit of abundance and joy. For Hegel objectification was essentially *work:* it was born out of bitter necessity. The fact that Reason objectified itself in nature and in human history was not the result of its power and abundance, but of its weakness and imperfection. It is through *labor* that Reason has to overcome its lack of self-consciousness and reach greater perfection: "The Spirit *acts* (*handelt*) essentially and makes itself to what it tendentially (*an sich*) is, to its achievement, to its work…"[11] However, for Hegel work is not only the process of objectification, but also the process of the appropriation of the product. While Schiller's individual *enjoys* the product of its artistic expression, Hegel considers the appropriation of the objectified self by the Spirit as work, as an *active* appropriation. The Spirit "…acts against itself, consumes its existence, but in consuming it, cultivates (*bearbeitet*) it…"[12]

The underlying model of both Schiller's 'play impulse' and Hegel's objectification (*Entäusserung*) of Reason is the model of *production and consumption.* The implicit assumption of this model is that the abolition of alienation is only possible when one objectivates oneself and subsequently appropriates the product of this process. Production and consumption directly belong together. The 'consumption' of the 'product of labor' by Hegel's Reason is an active consumption. Schiller, on the contrary, saw the appropriation of the product of the 'play impulse' as a passive consumption. In the case of Hegel one might even speak of a 'productive consumption'. Because in the process of appropriation Reason 'produces' itself: "The Spirit is essentially the result of its activity…"[13] Reason, through the appropriation and 'consumption' of its objectified self, comes to self-knowledge and to freedom. However, one should not take this 'consumption' too literally, even when Hegel sometimes uses the term 'digest'. In the process of real consumption food is digested in the stomach. It is broken down via chemical processes. When Reason stands in front of the world in which it has objectified itself, it is not going to swallow it up as a Rabelaisian Pantagruel, neither will it destroy the world as the Indian god Shiva. Reason is an ascetic god. When it 'consumes' the world, it does so only with the *spiritual* digestion of its consciousness, which leaves the existing reality intact. Abolition of alienation is for Hegel always a *spiritual* act.

What is the role of man in this process of divine alienation and abolition (*Aufhebung*) of alienation? Not only is there a place for man in this process, but Hegel attributes to him a central and prominent role. The process by which Reason becomes conscious of itself is not a process which happens high above the heads of the people, it is a process which takes place *via* the people. For Reason, which has objectified itself in nature and in history, it is *human history* in particular through which it becomes conscious of itself. Because *in man* it develops itself from a primitive consciousness to a *self*-consciousness and from there to 'absolute knowledge'. This development is the 'cunning' which Reason uses in history. By letting human passions play against each other, Reason executes its own plan. The universal struggles and clashes of interests of individuals and groups which make history appear chaotic, is the medium through which Reason achieves knowledge of itself and freedom. Does this mean that man is only a passive instrument of Reason and that to him is denied the capability to shape history in an autonomous way? No, because such a degradation of man is incompatible with Hegel's philosophy, which pretends to be a philosophy of freedom – and of human freedom. Hegel wants to combine human freedom and objective necessity. Man is for him not a passive instrument with no active part in the realization of the purpose of Reason. According to him the 'most common lifeless object' (*gemeinste leblose Sache*), when used as an instrument, has already something which makes it appropriate for the purpose. This is *a forteriori* true for man, who is not a lifeless instrument, but a rational being. Man, therefore, is, through his nature, focused on the *Vernunftzweck,* Reason's purpose.

Together with their own needs and passions the human race would not only realize that purpose, "…but [it] would share in Reason's purpose and thereby become ends in themselves… Man is an end in himself, namely, through the divine within him, through that which from the outset was designated Reason and – insofar as it is active and autonomous – can be called freedom…"[14] Man is the incarnation of Reason on earth. In him – as a rational being – burns a divine spark. Therefore the historical task to realize the purpose of Reason rests upon his shoulders. This means that in *man* Reason comes to 'absolute knowledge', to knowledge of itself. This means that man has the task of knowing god.

‘ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE’ AS THE DUTY TO KNOW GOD

Hegel, therefore, vehemently attacks the “theory which has become a dogma, that it would be impossible to know god.”[15] He points to the Holy Scripture which prescribes it as the highest duty not only to love god, but also to know him. In the Christian religion god has revealed himself. Therefore he is no longer a secret and hidden god. With the possibility of knowing god we also have, according to Hegel, the duty to try to do so. Because “god does not want narrow-minded minds and nitwits as his children…”[16] Knowledge of god, however, is for Hegel not theological speculation about a metaphysical, otherworldly being. Because god has objectified himself in nature and in history, it is possible to know him when one knows nature and history. Hegel’s philosophy has, apparently, a strong pantheistic streak. But by attributing to man a prominent role in the abolition of Reason’s alienation his anthropology takes on a critical stance. Not only Reason, but also man has not yet become what he is *in principle*. The inner alienation of Reason is reproduced in man: not only Reason, but also man appears to be alienated. Only when man has reached ‘absolute knowledge’, knowledge of god, will this alienation be abolished. What religion approaches with emotion, philosophy approaches with reason. Because religion approaches god only emotionally, it cannot really understand god. This is only possible for philosophy, in which man rationally comes to ‘absolute knowledge’. The pretention of religion is not totally false, but only if one is conscious of the fact that it is only valid for a restricted period of time. When philosophy is able and ready to take religion’s place, religion has to disappear. However, religion will continue to exist – in an ‘elevated’ (*aufgehoben*)[17] form – through philosophy.

HEGEL AS NON-ALIENATED MAN

How can man come to ‘absolute knowledge’? According to Hegel, to achieve this an adequate knowledge of history is necessary. Unfortunately, he said, such an adequate knowledge could not be found in the philosophy of history of his time which segments history in different parts, according to certain categories and time periods. The result was like a rabbit pulled out of a magician’s hat: one gets out of it what has earlier been put in. With such an aprioristic construction, said Hegel, a real philosophy of history had nothing to do. Real philosophy of history neither added anything to history, nor did it take things away: it was a pure ‘thinking observation’ (*denkende Betrachtung*) which

reproduced history as it *was.* Only one thing was understood in this philosophy, namely that the history of the world is the history of Reason. Hegel, anticipating the objection that his 'real philosophy' also was based on an aprioristic principle, wrote: "What I have said for now and will continue to say, should not be understood – as concerns our science also – as a mere presupposition, but as an overview of the whole, as the result of the observation which we have to undertake, a result that is known to *me,* because I already know the whole."[18] Here Hegel is suggesting nothing less than having completed *himself* this 'thinking observation' of world history. In his – Hegel's – philosophy Reason would have come to knowledge of itself and, as such, world history would have been completed. Hegel would have fulfilled the vocation of humanity to know god. He would have abolished human alienation: the tension in man between his essence and his factual existence. Hegel, who, in his philosophy, would have reached 'absolute knowledge', is *non-alienated man.* He acts as a representative of mankind, which – by him – is redeemed of its alienation. Hegel, the philosopher, takes on clear messianic traits. Just as Christ redeemed mankind by taking on the sins of the world, Hegel abolishes human alienation because he has reached 'absolute knowledge'.

It is no surprise that Hegel's megalomaniac pretentions have drawn criticism from many sides. Not only because he thought he had reached 'absolute knowledge', but also because of his idea of history. By reaching the stage of 'absolute knowledge' history would be 'over'. Feuerbach was already asking "if it is possible that the species realizes itself in *one* individual… philosophy in *one* philosopher."[19] Feuerbach refused – rightly – to believe in a philosophical Messiah, or, as he calls him, a 'speculative Dalai Lama'. We see, said Feuerbach, that the earth continues to turn around after Hegel's 'completion of history'. And if this is the case, is then not also Hegel's philosophy only a time-bound interpretation, which "*nolens volens* from the rank of absolute reality of the Idea will be reduced to the more modest place of a certain and specific reality?"[20] And he continued: "Should Hegel's philosophy be the absolute reality of the Idea of philosophy, then the end of Reason in Hegel's philosophy would have as a necessary corollary the standstill of time, because when the time, as before, would continue its dreary course, then Hegel's philosophy would lose its characteristic of absoluteness."[21]

NO END OF HISTORY?

The fact that Hegel considered the history of philosophy and of spiritual life completed with his own philosophy, Ernst Bloch termed *beispiellos* (unparalleled). He wrote that it resembles the 'illusion of the solipsist' who thinks "that he is alone in the world and

that everything will sink away with him, the moment he falls asleep or dies."[22] There is, wrote Bloch, something grotesque and 'clown-like' in it. However, Bloch tried to explain Hegel's supposed megalomania by seeking motives which reached beyond the fear of a great philosopher of being outflanked by posterity. Finally, he thought he had found the solution in Hegel's *concept of science.* Science for Hegel could only possibly be concerned with what exists or has existed. The future does not yet exist, therefore it cannot be an object of science. A scientific futurology would for Hegel be a contradiction. Because for Hegel philosophy is the highest form of science, philosophy has to restrict itself to what exists. According to Bloch this 'Pathos of Concreteness' (*Pathos der Konkretion*) has led to Hegel's blindness to the future.

Georg Lukács, a prominent Hungarian Marxist philosopher, wrote: "Hegel's stopping at the present as the fulfilment of the Spirit… is reactionary."[23] However, later Lukács changed his position and came to the conclusion that for Hegel the 'end of history' was neither the end of real history, nor the end of *rational* history. He didn't think that Hegel considered his own philosophy as a static endpoint in which each movement of Reason freezes, but rather as a level at which movement is still possible without, however, reaching a higher level.[24] Indications for such an interpretation can certainly be found in Hegel's work. It is not that Hegel expected an apocalyptic end of the world after his death. If this were the case, why would he, in a letter to Uexküll in 1821, speculate about future developments in Russia? But it is certain that he did not expect a further *rational* development. In the Foreword to his Philosophy of Right he defines philosophy as "the comprehending of that which is present and real, not the drawing up of something transcendental."[25] Philosophy is therefore always time-bound. It is, according to Hegel, foolish to think that one can transcend the world of one's own time. When one tries to do this, one replaces real knowledge by 'fantastic phantasies' and utopian models of the future, which are not scientific. The concept 'future' is for Hegel not meaningless, but, as a reality which does not yet exist, it cannot be an object of philosophy. Only when the future becomes a reality is it open for philosophy. For Hegel, therefore, there is a possibility for future development, even for a philosophical development, but this philosophy will not lead to essentially new insights. It is clear that even in this more 'realistic' form, Hegel's philosophy still remains extremely pretentious. It is a closed, self-centered and self-referential system that presents itself as a quasi-autonomous spiritual universe, and is, therefore, a far cry from what philosophy is: modest attempts to understand reality, standing on the shoulders of the giants before us, and knowing all the while that all our knowledge is partial, biased, and incomplete, and that future generations will certainly be in a better position to comprehend the world – our own contemporary world included.

Although Hegel does not consider the development of Reason *as such* terminated with his own philosophy, he considers Reason's *essential* development as terminated. Because the moment the philosopher comes to 'absolute knowledge', it is Reason which comes to self-consciousness. But how does the philosopher reach this 'absolute knowledge'? Is it some kind of personal grace, bestowed upon the philosopher from heaven? No, for Hegel 'absolute knowledge' is not the result of some divine inspiration, but the result of a long historical process. Humanity has to work hard to reach this level. It is the result of an active process in which man, starting with a 'natural' consciousness, explores the surrounding world and thereby develops himself. Labor has, therefore, a central place in this process. Through his work man changes not only the object of his labor, but he himself, in turn, is changed by this object. By his labor also human consciousness changes. This *subject-object dialectic,* this reciprocity, which is the basic model of human labor, is for Hegel also the basis of the development of human consciousness. Labor, therefore, occupies a central place in Hegel's philosophy. In the classes he gave in Jena in the winter of 1803-1804, he was already speaking about it. Work, said Hegel, is no animal drive, but a *Weise des Geistes,* a spiritual act which belongs to the realm of Reason. Labor is what characterizes man. However, Hegel does not share the Judeo-Christian view that labor is the result of a curse after man was expelled from paradise. He rather supports the protestant vision that labor, coupled with an ascetic way of life, incarnates one of the highest human values. In the work ethos of the Reformation labor was no longer considered unilaterally as a *molestia,* as an annoyance born out of necessity, but also as an *opus,* as an achievement and a vocation to develop himself.

Hegel adopts this ambivalent character of labor. He describes it as 'negative behavior' (*negatives Verhalten*) vis-à-vis nature if it only serves as a means to satisfy one's needs. Man differs from the animal, which satisfies its needs directly, by producing himself the products he needs, albeit with the help of nature. Labor, however, the link between man and nature, is not purely negative – as in the case of animals – because man does not only consume and digest the products of nature. His labor destroys the existing form of nature, but at the same time gives it a new form. Labor, the intermediary between man and nature, takes place in an intermediate way – or, as Hegel says, it is *vermittelt.* This means that labor is exercised not in a direct way, but in an increasingly *indirect* way: it takes place with the help of tools and machines, which make the distance between nature and the human hand greater. It is not only tools and machines that increase the distance between the worker and nature, but also *society*. Through the development of

the division of labor man works less and less for the direct satisfaction of his own needs, but works increasingly for the satisfaction of the needs of others, while he himself is increasingly dependent on others for the satisfaction of his own needs. The division of labor, which enhances efficiency, at the same time makes the labor process more dull and monotonous, reducing it to a set of standardized gestures.

Like Schiller Hegel speaks about the debilitating character of machine work: "Work becomes absolutely deadening, it becomes machine work, the capability of the individual [becomes] endlessly more limited and the consciousness of the factory worker [becomes] degraded to the worst debility."[26] By using machines man is capable of dominating nature, but this has the negative consequence that "the more he dominates her, the more he degrades himself."[27] Because when man cultivates nature with the help of machines, "the remaining work becomes more machine-like."[28] Hegel does not explicitly mention *alienated labor,* but it is clear that work, described by Hegel as 'machine-like' and 'deadening', work through which the consciousness is degraded to the 'worst debility', is in fact alienated work, because the worker does not live up to the dignity and potential of man. With this criticism of alienated labor Hegel comes close to Schiller and Marx.

THE DIVISION OF LABOR AS A CATALYST OF THE GENERAL INTEREST

Alienated, machine-like labor is a consequence of the division of labor. Does this mean that Hegel rejects the division of labor? Hegel's position reminds one of Schiller's, who said that the division of labor was positive for *mankind as a whole*, but had disastrous consequences for *individuals.* Hegel considers that the division of labor has emancipated humanity *as a group* from nature – because it has led to a greater collective grip on nature – but at the same time it has strengthened the mutual dependence of individuals.[29] While mankind as a whole becomes more free vis-à-vis nature, individuals become less free because of this greater mutual interdependence. We see here a certain resemblance to Rousseau, who considered the division of labor as the origin of human unfreedom. Unlike Rousseau, however, Hegel does not emphasize this dependence, but rather the *chaotic* character of this dependence: "The relationship between the particular kind of labor with the total endless mass of needs [becomes] chaotic and a blind dependence, as a result of which a distant operation allows to stagnate the work with which a whole class of people earned their living and makes it superfluous and useless."[30]

Here Hegel is pointing to the fact that through the division of labor the workers in a market economy are subjected to the vagaries of the market. They are dominated by economic events over which they have no control. Hegel does not want to abolish the division of labor, which, of course, would be impossible, but he wants to change the blind way in which the market functions. He pleads for control not only over the market for goods, but also of the financial market. This early criticism of the financial market is striking. Hegel calls money, "a life of the dead, that moves and in its movement ebbs and flows, blindly, like the elements [and] that like a wild animal needs to be bridled and restrained continuously and rigorously."[31] However, Hegel does not propose concrete proposals to bridle the 'wild animal'. The significance of these remarks is to be found rather in the early consciousness of the problems of the market economy, which is expressed in them. Hegel is concerned about the fact that the economic process has become a 'second nature' which is spiraling out of control. While we manage to subjugate the real nature increasingly by our labor, we let ourselves increasingly dominate by this 'second nature' we have created ourselves. Hegel does not turn against the division of labor as such. Despite its negative consequences, such as degrading, alienating work, for him the division of labor has mostly positive consequences. These positive consequences are not only economical, but also *moral.* Through the division of labor people would develop an inclination to behave *socially.* In a society without the division of labor everyone would produce only for himself. In a society based on the division of labor everyone would, certainly, primarily work for his own subsistence, but "in this dependence and reciprocity of labor and the satisfaction of needs the subjective egoism transforms itself into a contribution to the satisfaction of the needs of all others … so that everyone – while earning money for himself, producing, consuming – thereby precisely produces and earns for the consumption of everyone else."[32] In the division of labor Hegel therefore discovers a tendency which points in the direction of the realization of the general interest.

HEGEL AND THE PROLETARIAT

Hegel – like Schiller – described the degrading character of factory work. This does not mean that he was criticizing capitalist class relations, as Marx would do after him. Like Schiller he kept his criticism within the confines of the existing society. Does this mean that he did not see the great social problems of his time, in particular the precarious situation of the proletariat? Hegel certainly had an eye for the social problems

of his time. This becomes clear from the way in which he describes civil society in his *Philosophy of Right*. He observes in civil society a process of population growth and industrial expansion. Because people are becoming more dependent on each other for the satisfaction of their needs, mutual coherence is also growing. Through the expansion of industrial modes of production, he wrote, "on the one hand the amassing of riches increases … and on the other hand the individualization and limitation of the particular labor and thereby the dependence and misery of this class, which is bound to this labor, to which is related the inability to experience and enjoy further freedoms and in particular the spiritual advantages of civil society."[33] Hegel is postulating clearly a relationship between the riches which are amassed by one class with the poverty and misery of the other class, but – unlike Marx – he does not postulate a *direct* relationship. He considers both to be consequences of the expansion of industrial production and the growth of the market economy. Riches and poverty appear in this way as the 'natural' consequences of industrial production and the market economy. Unlike Marx, who considers the misery of the working class to be a consequence of the capitalist structure of society in which the profits of entrepreneurs are the appropriated surplus value created by the workers, Hegel explains the accumulation of riches on the one side and the misery of the workers on the other by pointing to *technical* factors, such as the introduction of machines in the production process.

In his Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 Marx was to criticize the capitalist conditions in which the worker is forced to sell his labor. He considers it as the source of his alienation. For Hegel this is not the case. The sale of his labor does not degrade the worker: "I can sell particular parts of my physical and mental capabilities and possibilities, letting it be used by someone else for particular productions and for restricted time periods, because through this limitation they get an external relationship to my totality."[34] The worker, who sells his potential to work, is, according to Hegel, not alienated, because he gives up his freedom not definitively, but only for a limited period of time. Unlike the slave who has definitively lost his freedom, the worker does not belong to the capitalist. He remains a 'person', a subject of law who retains the freedom to renew or not renew the labor contract after its termination. As a free 'person' the worker is also equal to the factory owner with whom he makes a contract. Marx will later attack the *formal* character of this freedom and equality. Because the worker, who formally retains the freedom to renew or not renew the contract, is in reality forced to do so if he wants to earn a living for himself and his family.

Hegel's acceptance of wage labor under capitalist conditions does not mean that he accepts all consequences of the capitalist mode of production without any problem. He expresses his concern about problems that emerge because "a great mass goes down below the mark of a certain level of subsistence,"[35] which gives birth to the *Pöbel* (subproletariat). Hegel's concept of *Pöbel* is not identical with the working class or the proletariat. It is rather that part of the proletariat to which Marx later will refer as the *Sphäre des Pauperismus* (sphere of pauperism).[36] This group includes the lumpenproletariat and the unemployed. Hegel thinks that public agencies should be made responsible for this group, "as much because of its direct needs, as of its aversion of work, misdemeanor, and other vices that emerge from such a situation and the feeling of its injustice."[37] Hegel attributes to the public authorities the task of delivering material support, as well as a role in (re-)education. This does not mean that he is against support, offered by private welfare organizations. This welfare should be assessed in a positive way, because it helps "with feelings, with love." However, he added, "the public state of affairs… can be considered as more perfect, less there remains to be done for the individual to his opinion, compared with what has been organized in a public way."[38]

Hegel, therefore, is, indeed, concerned about the social problem.[39] In a modern way he even pleads for efficiently organized public provisions for the victims of the system. Ideas about the emancipation of the working class, however, are absent. But the solutions he proposes for the social problem open his eyes for some contradictions inherent in the capitalist system. In the first place he is conscious of the fact that his plea for entitlements without work does not fit with the work ethos of civil society. In case public agencies would supply the livelihood of the poor, their subsistence would be guaranteed, "without being mediated by labor, what goes against the principle of civil society and the feeling of its individuals concerning their autonomy and honor…"[40] A solution would be to let the unemployed earn their unemployment benefit by the creation of public works. However, wrote Hegel, by doing this "one would augment the total production, the abundance of which, together with the shortage of consumers who themselves are productive, is the evil, which in both ways would only be enhanced."[41] The creation of artificial employment for the unemployed would only enhance the overproduction which is the cause of the crisis and thus lead to an increase in unemployment.

Hegel here laid bare some of the contradictions of the capitalist system. When one supports the unemployed with public money, there emerges a contradiction with the

principle of civil society that the citizen earns an own income only with his labor and thus acquires an independent position. However, if one creates work for the unemployed, this will only lead to an increase in unemployment. These contradictions bring Hegel to the exclamation "that civil society with its abundance of riches is not rich enough, which means does not possess enough of its characteristic capital to make an end to the excess of poverty and the development of *Pöbel.*"[42] However, the contradictions mentioned by Hegel are not as absolute as they were presented by him. This becomes clear from the fact that in the modern welfare state the unemployed receive benefits without the duty of having to work for them. Insofar the principle of civil society has been adapted to the realities of the labor market. This adaptation was made easier by Keynes's theory of 'effective demand' which made clear that the financial support of the unemployed maintained the aggregate consumption above a certain minimum level, which had the effect to cushion the crisis. Also public works have occupied an important place in modern economic crisis management. The contradiction, mentioned by Hegel, one has tried to avoid by not engaging the unemployed in the production of consumer goods which would lead to an increased overproduction on the market. Before the Second World War one engaged the unemployed in great public works, such as building roads and canals. Nowadays one creates temporary jobs in the government and semi-government sector. These kind of jobs do not lead to a growth in industrial production and do not deepen the crisis. Because such solutions are only possible in the modern welfare state they remained outside Hegel's focus.

It is clear, however, that also these modern measures are only emergency solutions for the fundamental problem of the capitalist mode of production: the ever recurring cycles of economic expansion, overproduction, crisis, and unemployment. Hegel saw only the classic capitalistic solution for this problem. The crisis could, according to him, only be resolved by exploring new markets where the superfluous production could be sold. "By this dialectic," wrote Hegel, "civil society is lifted above itself, in the first place thís civil society, to seek outside itself in other peoples… consumers and thus the necessary means of subsistence."[43] However, there are limits to such an expansion of new markets. In the first place *relative* limits, because one has to face the competition of other capitalist nations, which also have to conquer new markets. In the second place *absolute* limits, because one cannot win more consumers than there are inhabitants in the world. These are problems which Marx will attack in his later political economic works, especially in the three volumes of *Capital.* Hegel has only a limited interest in economics. Although he observes the social problems of his time, he sees, contrary to Marx, no role for the proletariat in solving the social crisis.

THE PROLETARIAT: A DANGER FOR SOCIETY

The working class appears in Hegel's writings either as a *victim* of the economic situation, or as *Pöbel* – as lumpenproletariat – thus as a danger for society. In the *Vorlesungen* (lectures) of 1803-1804 there are references to the situation of the proletariat from which one can deduce that he considered the proletariat as a *victim* of the economic relations. He points, for instance, to the fact "that a faraway operation [i.e. the disappearance or diminution of demand] often makes the work of a whole class of people… superfluous and useless."[44] However, he regards the first beginnings of a primitive class consciousness as dangerous and menacing. Because the *Pöbel* is inclined to an "inner rebellion against the rich, against society, the government, et cetera."[45] Although one can explain this rebellion, he said, one cannot justify it. One can explain it, because the misery which has led to this emergency situation is not caused by a natural disaster – for which no-one is responsible – but by the functioning of society for which, finally, people are responsible. Because of these *social* roots of their misery the workers do not passively accept their fate: "Against nature no one can assert a claim, but in society a need takes immediately the form of an injustice inflicted on this or that class."[46] One would expect that Hegel would have a positive view of the consciousness of the proletariat that society is made by man and therefore can also be changed by man. Did he not in his lectures of 1803-1804 speak out against the 'blind dependence' of the people of their own product – therefore also against the blind dependence of the market mechanism? The contrary is true. He does not consider the primitive class consciousness of the *Pöbel,* its inner rebellion against a system which throws it out of employment and makes it destitute, as an important condition for its emancipation and for social change, but as 'evil' (*das Böse*). This 'evil' is caused by the fact that the proletariat "does not have the honor to earn its subsistence through work and nevertheless considers it as its right to be sustained."[47]

In Hegel's works one will look in vain for ideas about an emancipation of the working class. The reason for this is the very character of Hegel's philosophy. The emancipation of the working class would mean that the proletariat would be able to give their formal freedom and equality a concrete reality. The proletariat would, in this way, be able to bring about a rational reality (*vernünftige Wirklichkeit*). We have seen, however, that, according to Hegel, neither an individual, nor a group or a class, nor even humanity as a whole - acting alone - is capable to realize such a 'rational' reality. People who are 'morally dissatisfied' (*moralisch unzufrieden*) because the world they live in does not fit with their ideals of freedom and justice, are inclined to confront this reality with these ideals. These ideals, however, remain necessarily a powerless imperative, a

mere *phantasy* about a better future, because people lack the power to realize these ideals. Sometimes there are groups or classes which succeed to realize their ideals, in particular during revolutionary periods. However, Hegel said, not only is such a realization as a rule short-lived and transient, but, in addition, the ideals are most of the time already corrupted during their implementation. Because the revolutionary "thinks, maybe, that he wants some positive situation, for example the situation of general equality… but in fact he does not want its positive reality…"[48] The direct realization of the abstract ideal leads, according to Hegel, necessarily to a 'fury of destruction' (*Furie des Zerstörens*). Hegel's negative assessment of revolutionary praxis is clearly motivated by the trauma of the Terror period of the French Revolution. In this period reality was in a violent way modeled after the ideals of equality. Everything which did not fit with this abstract ideal of equality, was suppressed. It was a time in which 'all differences in talent, in authority, had to be abolished'. The result was the contrary of a 'rational' reality. Instead of happiness the citizens got fear and trepidation (*Erzitterung*).[49]

THE WORLD SPIRIT AS A REVOLUTIONARY

The impossibility for any human group or class to bring about a 'rational' reality was, according to Hegel, inherent to the human condition, namely the fact that all ideals people strive to realize "are shipwrecked on the cliff of the hard reality… and perish."[50] For this reason he would have labeled a revolutionary emancipation of the proletariat as a utopian phantasy. Because for Hegel there was only one instance capable of realizing the Rational: Reason – also called by him the World Spirit. It is Reason which, with an immanent necessity, gives reality a rational character. In this way Hegel takes the task to change the world in an emancipatory direction away from mankind and transfers it to the World Spirit. Although the World Spirit accomplishes his task *via* the actions of the people – by using his 'Cunning of Reason' – the people are not the real subjects of the historical process, because they lack an insight in the final meaning of their actions. They are just executors of the 'Cunning of Reason'. Like someone, who has been under hypnosis, afterward hears what he has done, so humanity gets only an insight in what it has accomplished after the completion of the task.

This is a far cry from a revolutionary change of reality, which presupposes that people strive for goals that they have *consciously* set for themselves. However, also the World Spirit is not the divine revolutionary Hegel pretends him to be. Habermas, rightly, emphasized the fact that also the World Spirit does not strive for a *conscious* and *rational*

goal in history. Although Hegel speaks about the 'Cunning of Reason' (*List der Vernunft*), this 'cunning' is *not* a goal that has been defined before its implementation: it is rather an unconscious drive. Because only *after* the realization of its 'cunning' the World Spirit constitutes itself as a *self*-conscious subject. Therefore it can only *afterwards* get an insight in the rational course of history. "Only after the cunning has been brought to an end there can be a World Spirit which can arrive at smart ideas."[51] Also the World Spirit is, therefore, no revolutionary who has formulated his emancipatory goals beforehand. According to Habermas we find in Hegel's World Spirit as the revolutionary who, in the end, is not allowed to be one Hegel's ambivalence toward the French Revolution: "Hegel wants to revolutionize reality without revolutionaries."[52]

NOTES

[1] Cf. Letter of Hegel to Schelling, Bern, April 16, 1795: "Schiller's *Horen*, two first pieces, have delighted me greatly; the essay on the aesthetic education of man is a masterpiece." (Quoted in Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel: A Reinterpretation,* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1966), 305).

[2] The term *Vernunft,* used in the classical German philosophy, and its adjective *vernünftig* are translated with respectively 'Reason' and 'rational', although these terms do not completely fit with the German original. 'Reason' rather fits with the German word *Verstand,* which is discursive reason. *Vernunft* implies not only a rational, but also a *moral* aspect. Therefore, one cannot reduce the realization of the *Vernunft* to a pure rational act. In general it has the connotation of the emancipation of mankind toward a greater freedom and equality. Hegel lifts the concept above the level of man and gives it a metaphysical meaning.

[3] Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte," *Werke,* Band 12, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), 49: "That can be called the *Cunning of Reason* which lets work the passions for itself, wherein that through which it realizes itself, diminishes and suffers a loss."

[4] Michael Landmann, *Philosophische Anthropologie,* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1964), 95.

[5] G.W.F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein Verlag, 1972), Paragraph 4, Zusatz, 25.

[6] Hegel, "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte," 30.

[7] Hegel, "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte," 21.

[8] Hegel, “Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte,” 21.

[9] Schiller, Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen, 27th Letter, 159.

[10] Schiller, Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen, 15th Letter, 91.

[11] Hegel, “Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte,” 99.

[12] Hegel, “Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte,” 98.

[13] Hegel, “Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte,” 104.

[14] Hegel, “Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte,” 50.

[15] Hegel, “Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte,” 26.

[16] Hegel, “Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte,” 27.

[17] The term *Aufhebung,* used by Hegel, has no literal equivalent in English. The verb *aufheben* combines three connotations: the first is ‘to end’; the second is ‘to elevate’, ‘to bring to a higher level’; and the third ‘to store’. These three connotations are essential for Hegel’s dialectic. A situation is ‘ended’ by negating it, which brings it to a higher level. But in this new – higher - situation, the original situation is not destroyed, but is *aufbewahrt:* it is stored.

[18] Hegel, “Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte,” 22.

[19] Ludwig Feuerbach, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie," in Ludwig Feuerbach, *Philosophische Kritiken und Aufsätze,* (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam jun., 1969), 27.

[20] Feuerbach, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie," 30.

[21] Feuerbach, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie," 29.

[22] Ernst Bloch, *Subjekt-Objekt – Erläuterungen zu Hegel,* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971), 442.

[23] Georg Lukács, "Moses Hess und die Probleme der idealistischen Dialektik (1)," in Georg Lukács, *Organisation und Partei,* (no editor, 1970), 93.

[24] Georg Lukács, *Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins – Hegels falsche und echte Ontologie,* (Neuwied am Rhein: Luchterhand, 1971), 17: "The coincidence of idea and present does not mean for Hegel to deny any movement, [but] only its reduction to shifts inside an essentially no longer changeable system."

[25] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* 11.

[26] G.W.F. Hegel, "Anhang zur Jenaer Realphilosophie – Ausarbeitung zur Geistesphilosophie von 1803/1804," in G.W.F. Hegel, *Frühe politische Systeme,* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein Verlag, 1974), 334.

[27] Hegel, "Anhang zur Jenaer Realphilosophie," 332.

[28] Hegel, "Anhang zur Jenaer Realphilosophie," 332.

[29] Dawydow describes the process of division of labor through which mankind as a whole becomes more free vis-à-vis nature, but the individuals less free, in the following way: "The universality of labor, which is an expression of the freedom of society as a whole, manifests itself more and more as a universal dependence, as a universal unfreedom of every single… working individual. It is about a dependence in which not even the animal finds itself." (Juri Dawydow, *Freiheit und Entfremdung,* (Frankfurt am Main: Marxistische Taschenbücher, 1970), 57.

[30] Hegel, "Anhang zur Jenaer Realphilosophie," 334.

[31] Hegel, "Anhang zur Jenaer Realphilosophie," 334.

[32] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 199, 179.

[33] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 243, 207.

[34] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 67, 74.

[35] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 244, 207.

[36] Cf. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital,* Band 1, op. cit., 673.

[37] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 241, 206.

[38] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 242, 207.

[39] Cf. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, Paragraph 244, Zusatz, 208: "The important question how to remedy poverty is one which occupies and torments in particular modern societies."

[40] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 245, 208.

[41] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* 208.

[42] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* 208.

[43] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 246, 209.

[44] Hegel, "Anhang zur Jenaer Realphilosophie," 334.

[45] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 244, Zusatz, 208.

[46] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* 208.

[47] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* 208.

[48] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 5, 28.

[49] In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel wrote in the paragraph "The absolute freedom and terror" on the period of *Terreur* in the French Revolution: "The universal freedom can produce no positive work or action … it is the fury of disappearance." (G.W.F. Hegel, "Phänomenologie des Geistes," *Werke,* Band 3, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), 435-436).

[50] Hegel, “Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte,” 52.

[51] Jürgen Habermas, “Hegels Kritik der Französischen Revolution,” in Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie und Praxis – Sozialphilosophische Studien,* (Neuwied am Rhein, Luchterhand, 1969), 105.

[52] Habermas, “Hegels Kritik der Französischen Revolution,” 105.

Chapter Four

Ludwig Feuerbach: Religion as Self-Projection

FEUERBACH AS A YOUNG HEGELIAN

Hegel's philosophy had a great influence on his contemporaries. Immediately after his death his philosophical system had already gained the status of a semi-official Prussian state philosophy. Hegel was simultaneously a huge source of inspiration and exasperating fact. A source of inspiration because of the depth of his work's reflection and its broad range. Hegel's philosophy treated the most diverse subjects: philosophy of nature, philosophy of history, logic, aesthetics, epistemology, ethics, politics, and the philosophy of the state. However, at the same time his philosophy was an exasperating fact because of its closed and monolithic character. One had to accept or reject Hegel's system as a whole: there seemed to be nothing in between. However, the generation of young, critical philosophers after Hegel – who soon gained the name of 'Young Hegelians' – were to try to escape from the difficult choice of 'taking it or leaving it'. They would attempt to criticize the foundations of Hegel's system and attack its monolithic character, while saving the richness of its contents. Ludwig Feuerbach was also a member of this group. While most Young Hegelians had followed the classes of Hegel's assistant Eduard Gans and knew Hegel only indirectly, Feuerbach, on the contrary, had followed Hegel's classes. At first he studied theology in Heidelberg, but in the spring of 1824 he had moved to Berlin. In Berlin he soon gave up his study of theology to dedicate himself to philosophy. Of this period he wrote:

> "[I] went to Berlin to hear Hegel, but at the same time the most renowned theologians there also. I joined the University of Berlin in a most unhappy, undecisive state, divided within myself. I already felt in myself the division

between theology and philosophy, the necessity to make the categorical decision either for one or the other. I decided in favor of philosophy."[1]

Feuerbach's admiration for Hegel was great. This becomes clear from the review he wrote in the *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik* (Yearbooks for Scientific Critique) on Hegel's lectures on the history of philosophy, which were published posthumously in 1835. He praised Hegel's philosophy as follows: "No historian has yet described the philosophy of the past with such an ardency as Hegel's … His history is and guarantees… without doubt the first real knowledge of the history of philosophy, [which] discloses to us the real meaning of the different systems, an understanding of them."[2] Also two years later, when he wrote a study on the philosopher Leibniz, titled *Darstellung, Entwicklung und Kritik der Leibnizschen Philosophie* (Presentation, Development, and Critique of Leibniz's Philosophy), he confessed himself to be in Hegel's idealistic tradition. Like Hegel, in the spirit-matter relationship he attributed primacy to the spirit and he even went so far as to declare materialism to be an idealism, because it would only be 'an intermediary link in the development of the spirit, only a secondary, particular product'.

FEUERBACH'S CRITICISM OF RELIGION

However, in his Leibniz study of 1837 one can already find some passages which deviate from Hegel. These concern the relationship between philosophy and religion. Hegel did not attack religion from the standpoint of his philosophy, but attributed religion its own place in the development of Reason. According to him religion approached the divine-absolute with *feeling,* while philosophy approached the divine-absolute – on a higher level – with the *intellect*. For him, therefore, it was not necessary to attack religion, because in the end it would – slowly and surely – be elevated (aufgehoben) in the philosophy. However, Feuerbach was already taking a more rigorous stance vis-à-vis religion and he distanced himself here clearly from Hegel. "Belief," he wrote, "was recognized by the philosophers of the new age, but in such a way as, for instance, a wife is still [recognized] by the husband as a rightful person, when inwardly he lives in discord with her; it was not a recognition of love and unity; it was a recognition which was pure endurance…"[3] Hegel's positive evaluation of religion is not accepted by Feuerbach. For him a peaceful coexistence between philosophy and religion is impossible: "It was therefore necessary for this internal alienation and split between belief and reason to be expressed as a direct

contradiction … In this way man was internally split, confirming through his belief, or rather imagining that he could confirm, what he denied directly with his reason."[4] And he continued: "The success of science, the birth of the creative mind, is only bound to the downfall of belief." Religion and also theology, which is religion presenting itself with an aura of science, should not in a Hegelian sense be 'elevated' by philosophy, because then they would still be preserved, but they should simply disappear.

FROM IDEALISM TO NATURALISM

This negative evaluation of religion is the basis of Feuerbach's transition from an idealistic to a naturalistic-materialist standpoint. For Hegel nature was only the objectification (*Entäusserung*) of the Spirit. Nature, therefore, for him lacked any autonomy, it was only a different incarnation (*Anderssein*) of the Spirit. Feuerbach would gradually leave this standpoint, emphasizing the autonomy of nature. In his essay *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie* (On the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy) of 1839 he wrote: "For the philosophy of nature there exists *only* nature, for idealism only spirit…" And he asked: "How do we leave this dualism behind us?"[5] The solution, he continued, has to be sought by putting neither the spirit, nor only nature as the absolute, because … the absolute is spirit *and* nature … the unity of spirit and nature."[6] This new point of view has important consequences for his philosophy. The absolute which is the subject of philosophy, is no longer the spirit – as it was for Hegel – but the *unity* of spirit and nature. And because this unity is embodied in man, he declared "the essence of man the highest subject of philosophy."[7]

Feuerbach distanced himself definitively from Hegel, whose philosophy he called 'rational mysticism'. Moreover he was clearly thinking of Hegel when he wrote: "Vanity is… all speculation which wants to transcend nature and man."[8] Feuerbach sings the praise of nature. However, this nature is not the dead matter of the eighteenth century mechanical materialists, it is a nature of an immense richness, a nature which has produced not only all organic life on earth, but also something very exceptional: the human mind. "Nature," wrote Feuerbach, "not only built the trivial workshop of the stomach, but also the temple of the brain…"[9] Nature is also not a sphere of exclusively causal processes in which there is no place for freedom, as mechanical materialists wanted us to believe. On the contrary, nature makes ample place for freedom: "Nature resists only fantastic freedom, but she does not contradict rational freedom."[10] It is nature and not Hegel's speculative *Geist,* which, from now on, becomes for Feuerbach the alpha and omega of

all what exists. Nature is not a product of the spirit, rather the *human* spirit – and that is the only form in which the spirit exists – is a product of nature. Philosophy should, therefore, turn away from all unrealistic speculation and turn itself toward nature: "Philosophy is the science of reality in its truth and totality; but the totality of reality is *nature* (nature in the most universal sense of the word). The most profound secrets lie in the simplest natural things, which the fantastic speculator, craving the metaphysical, kicks aside. The return to nature is the only source of salvation."[11] This 'return to nature' reminds one of Schiller's emancipation of the senses. It cannot be discounted, therefore, that Schiller (and Goethe) had an influence on Feuerbach's transition to naturalism. Feuerbach, for instance, quoted approvingly from the correspondence between Goethe and Schiller.[12] Moreover, without a doubt the great interest Feuerbach had in this period for the physical sciences must also have played a role. He was actively engaged in physiology, botany, entomology, anatomy, and geology. The great progress, made by these empirical sciences compared with the (mostly speculative) humanities will certainly have inspired him to give man and nature a central place in his philosophy.

THE GENETIC-CRITICAL METHOD

Feuerbach not only changed the object of philosophy, he also distanced himself from Hegel concerning the idea of what essentially is philosophy. Hegel's philosophy was conceived to *understand* reality. According to Feuerbach Hegel went so far as to understand many things as 'rational' which were in fact of 'dubious nature' (*dubiöser Natur*). "In particular Hegel had interpreted some notions which merely express subjective needs as objective truth, because he did not go back to the source, the *need* on which these notions were based…"[13] Hegel's philosophy was critical in that it tried to separate the essential from the non-essential. However, for Feuerbach this was not sufficient. Philosophy had to be *genetic*-critical. This he explained as follows: "The genetic-critical philosophy is that [philosophy] which demonstrates and understands an object, presented by the imagination, not in a dogmatic way, but explores its *origin,* and thus doubts whether the object is a real object or only an image, maybe only a psychological phenomenon, that therefore makes a very strict difference between what is subjective and objective."[14] Feuerbach wanted to apply this genetic criticism not so much to objects given in the immediate experience of the senses, but in particular to ideas with which no concrete experience corresponded. He criticized, for instance, the concept 'nothingness', which Hegel in his logic conceives as something real. 'Nothingness' could perhaps, according

to Feuerbach, exist in our imagination, but that did not mean that one could conclude that it really existed. In Feuerbach's words: "We have also an image of a ghost, however, does it therefore earn a place in psychology as something real? The only way it belongs in philosophy is in order to explore the origin of ghost seeing and ghost belief."[15]

PROJECTION AND RELIGIOUS ALIENATION

With this criticism begins a new phase in Feuerbach's development. In his 'idealistic' period he had already criticized religion, but at that point his criticism was not yet directed against the *object* of religion: the divine spirit, because in that period he himself still considered the spirit as something absolute. His criticism still concerned only the *way in which* one could know this absolute. According to him religion and theology stood in the way of scientific progress by their stubborn adherence to certain dogmas. From now on, however, his criticism becomes much more radical, attacking directly the very *object* of religion. Having declared nature, and in particular natural *man,* the highest philosophical principle, there was no longer a place for a metaphysical spirit or a supra-natural god. Moreover, with the genetic-critical method he had developed an instrument to criticize the concept of 'god'. Was not this concept in particular suitable for analysis by this method, as it corresponded with nothing in empirical experience. For two years Feuerbach dedicated himself to the task he had set himself: to write a book in which he applied the genetic-critical method to the Christian religion. When the result of this work, titled *Das Wesen des Christentums* (The Essence of Christianity), was published in June 1841, it would lead to a revolution in the thinking about religion. It is in this book that Feuerbach for the first time formulated his theory of *religious alienation.* The central question he asked was: who or what is god? Is god a real person, as he is presented in the Christian religion, or is he simply a product of the human imagination? In other words: do we have to explain man by god, or god by man? For centuries theology had explained man by god. Feuerbach will turn things upside down and explain god by man.

Two years earlier, in his essay On the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy, he had already declared man and in particular man's essence to be the highest reality. Now he would try to prove that religion and theology are, in reality, not sciences about god, but sciences about *man.* "Man," he wrote, "cannot go beyond his true essence. Through his imagination he can, to be sure, conceive of individuals of another, so-called higher nature, but he can never again abstract from his species, his essence; the essential characteristics he gives to these other individuals are always characteristics derived

from his own essence – characteristics in which in truth he portrays and objectifies himself."[16]

Humanity will always be at the highest level of importance to itself. It can never go beyond itself. If humanity nevertheless creates images of a higher being, then it is itself that is being projected. The explanation of these images should, therefore, be sought in *itself*. This is a completely new approach toward religion. "God," wrote Feuerbach, "is man's *exposed* soul, [man's] *articulated* self; religion is the celebratory revelation of man's hidden treasures…"[17] "The absolute essence, man's god, is *his own essence*."[18] When people imagine a god and attribute to him all kinds of characteristics, then it is their *own* essence which they project. The love, wisdom, and existence which they praise in god, is their *own* love, their *own* wisdom, and their *own* existence. "You believe in love as a divine characteristic because you yourself are loving, you believe that god is a wise, benevolent being, because you know nothing better about yourself than goodness and wisdom, and you believe that god exists, that therefore he is a subject or being… because you yourself exist, you yourself are a being."[19] In religion man does not project *all* his characteristics, but only his most *sublime* characteristics onto a being which does not exist.

In religion, therefore, man has his own essence as his object: "The consciousness of god is man's self-consciousness, the knowledge of god man's self-knowledge." This does not mean that man comes to a *real* consciousness of himself in religion: "However, when religion, the consciousness of god, is referred to as man's self-consciousness, then this does not mean that religious man would be directly aware of the fact that his consciousness of god is the self-consciousness of his own essential nature, because the lack of this consciousness is precisely the foundation of the particular character of religion. In order to avoid this misunderstanding it is better to say: religion is man's *first,* namely *indirect* self-consciousness."[20] In religion humanity does not come to a *real* self-consciousness. On the other hand Feuerbach considers religious projection as a *necessary condition* for the development of this self-consciousness: "Man puts his essence *outside himself,* before he finds it within himself."[21] Here he is making a comparison with a child that also has first to experience itself as an object before it can discover its own identity. This becomes clear from an early age in the way it talks. A child speaks in the beginning about himself in the third person ('John wants…') and only later in the first person ('I want…'). What is true for the development of each individual, is equally true, says Feuerbach, for the development of humanity as a whole. Therefore he calls religion 'the childish essence of humanity.' Humanity will only be grown-up when it recognizes its religious projection as its own essence. Only then it will have

acquired self-consciousness. This will be the case when religion has been replaced by philosophy. Because religion and philosophy have the same subject: the essence of man. But in contrast with the philosophical consciousness the religious consciousness is not aware of this.

Like Hegel Feuerbach considers religion the preliminary phase of philosophy. But unlike Hegel he does not consider philosophy a rational *continuation* of religion. Between religion and philosophy he postulates a clear *rift:* the two cannot go together. The task of philosophy is to unmask religion as man's projection. After this *démasqué* religion's role is over. Because then it will be clear that the characteristics which were attributed to god are not divine because *god* possesses them, but that god can only be god *due* to these characteristics. Not god, but these characteristics are, therefore, the absolute, which means that when we give up god, we don't have to give up these characteristics. Feuerbach does not consider himself to be a real atheist: "A true atheist… is therefore only the one for whom the characteristics of the divine being, such as love, wisdom and justice, don't have any meaning, but not the one for whom only the subject of these characteristics has no meaning."[22] Humanity which comes to self-consciousness declares god to be dead, but not his qualities, because in these qualities it recognizes itself. Feuerbach's emphasis on human qualities and human values as the basis of religion, decoupling these values from a 'divine ontology', which was revolutionary in his time, is still a source of inspiration for modern thinkers. Ronald Dworkin, for instance, in his book *Religion Without God,* wrote in the same vein: "The conviction that a god underwrites value … presupposes a prior commitment to the independent reality of that value. That commitment is available to nonbelievers as well."[23] And he added: "What divides godly and godless religion – the science of godly religion – is not as important as the faith in value that unites them."[24]

NOTES

[1] Letter from Feuerbach to Ludwig Noack of June 23, 1846, quoted by Walter Kaufmann in "An Unknown Feuerbach Autobiography," *The Times Literary Supplement,* January 2, 1976.

[2] Quoted in Paul Kägi, *Genesis des historischen Materialismus – Karl Marx und die Dynamik der Gesellschaft* (Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1965), 98-99.

[3] Kägi, *Genesis des historischen Materialismus,* 101.

[4] Kägi, *Genesis des historischen Materialismus,* 101.

[5] Ludwig Feuerbach, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie," in Ludwig Feuerbach, *Philosophische Kritiken und Grundsätze,* Werner Schuffenhauer (ed.), (Leipzig: Reclam, 1969), 57.

[6] Feuerbach, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie," 57.

[7] Feuerbach, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie," 70.

[8] Feuerbach, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie," 71.

[9] Feuerbach, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie," 71.

[10] Feuerbach, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie," 71-72.

[11] Feuerbach, “Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie,” 71.

[12] Feuerbach, “Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie,” 27.

[13] Feuerbach, “Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie,” 63.

[14] Feuerbach, “Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie,” 61-62.

[15] Feuerbach, “Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie,” 67.

[16] Ludwig Feuerbach, “Das Wesen des Christenthums,” in Ludwig Feuerbach, *Sämtliche Werke,* Band 6, Wilhelm Bolin and Friedrich Jodl (eds), (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1960), 14. Ideas about religious projection, however, could be found already in German thinkers before Feuerbach. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, for instance, wrote: “God created man in his own image, which means, probably, that man created god in his own [image].” (Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-1799), *Aus den Sudelbüchern,* selected by Hannah Arnold and Heinz Ludwig Arnold, (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2008), 73).

[17] Feuerbach, “Das Wesen des Christenthums,” 15.

[18] Feuerbach, “Das Wesen des Christenthums,” 6.

[19] Feuerbach, “Das Wesen des Christenthums,” 22.

[20] Feuerbach, “Das Wesen des Christenthums,” 16.

[21] Feuerbach, “Das Wesen des Christenthums,” 16.

[22] Feuerbach, “Das Wesen des Christenthums,” 26.

[23] Ronald Dworkin, *Religion Without God,* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 1-2.

[24] Dworkin, *Religion Without God,* 29.

Part II

Young Marx's Theories of Alienation and Revolution

Influences of Schiller, Rousseau, Hegel, Feuerbach, and Ruge

Chapter Five

Marx and Schiller:

Marx's First, Unknown, Theory of Alienation

THE INFLUENCE OF SCHILLER'S THEORY OF ALIENATION ON THE ADOLESCENT MARX

In discussing Marx's theory of alienation, one is mainly concerned with his theory of alienated labor, such as he has elaborated in the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844." Sometimes his theories of religious and political alienation, which preceded this, are mentioned. To the best of my knowledge it has never before been mentioned that rudimentary thoughts about alienation were already present in a period where he had not yet developed a crystalized theory of alienation: his school days. Nevertheless, during that period we can already see the earliest thinking in terms of alienation. Schiller's influence has played an important role here. In order to follow the trail of Schiller's influence we must return to one of Marx's earliest theses, namely his final paper for German, which he wrote at the age of seventeen and which was titled: "Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of Profession." This paper, which gives a good insight into the thinking world of the adolescent Marx, begins as follows:

> "Nature herself has determined the sphere of activity in which the animal should move, and it peacefully moves within that sphere, without attempting to go beyond it, without even an inkling of any other. To man, too, the Deity gave a general aim, that of ennobling mankind and himself, but he left it to man to seek the means by which this aim can be achieved; he left it to him to choose the position in society most suited to him, from which he can best uplift himself and society."[1]

The powerful idea of *emancipation* behind these sentences is immediately recognizable: man should not – like an animal – be satisfied with the situation he finds himself in, but he must improve society and himself. A close relationship exists between alienation and emancipation. If one experiences the existing situation or elements thereof as alienated, then this usually leads to ideas about emancipation through which this situation must be changed.[2]

Marx, at that moment, however, does not yet experience reality as alienating. He sees the existing reality as in principle 'reasonable' (*vernünftig*), although this does not mean that for him this reasonable reality cannot be and should not be further improved. The idea of emancipation is thus already present, although in a *general* and *abstract* form. The 'elevation of society' he strives for still remains mainly an abstract ideal. Because it is not yet clear to him what that elevation is actually like and how it should take place. What is especially noticeable about the above-mentioned quotation is the terminology used by Marx. Thus he talks about a 'general goal to *ennoble* humanity and himself'. We recognize here a term which is already familiar to us from Schiller's theory of alienation, which indicated the 'ennoblement' of humanity as a solution to alienation. Of course, the use of this one term is not in itself a sufficient reason to presume an influence by Schiller on Marx. However, there are more indications which make such an interpretation plausible. When Marx for example, a little further on, is concerned with the necessity of choosing a profession that is not at the expense of our physical condition, he phrases it as follows:

> "It is true that we can rise above it [our physical condition], but then our downfall is all the more rapid, for then we are venturing to build on crumbling ruins, then our whole life is an unhappy struggle between the mental and the bodily principle. But he who is unable to reconcile the warring elements within himself, how can he resist the tempestuous stress, how can he act calmly? And it is from calm alone that great and fine deeds can arise; it is the only soil in which ripe fruits successfully develop."[3]

We have seen how Schiller tried to overcome the ethics that were one-sidedly based on the suppression of the passions. He saw both as alienated: the one who excessively suppresses his natural passions and the one who excessively satisfies them. 'Form impulse' and 'sense impulse' were, according to him, entangled in a continuous fight. When one of the passions managed to suppress the other and developed itself at the expense of the other, alienation was the consequence. Only through a *harmonious, simultaneous* satisfaction of both impulses could alienation be abolished. He thought this harmony could be achieved through the 'play impulse', which unites the other two impulses and thus brings their fight to en and.

Let us now look at Marx. We see that he also regards a one-sided suppression of the passions as *negative.* According to him man can rise above his physical condition by a one-sided suppression of the passions, but then our whole life is 'an unhappy struggle between the mental and the bodily principle'. It is not difficult to recognize Schiller's fight between 'form impulse' and 'sense impulse' in this struggle. But the analogy goes even further. Just as Schiller wants to end the struggle between both passions in a *harmony,* so Marx wants to *reconcile* the warring elements. Because only then can 'great and fine deeds … arise'. The analogous meaning of Schiller's 'harmony' and Marx's 'calm' is striking.[4] And although Schiller is not named anywhere, a direct or indirect influence on Marx by Schiller seems very probable.

SCHILLER IN MARX'S POEMS

Even Marx's poems, written in his youth, give an indication in this direction. When Marx went to Bonn to study law after completing secondary school, in his first year literary aspirations awoke in him. At this time he wrote a large number of poems, both short and long. Although most of his poems are intensely romantic and rather inflated in tone and Marx himself later regards them as the sins of his youth, they are of importance here, because Schiller and Goethe are named by him with much reverence in some of these poems. Thus in the "Epigrams" which, due to their sarcastic tone, are among his best poems, he criticizes the German petty bourgeois, who has the audacity to measure great minds, such as Schiller and Goethe, against his own narrow-minded norms. These German petty bourgeois find Schiller too bombastic[5] and Goethe a fine writer.[6] But if they have to choose between them, they prefer Schiller:

> "Schiller was surely nearer the mark,
>
> You can read his ideas in letters stark,
>
> His thoughts are there in black and white,
>
> Though it's hard to fathom the meaning aright."[7]

Marx clearly alludes to Schiller's "On the aesthetic education of man." From such allusions one could conclude that Marx had read this work and was, therefore, directly familiar with Schiller's theory of alienation.

Another – indirect – line of influence is Marx's father. He was a great admirer of Schiller. This is evident in, among other things, a letter he wrote to his son in early 1836, when he had just started studying. He warns Marx not to publish prematurely his poems. "You would do well," he writes, "to wait before going to print. A poet, a writer, must nowadays have the calling to provide something sound if he wants to appear in public."[8] His father then sets him Schiller as an example: "Only the excellent have the right to claim the attention of a pampered world which has a Schiller…"[9] It becomes clear that his father is not only a great admirer of Schiller as a man of letters, but also as a philosopher and is strongly influenced by Schiller's *theory of alienation,* from a letter which he writes to Marx on December 9, 1837. He states that Marx must use his natural gifts and talents in order to 'ennoble' himself. How should one conceive this 'ennoblement'?

> "One is a human being, a spiritual being, and a member of society, a citizen of the state. Hence physical, moral, intellectual and political ennoblement. Only if unison and harmony are introduced into the efforts to attain this great goal can a beautiful, attractive whole make its appearance… only the endeavor to extend ennoblement in due, equal proportion to all parts is evidence of the will to prove oneself worthy of these gifts; only through the evenness of this distribution can a beautiful structure, true harmony, be found. Indeed, if restricted to individual parts, the most honest endeavors not only do not lead to a good result, on the contrary, they produce caricatures: if restricted to the physical part – simpletons; if to the moral part – visionaries; if to the political part – intriguers; and if to the intellectual part – learned boors."[10]

It is Schiller's *theory of alienation* which Marx's father here confronts his son with. Not only can one recognize Schiller's use of terminology ('ennoblement', 'harmony'), but also the text completely agrees with Schiller's views: every one-sided development is fundamentally wrong, because this only produces caricatures. Only through an equable and well-balanced development of his talents does man reach inner harmony and can he 'ennoble' himself.

We see thus that Marx's thought, at a stage when influence of Hegel or Feuerbach definitely could not be the case, was already influenced by a theory of alienation: Friedrich Schiller's theory of alienation. His father's influence has most probably played a large role here. In the few letters which have survived, it becomes clear that Marx's father thought was wholly in the categories of Schiller's theory of alienation. It is well-known that Marx cherished a great respect for his father, to whom he even dedicated his poems.[11] This respect must certainly have contributed toward the fact that Marx inherited these ideas so readily from his father. Thus, when, several years later, Marx began to develop his own theory of alienation, this should not be seen as a completely new development. In fact it is the further development of his thought as an adolescent. As far as I know this influence of Schiller's theory of alienation on young Marx has not been analyzed earlier.[12] In Marx's later work also – having distanced himself from his own theories of alienation for a long time – there are still some parts which bear a strong resemblance to Schiller's theory of alienation. Thus, for example, he speaks in the third part of *Capital* of

> "Capitalist production … more than any other mode of production, it squanders human lives, or living labor, and not only blood and flesh, but also nerve and brain. Indeed, it is only by dint of the most extravagant waste of individual development that the development of the human race is at all safeguarded and maintained in the epoch of history immediately preceding the conscious reorganization of society."[13](13)

Who cannot help but thinking of Schiller's statement that the development of the human race *as a whole* takes place always at the expense of the development of the *individual*? Marx, similarly to Schiller, does not see this as a necessary process. It happens, according to him, only in the 'prehistory', i.e. in the period of the capitalist mode of production, but will happen no longer in the era of socialism, the era of the 'conscious reorganization of society'. That the 'mature' Marx also thought in these categories is perhaps a sign that Schiller's theory of alienation not only influenced him in his earliest youth, but also – perhaps subconsciously – in the later years of his life.

NOTES

[1] Karl Marx, "Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession," in *Marx and Engels Collected Works,* Vol. 1, (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1975), 3.

[2] An exception must be made here for nineteenth century positivism, which saw alienation as a given *fact*, without drawing from it the conclusion that emancipation was necessary. Cf. Bronisław Baczko, *Weltanschauung, Metaphysik, Entfremdung – Philosophische Versuche,* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969).

[3] Marx, "Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession," 7.

[4] It is interesting that Marx uses the *physiological* notion of 'calm' (*Ruhe*) instead of the *aesthetical* notion of 'harmony'. An indication of his later naturalism?

[5] Karl Marx, "Epigrams," in *Marx and Engels Collected Works,* Vol. 1, op. cit., p. 577:

"Of Schiller there's no reason to complain,
Who couldn't more humanly entertain.
Endowed with an elevating mind,
He didn't stick to the daily grind.
He played with Thunder and Lightning much,
But totally lacked the common touch."

[6] Marx, "Epigrams," 578:

"But Goethe's taste was too nicely ordered;
He'd rather see Venus than something sordid."

[7] Marx, "Epigrams," 578.

[8] Letter from Heinrich Marx to Karl Marx, beginning of 1836, in *Marx and Engels Collected Works,* Vol. 1, op. cit., 650.

[9] Letter from Heinrich Marx to Karl Marx, beginning 1836, 651.

[10] Letter from Heinrich Marx to Karl Marx of December 9, 1837, in *Marx and Engels Collected Works,* Vol. 1, op. cit., 687.

[11] Concerning Marx's relationship with his father, Marx's daughter Eleanor wrote for example: "Marx was very close to his father. He never tired of talking about him and always carried his picture with him…" in *Die Neue Zeit,* 1897, No. 1.

[12] Not even by Heinrich Popitz, who in his book *Der entfremdete Mensch – Zeitkritik und Geschichtsphilosophie des jungen Marx*, (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1968), covers Schiller's theory of alienation, but does not show any direct link between Schiller and Marx. This possibility is previously ruled out by him, because he divides Marx's youth into three periods of which the first only begins in 1838 (Cf. Heinrich Popitz, 7). Marx's German paper dates from 1835.

[13] Karl Marx, *Capital,* Vol. 3, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977), 88.

Chapter Six

‘The True State’:
Marx’s Earliest – Liberal – Political Ideal

MARX AS A YOUNG HEGELIAN

When, at the age of seventeen, Marx entered the University of Bonn, this law student had only one great ambition: to become a literary writer like Goethe, Schiller, or Joseph von Eichendorff. He was a prolific writer of poetry, who sent the results of his inspiration to his fiancé, Jenny von Westphalen, who was four years his senior. However, in his poetry there were already indications of the romantic *Weltschmerz,* this ‘world weariness’ from which many of his contemporaries also suffered. In a letter he wrote to his father on November 10, 1837, he mentioned the separation of ideal and reality as one of the main themes of his poetry: “The complete opposition of what exists and what should exist characterizes all the poems of the first three volumes which Jenny was sent by me.”[1] In this letter he criticizes the fantasy world he sought in his poems. What else was this ideal world other than a ‘distant beyond’ (*fernliegendes Jenseits*) and he asked himself what exactly was the value of these poetic ‘attacks on the present’. The only result, he wrote, was that ‘all that is real becomes vague’. Marx criticized the romantic illusionary world which he had sought earlier in his poetry.

Why this sudden self-criticism? Marx had moved from Bonn to the University of Berlin and it was in particular the influence of Hegel’s philosophy which brought about this change of attitude. When Marx for the first time became acquainted with Hegel’s philosophy he was scared off by Hegel’s enormous pretentions and his obscure style. In the same letter he wrote his father: “I had read fragments of Hegel’s philosophy, but didn’t like their bizarre melody.”[2] However, in Berlin he came into contact with the so called *Doktorklub,* a group of progressive Young Hegelians. Under their influence

he overcame his aversion and immersed himself once more in Hegel's philosophy. He wrote: "One time I still wanted to dive in the sea, but with the strong intention… no longer of practicing the art of fencing, but to hold pure pearls against the sunlight."[3] During this period Marx wanted to approach Hegel's philosophy in a positive way in order to find the valuable elements also contained within it. He wrote: "I chained myself more and more to the present world philosophy, from which I thought I had escaped…"[4]

Marx's 'immersion' in Hegel's philosophy also becomes clear from the rest of the letter in which he criticizes his own earlier attempt to write a philosophy of right. This self-critique is written in *Hegelian* terminology. The criticism of his own poems, which he had already expressed earlier, also comes back: "Here there appeared in particular the very disturbing opposition between reality and what [ideally] should be, which is characteristic of idealism."[5] Here Marx is applying Hegel's critique of Kant's abstract *Sollen,* Kant's abstract moralism, to himself. Hegel did not want to hold the Idea as an abstract ideal against existing reality, but wanted to seek it in reality itself.[6] Marx said he was no longer satisfied with abstract ideals which stand far away from the existing reality, but that he wanted to reconcile ideal and reality: "I came to [the point of view] to seek the Idea in reality itself. If before, the gods had lived above the earth, now they had become its center."[7] This emphasis on the earthly *here and now* will prove to be very important for the further development of Marx's theory of alienation.

THE YOUNG HEGELIANS' ATTACK ON RELIGION:

DAVID STRAUSS AND BRUNO BAUER

However, under the influence of the Young Hegelians Marx was to distance himself from Hegel as concerns the question *how* idea and reality should be reconciled. We have seen that for Hegel the history of the world was not the autonomous development of humanity, but the objectification of an absolute Spirit. Not man, but the Spirit was the subject of history, instrumentalizing the actions of mankind to reach its goal: absolute knowledge. The Young Hegelians rejected any dependence of man on a higher being. History had to be explained only by reference to man without taking refuge in metaphysical principles. This meant a fundamental attack on the ontological principles of Hegel's philosophy, because not the divine Spirit, but the human self-consciousness was the ultimate basis of being and should, therefore, be the foundation of all philosophy.

The Young Hegelians' critique of Hegel's philosophy, however, did not stand alone, but was a part of a broader critique which also a critique of (the Christian) religion. Here, one of the Young Hegelians, David Friedrich Strauss, played a prominent role. In 1835 he published a book, titled *Das Leben Jesu* (The Life of Jesus) in which he analyzed the four gospels and showed that there existed many contradictions between them, which led him to the conclusion that one could not take them seriously as trustworthy historical sources. This critique of the Christian revelation went deeper than those of the eighteenth century French materialists. These had also rejected the Christian scriptures, but only on the basis of inconsistencies with their own daily experience. They denied, for instance, the possibility of miracles, which were reported in the different gospels, because these contradicted their experience that natural laws could not be suspended.

Strauss's approach was different: by exposing the contradictions that existed *between* the gospels, he denied these the status of reliable historical material. The gospels were, according to him, no more than *myths* in which were expressed fears and uncertainties, the hope and aspirations of the community from which they emerged. Religion was the collective consciousness of that community. Christianity with its doctrine of the god-man Jesus had, for the first time, according to Strauss, suspended religious dualism, which placed god *outside* the earth, bringing god back to earth from a transcendental reality. The problem was, however, that in Christianity this unity of the human and the divine remained confined to only *one* person: the god-man Jesus. This unity was thereby given an exclusive and 'once only' character. The divine quality that Christianity attributed to Jesus, should, said Strauss, be given not only to Jesus, but to *humanity as a whole.* Mankind should take the place of Jesus, because mankind as a whole is the divine.

Strauss's *Life of Jesus* was a frontal attack on the Christian dogma of a personal god, who is the creator of heaven and earth. His critique led to an outrage among theologians. However, Strauss, claiming "an internal liberation of the heart and the mind from certain religious and dogmatic presuppositions" answered: "If the theologians consider this absence of presuppositions in his work as unchristian, he finds the presuppositions of their works which are based on belief, unscientific."[8] Strauss' book would soon get an even more radical sequel in a publication by another Young Hegelian, Bruno Bauer, who was a personal friend of Marx. In his *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker* (Critique of the Evangelical History of the Synoptists)[9], which was published in three volumes in the years 1841-1843, Bauer criticized the method used by Strauss. He said that Strauss had – wrongly – attributed the same weight to each of the four gospels. This was a great mistake, because between the gospels there existed

a clear temporal priority: John took his material from Luke, while the gospels of Luke and Matthew were derived from the gospel of Mark. There was, therefore, only one original, and three copies. Bauer reproached Strauss for allowing the theologians too much leeway: although he exposed the contradictions between the different gospels, he had to admit that there existed also a *consensus* among the apostles with respect to certain reported facts. Because Strauss considered the four gospels as four *independent* historical sources, such a consensus must be regarded as a proof of the truth of these historical facts. One such a confirmed historical fact, for instance, was the historical existence of Jesus.

By reducing the four gospels to one original Bauer denies the evidential value of this consensus. However, he goes even further. Because for him the original is not a reliable historical report either, but only the personal creation of the apostle Mark. In this way Bauer removes every historical foundation from under Christianity. Not only does he doubt the exclusive divine character of Jesus – like Strauss before him – but he denies also that Jesus ever existed. Christianity was, according to him, built totally on fiction. The conclusion for Bauer is a radical atheism which considers no principle too sacred to be above a fundamental critique.

CRITIQUE OF RELIGION AS HIDDEN CRITIQUE OF POLITICS

What was the interest of the Young Hegelians' criticism of religion? Discussions about religion were, maybe, interesting for theologians, but did they also have a social meaning? They certainly had such a meaning, and more: their real meaning was *political and social*. Because the authoritarian and semi-feudal Prussian state was closely related to the (Lutheran) Church. Prussia – where most Young Hegelians lived – was not only the most powerful German state, it was also officially a 'Christian' state, in which institutionalized religion was the most important ideological pillar of the monarchic regime. Every attack on religion, therefore, had the implication of an attack on the state. This political character of the Young Hegelian movement appeared more directly in their critique of Hegel's theory of the state, which had developed into Prussia's quasi-official 'state philosophy'. The Young Hegelians reproached Hegel for, in his Philosophy of Right, providing the reactionary Prussian state with a theoretical legitimation. This was even more the case because he did not consider the ideas expressed in his Philosophy of Right to be his personal vision, but as the 'thinking observation' (*denkende Betrachtung*) of the objective self-development of the 'Idea of the State'. By presenting the Prussian

state with its hereditary monarchy, press censorship, heavy bureaucracy, and ruling caste of large landowners, as the realization of the 'Idea', he did more than just legitimate this state: he provided it with a divine aura.

The Young Hegelians, who criticized Hegel's adjustment to the Prussian status-quo, had mainly radical-democratic ideas themselves. They were in favor of the realization of a *Vernunftstaat,* a rational state, based neither on god, nor on an 'Idea of the state', but only on the rational will of the people. As admirers of the French Revolution they considered such a democratic 'rational state' the incarnation of the general interest. In such a state there would be no place for princely arbitrariness or despotism – however 'enlightened' the despot might be. Popular sovereignty would and could be exercised only by a representative parliament, which would be the most competent institution to mediate between the sphere of the general interest (the state) and the sphere of particular interests (civil society).[10] They also attributed to the free press an important role in this mediation.[11]

PHILOSOPHY AS CRITIQUE

The philosophical and political ideas of the Young Hegelians had a great impact on the young Marx. This influence was already becoming clear in his dissertation *Differenz der demokritischen und epikureischen Naturphilosophie* (Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature) with which in the spring of 1841 he gained the title of Doctor in Philosophy. In the preface he chooses as a motto the statement of Prometheus: "In one word, I hate all gods." This statement is for Marx 'philosophy's confession', "her own statement against all heavenly and earthly gods who do not recognize the human self-consciousness as the highest god."[12] For Marx there can be no other god than man's self-consciousness. As for Feuerbach philosophy and religion are for him incompatible concepts. In his dissertation he speaks about the *Land der Vernunft* (Land of Reason), which is a "countryside in which his [god's] existence stops."[13] Religion is not a preliminary phase of philosophy, as Hegel pretends, but it is its opposite: religion is completely irrational. Marx therefore sharply criticizes Hegel who, concerning the proofs of god's existence, has "inverted all these proofs, i.e. rejected [them], in order to justify them."[14]

Like Strauss, who considered religion the product of a myth-producing consciousness, Marx also considers religion to be a social product. But while Strauss

– following Hegel – considered such a production of myths as a phase in a positive development, Marx regards it as completely negative. Religion is the product of a humanity which has not yet developed itself in a rational way and it will not be capable of developing itself in a rational way, as long as it has not overcome religion.[15] Marx does not yet speak here in terms of alienation, however, it is clear that he considers religion as a situation of alienation. In this text he is already referring to the separation of essence and existence, which, as we have seen in the preceding chapters, was characteristic of theories of alienation. When, for instance, he says that it is the task of philosophy to play a critical role, he does so in the following words: "It is the critique which measures the individual existence against the essence, the particular reality against the idea."[16]

Here we see for the first time the agenda of Marx's philosophy. While for Hegel philosophy always came *afterwards* as the understanding of an already existing 'rational' world, for Marx philosophy stands in the middle of life, inspiring the actions of the people. The subject matter of Hegel's philosophy was the 'existing Reason' and its task was to reconcile it with the 'self-conscious Reason'. Hegel's philosophy was not concerned with the *Unvernunft* – all which still was 'irrational' in the world. He left this to the praxis of the World Spirit, which would necessarily remove it. Marx – unlike Hegel – could not leave this task to the World Spirit, because he considered this to be a substitute for the Christian god. Like god this World Spirit was a religious abstraction. Instead of liberating the world of everything irrational the World Spirit itself belonged as a religious fiction to the realm of the irrational from which the world should be liberated. Humanity and humanity *alone* was the subject and the author of history. All that was irrational in the world had, therefore, to be abolished by man. For this task Marx attributed an important role to philosophy. Philosophy, with its pretention to have an insight into the essence of what exists, had the task of confronting empirical reality with its own essence. Philosophy could reveal how far this essence had not yet been realized. Thereby philosophy transformed itself into critique. Compared with Hegel Marx had a completely different understanding of the task of the philosopher. For Hegel this task was to become conscious of the realized Reason in history. The attitude of the philosopher vis-à-vis this existing reality was one of reflection and contemplation. For Hegel philosophy had primarily a *confirming* role. For Marx the task of the philosopher was to become conscious of what still was irrational in the world. Philosophy has not a confirming, but a *critical* role. Philosophy makes people conscious of a discrepancy: it creates thereby a tension: "Animated by the drive to realize itself it develops a tension with [everything] else."[17] Philosophy turned against existing reality. Marx, therefore, transforms philosophy from a contemplative theory into an instrument of *praxis*.

For Marx this philosophical praxis did not yet have the meaning which he was to give it later: a *revolutionary* praxis which intervenes in the concrete social reality. During this period praxis still had for him the meaning of a *theoretical* praxis exclusively. Marx still expected total salvation from philosophy. This is in itself not so strange. Because, like the other Young Hegelians, he considered human self-consciousness to be the only true reality. Seen from this perspective, changing reality does not mean changing concrete material circumstances, but changing the *consciousness* of the people. Marx does not yet embed this philosophical praxis into a broader framework of revolutionary praxis, but the theoretical praxis gets the status of praxis *as such.* According to him the philosophical praxis offers a sufficient guarantee of liberating the world from its deficiencies. In particular because the most important deficiency of the world: religion, is a question of consciousness. To liberate the world from religion philosophy has to bring people to a critical self-consciousness. Marx has not yet developed his later slogan that 'the weapon of the critique' cannot replace 'the critique of the weapons'. He is still a faithful follower of his friend and teacher Bruno Bauer, whom, some years later in his book *The Holy Family,* he will attack as a 'critical critic' (*kritische Kritiker*).

Bauer sharply criticized the Church and the state of his time. He exposed the inconsistencies in official ideology and ridiculed them. However, this criticism was not the starting point for reformist change, but stood alone completely. Bauer showed with his sharp analyses that things could be different and had to be different, without committing himself to participating in such a project. Verbal radicalism was accompanied by political impotence. This did not mean that Bauer closed his eyes to the great problems of his time. For him also it was impossible to neglect the poverty and misery, caused by the nascent industrialization of Germany. The causes of this misery, however, he sought not in the material conditions in which people lived, but in their consciousness and mentality. The philosopher should, therefore, restrict himself to developing a critical consciousness in the people. He should show them that irrational conditions in the world are the consequence of a false moral attitude. Bauer denied that social problems could be solved by human engineering. Not humanity, but the historical process, said Bauer, would liberate society with an iron logic from its many ills – including princely despotism, censorship, and poverty. It is clear that this philosophy of history led to a passive attitude.[18]

Although Marx was strongly influenced by Bauer, he would not adopt Bauer's political quietism. He accused Bauer of making the same mistake as Hegel by

declaring 'history' to be the historical subject: it meant that social change was entrusted to an abstraction instead of to the people. Bauer's 'autonomous' history was in reality a profane version of Hegel's World Spirit. Marx would always hold on to humanity as the subject of history. He will only change the way in which he defines 'humanity'. Later he will specify humanity according to the different social classes. At this point he still understands 'humanity' completely as human self-consciousness, which he considers the essential reality. This idea also determines how he defines praxis. Because a change of reality implies a change of the human consciousness, the *theoretical* praxis of the philosopher, who confronts essence and existence, is for him the only adequate praxis.

HOW DOES MARX DEFINE 'CRITIQUE'?

Soon after leaving university Marx was to try to make a start on this theoretical praxis. Originally he had intended to apply for a job at the University of Bonn, where his friend Bruno Bauer worked. However, in March 1842 Bauer was fired because of his atheistic ideas. For Marx also the prospect of a university career seemed closed. In the same period some young progressive liberals from the Rhineland took the initiative of starting a paper with the aim of propagating liberal and democratic ideas. Because they sympathized with the ideas of the Young Hegelians they contacted Adolf Rutenberg, Georg Jung, and Moses Hess, who became the first editors of the new paper which was given the name *Die Rheinische Zeitung* (The Rhine Paper). Marx published his first article on May 5, 1842, and became chief editor in October of the same year. In the spring of 1843, however, the paper was to be banned by the authorities. However, this experience of working as a journalist would be of great importance to Marx's development. Marx comes for the first time in contact with the practical problems of his time. His philosophical program: criticizing the existing reality by confronting it with its essence, gains a wholly new dimension, because from now on he will direct his criticism to political and social events, which, as a journalist, he follows from close by. "At last philosophy had to end its silence, becoming a journalist,"[19] he wrote in an article and one may assume that he had himself in mind. Philosophy – *his* philosophy – broke out of its isolation and got into contact with 'the real world of her time'.

As a journalist he was in particular confronted with problems of censorship and freedom of the press. He followed critically the long debates on this issue in the *Landtag,* the parliament of the Rhineland, and analyzed and commented on these debates in his paper. The way in which Marx practiced his profession of critic, betrays the influence

of Bruno Bauer. Like Bauer Marx exercises an *internal* and an *external* critique. The internal critique is focused on the exposure of logical inconsistencies in the statements of others. It revealed the inconsistencies and contradictions in certain statements and also denounced the ambiguous and vague meaning of certain terms. The external critique confronted these statements with external, mostly *moral* criteria.

THE REALIZATION OF THE 'RATIONAL STATE'

The 'essence' with which the philosopher should confront the social and political reality of his time is for Marx the 'rational state' (*Vernunftstaat*). However, what this 'rational state' is exactly, is not made explicit by him. For Marx it is rather some kind of a Kantian regulative idea, an ideal against which reality is measured. However, the texts he writes in this period give an indication of some characteristics which he attributes to this ideal 'rational state'. The most essential characteristic is that there no longer exists an opposition between the private interests of the citizens and the general interest. Another fundamental characteristic is press freedom and consequently the absence of censorship. One can qualify Marx's 'rational state' still as *liberal.* In this period Marx still thinks that his ideal state can be realized without a fundamental transformation of civil society. Like most other Young Hegelians Marx assumes that the 'rational state' can be realized by *political* reforms, such as the separation of Church and state, press freedom, and a representative parliament. Property relations, class relations, and also the exploitation of the proletariat were subjects that still fell beyond his scope.

However, some events in the Rhineland parliament made him realize that one cannot view the state in isolation from civil society. In the parliament a debate took place on a law on the theft of wood. The wood owners wanted to put an end to an old custom that gave the poor the right to gather dead wood by making it punishable by law. They even went so far as to not only demand the restitution of the 'stolen' wood, but also a compensation for lost profits, and on top of this the right to collect the fines which they themselves had issued. This manifest abuse of the law and the repressive state apparatus in favor of the interests of the rich opens Marx's eyes to the relationship between the state and interest groups in civil society. It was evident that in this case the state was not the sphere of the general interest, as it pretended to be, but a tool in the hands of the rich and powerful. However, this does not yet bring Marx to the conclusion that a 'rational state' would only be possible through a change of ownership relations in civil society. He still looks for the causes of this abuse of the state apparatus exclusively in the *political*

organization of the state. It is clear to him that parliament was unable to represent the general interest, because parliamentarians were not elected as representatives of the people, but as representatives of predefined social estates (*Stände*). The three social estates: nobility, farmers, and bourgeoisie, each sent their own representatives to the parliament, where they defended the narrow interests of their own group rather than represent the general interest for the well-being of the nation.

"Is it not clear," asked Marx, "that representation of private interests, of the social estates, seeks and forces the state be reduced to the idea of the private interest?"[20] In another article he elaborated on this subject in more detail. One can choose, he said, to consider the social estates which are represented in parliament exclusively as an opportunity to take care of their particular interests and then they have nothing to do with the state and the general interest, or one considers these social groups as belonging to the state. In the latter case they become an 'illness of the state', because the particular interests, "alienated from the political spirit of the state, seek to restrict the state…"[21]

THE FREE PRESS AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE 'PEOPLE'S INTELLIGENCE'

How should this dilemma be resolved? A parliament which is organized on the basis of social estates is, according to Marx, a representative of the material interests. The landowners represent the interests of their land, the industrialists represent the interests of their industry, etcetera. What they represent, says Marx, is only 'material', the spiritless (*das Geistlose*). A real representation of the population should not let itself be reduced to 'the representation of something material which is not the people itself'. The people has to represent *itself.* But how should this be realized? By a conscious "representation of the people's intelligence (*Volksintelligenz*), which does not want to represent individual needs vis-à-vis the state; but which has the highest need of representing the state itself … as its own state."[22] Marx is appealing here to a 'rational' need in the population, namely the need to realize the general interest. Only when this need is realized could one speak of a 'true state'. In such a 'true state' will land ownership, industry, etc., *as such* not come into direct contact with the state, because in a 'true state' there exist only 'spiritual powers'. Only when material interests have transformed themselves into such a spiritual power by a process of 'political rebirth' do they have in such a state the right to express themselves.

Marx's thinking in this period has clearly strongly idealistic overtones. He considers the state as an ethical-spiritual sphere. Any direct contact with civil society has, therefore, to be avoided. He is also not yet interested in a transformation of civil society. He wants to leave civil society to itself and thinks that the problems can be solved by an appeal to the 'people's intelligence' - the reason of the people - which leads them to subsume their own interests under the general interest. He wants to rebuild civil society, which is divided into different social classes, on a political level into an abstract spiritual unity, the *Volksintelligenz,* the 'people's intelligence'. The problem, however, is that this 'political rebirth' supposes an unrealistic, chameleon-like transformation, similar to Rousseau's transformation of the egoistic *bourgeois* into the ethical *citoyen.* Marx may call the realization of the general interest man's morally *highest* need, this does, however, not mean that it is also man's *most compelling* need. Marx's 'true state', therefore, retains the character of a moral imperative. Marx still lacked a strategy for concrete change.

Nevertheless, there are already some clear indications which point toward Marx's later criticism of civil society. In his article on the Law on the Theft of Wood, for instance, he questions for the first time the legitimacy of private property. "When each violation of property, indifferently, without any precision, is theft, is then not all private property theft? Do I not through my private property deprive another of this property? Do I not in this way violate hís right to property?"[23] At this stage Marx still lacks the theoretical understanding to establish a direct relationship between the wealth of one class and the poverty of the other.[24] But we will see that his concept of 'general interest' will gradually lose its abstract character and, as a result of his personal experience, will become more concrete. Marx will increasingly define the general interest in terms of taking care of the poor and the weak. "The wise lawmaker," he wrote, "will not restrict himself to remedying the impossibility of members of one class belonging to a higher sphere of rights, but he will elevate that class to a real possibility of rights…"[25] However, for this the state has to be 'humane', 'rich', 'magnanimous', in short: 'rational'. Marx formulates here the demand that in a 'rational state' not only should *individuals* be able to emancipate themselves through social mobility, but the poor classes *as a whole* should be enabled to emancipate themselves.

The social content with which Marx gradually fills the concept of 'general interest' is also evident in the articles which he writes on the emergency situation of the wine farmers in the Mosel region. The crucial question here was whether the state should support the indigent farmers. The state bureaucracy was reluctant to lend support, because it considered it to be unjustifiable for the government to support particular interests. Marx wrote that it was a *duty* of the state to support the farmers: "The constant

emergency situation of one part of the state… is a contradiction between reality and the maxims of government."[26] The well-being of a particular region or a particular section of the population was also a concern of the state. Of course there are more private interests which are in need of support. Do we have to help them all? No, is Marx's answer, it depends on whether an emergency situation has a *general* character. Because only in that case will 'private misery' become 'state misery' and only then will lending support become a duty of the state vis-à-vis *itself*. But who determines whether something is a 'private misery' or a 'state misery'? According to Marx the victims themselves cannot decide this, because they will, consciously or unconsciously, be led by their personal interests. However, the state bureaucracy is also unable to do this, because of its tendency toward abstract thinking and bureaucratic formalism. Only the *free press* is according to him able to judge whether a particular interest has become a general interest, because not only does it have no direct interest and analyzes the problems critically, but also it treats the problem with sympathy. The free press does not speak only the 'rational language of judgment', but also an 'affective language'. Its relation to the conditions of life of the population is not only one of 'intelligence', but also one of 'the heart', and precisely herein lies the difference with the cool and impersonal formalism of state bureaucracy. Marx's early critique of the state, which gives such a prominent role to the free press, has still a clearly *liberal* character. However, in the following years it will develop itself into a more socially critical direction.

NOTES

[1] Karl Marx, Letter to his father of November 10, 1837, *MEW Ergänzungsband,* op. cit., 4.

[2] Marx, Letter to his father of November 10, 1837, 8.

[3] Marx, Letter to his father of November 10, 1837, 8-9.

[4] Marx, Letter to his father of November 10, 1837, 10.

[5] Marx, Letter to his father of November 10, 1837, 4-5.

[6] Hegel will call a situation in which the Idea has been realized *Wirklichkeit* (literally: 'Reality'). In the Philosophy of Right (Paragraph 259), for instance, he wrote: "The Idea of the State has direct reality (Wirklichkeit)…" In the *Zusatz* is added: "The state… is the realization of freedom, and it is an absolute goal of Reason that freedom is real."

[7] Marx, Letter to his father of November 10, 1837, 8.

[8] David Friedrich Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu,* 1. Band, (Tübingen: Verlag C. F. Osiander, 1838), Vorrede zur 1. Auflage, IX.

[9] The apostles Luke, Mark, and Matthew are commonly called the 'Synoptists', because their gospels display parallel narratives. The gospel of the apostle John stands apart.

[10] The Young Hegelians, therefore, do not go as far as Rousseau, who wants to abolish the separation between state and civil society. In Rousseau's social contract each had to give up all his rights, including his property rights. Private property became public

property and the private owner would have the status of manager of public property. In this way civil society would become socialized and integrated into the public sphere of the state. The Young Hegelians do not follow Rousseau in this respect. They do not want to abolish civil society, based on private property. Civil society maintains its autonomous character vis-à-vis the state.

[11] Here is another important point of difference with Rousseau, who considered each public debate as a threat to the 'general will'. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit,* (Neuwied am Rhein: Luchterhand, 1968), 110-111: "The un-public opinion … is elevated [by Rousseau] to the sole legislator, namely by the suppression of the public's discussion in the public sphere … One needs [according to Rousseau] only to have common sense (bon sens) [in French in original] to perceive the general interest. The ordinary, indeed simple people would only be irritated by the small details, discussed in a public debate … The volonté générale is rather a consensus of the hearts than of arguments."

[12] Karl Marx, "Differenz der demokritischen und epikureischen Naturphilosophie," *MEW Ergänzungsband,* op. cit., 262.

[13] Marx, "Differenz der demokritischen und epikureischen Naturphilosophie," 371.

[14] Marx, "Differenz der demokritischen und epikureischen Naturphilosophie," 371.

[15] This atheistic point of view does not indicate a real shift in his thinking. In an essay written for his gymnasium examination he had already depicted a naturalistic, 'Spinozist', image of god, seeing in god not a transcendent reality, but a synonym of 'nature'. Cf. *MEW, Ergänzungsband*, op. cit., 591: "*Nature* has given the animal a sphere of activity in which it has to move, and it remains quietly there without going beyond, and without having any awareness of any other. And to the people *the deity* gave a general goal, to ennoble humanity and himself…" (My emphasis, MHVH).

[16] Marx, "Differenz der demokritischen und epikureischen Naturphilosophie," 328-329.

[17] Marx, "Differenz der demokritischen und epikureischen Naturphilosophie," 329.

[18] Bauer's philosophy of history resembles in many respects the thinking of the eighteenth century Freemason movement. The freemasons also criticized the absolutist state, but restrained from political action. Like Bauer they were convinced that 'history' would remove the absolutist monarchy. They considered this insight in the necessary course of history as their secret which was revealed to them as an initiated elite. (Cf. Reinhart Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise – Eine Studie zur Pathogenese der bürgerlichen Welt,* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973), chapter 3).

[19] Karl Marx, "Der leitende Artikel in Nr. 179 der 'Kölnischen Zeitung'", *MEW*, Vol. 1, 99.

[20] Karl Marx, "Debatten über das Holzdiebstahlsgesetz," *MEW*, Vol. 1, 126.

[21] Karl Marx, "Über die ständischen Auschüsse in Preussen," *MEW Ergänzungsband*, 419.

[22] Marx, "Über die ständischen Ausschüsse in Preussen," 419.

[23] Marx, "Debatten über das Holzdiebstahlsgesetz," 113.

[24] It is interesting that in this article Marx for the first time is using the term 'surplus value' (*Mehrwert*). The concept, however, still lacks the specific meaning it is to get in Marx's political economy. It is used here as a synonym for profit and he treats it as 'economic ecstasy' (ökonomische Schwärmerei).

[25] Marx, "Debatten über das Holzdiebstahlsgesetz," 120.

[26] Karl Marx, "Rechtfertigung des ++-Korrespondenten von der Mosel," *MEW*, Vol. 1, 188.

Chapter Seven

From Critique of Religion to Critique of Society: The Influence of Arnold Ruge

MARX ADOPTS FEUERBACH'S 'TRANSFORMATIVE METHOD'

The *Rheinische Zeitung* was banned at the beginning of April 1843. This ban did not come totally unexpectedly, because in the last months of its existence especially, the paper had become more and more radical. Liberal criticism of issues related to censorship and the freedom of the press had gradually evolved into *social* criticism.[1] With hindsight Marx was, perhaps, pleased with this ban. He was tired of the constant fight with the censors who had to approve every sentence before its publication and who permitted him only "to fight with needles instead of rifle butts."[2] With irony, but also truthfully he could write to Arnold Ruge: "… the government has released me." During his work as a journalist he was confronted with many new problems which required theoretical research, for which, however, he had not had enough time, due to his workload during the day.

Now he could realize a plan that he had cherished for a long time: writing a critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. One year previously he had already written about this plan in a letter to Ruge. Ruge was the editor of the Young Hegelian magazine *Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst* (German Yearbooks on Science and Art), in which Marx wanted to publish this critique.[3] The delay was not, in itself, a bad thing, because in the meantime Marx had read two articles from the hand of Ludwig Feuerbach, which were to completely change his thinking. His Hegel critique was, therefore, to have a totally different character from what he had originally intended. The two Feuerbach articles were *Zur Beurteilung der Schrift 'Das Wesen des Christentums'* (On the Evaluation of the Publication 'The Essence of Christianity') and the *Vorläufige Thesen zur Reformation der Philosophie* (Provisional Theses on the Reformation of Philosophy).

In the first article Feuerbach defended himself against the rumour that he was the author of *Die Posaune* (The Clarion), an anonymous publication, which later turned out to have been written by Bruno Bauer. In 'The Clarion' the Young Hegelian

critique of religion was said to be a logical further development of an atheism already implicitly present in Hegel.[4] Feuerbach felt personally attacked and vehemently opposed this interpretation, pointing to the fundamental difference between Hegel's philosophy of religion and his own ideas on this subject. Hegel, in his philosophy of religion, proceeded, according to Feuerbach, in an alienating way, because he placed the essence of man as an object *outside* man. Instead of reducing the essence of man, which is objectified by religion, to man himself, Hegel interpreted this religious objectification as a *higher* reality on which he made concrete man dependent: "Hegel represents religion as the consciousness of an *other* [being], I as the consciousness of man's *own essence*..."[5] Hegel has, therefore, according to Feuerbach, turned away from the real essence of man. For him not the concrete reality, but an abstraction is the true reality: "Hegel takes as his point of departure the *infinite,* I the *finite* …"[6] The philosophy should, according to Feuerbach, take its departure from natural man, who is a finite and needy being.

In the 'Provisional Theses' he repeated this point of view in a number of aphorisms. These 'Theses' have especially a *methodological* interest. Here Feuerbach was pointing to the necessity to *turn* Hegel's philosophy *upside down.* This reversal of Hegel should be made into a methodological principle. Time and again the philosophical points of departure of Hegel and Feuerbach revealed themselves to be opposites. Hegel deduced nature from the Spirit, Feuerbach, on the contrary, the (human) spirit from nature. Hegel deduced man from god, Feuerbach, on the contrary, deduced 'god' from man. "The point of departure for philosophy is not god …," wrote Feuerbach in his 'Provisional Theses', "the point of departure is the finite, the determined, the real."[7]

Does this mean that Hegel's philosophy was for Feuerbach void and without any further value? Not at all. According to Feuerbach one could save the rational core of Hegel's philosophy by consequently *inverting* subject and predicate. In this way being is not deduced from thinking, but thinking is deduced from being. Instead of the statement "the Spirit produces man," one gets the statement "man produces the spirit." This *transformative method* of Feuerbach is adopted by Marx, who will later refer to it as "putting Hegel on his feet." Marx certainly considered Hegel's philosophy to be erroneous, but that did not mean that Hegel's philosophy was simply wrong. Hegel's philosophy is not wrong, but it is inverted. In other words: Hegel is making a *systematic* mistake, namely that he consequently changes subject and predicate. It is exactly in this consequent change that one could find the rational core of Hegel's philosophy, which made an adequate understanding of reality possible. Feuerbach tried to discover this rational core, using his transformative method. It is this very method, developed by Feuerbach, which gives Marx the instruments with which to criticize Hegel's Philosophy of Right. He will be able to criticize not only its contents, but also its logical status.[8] Feuerbach's influence on Marx in this period is without comparison. Because not only

does Feuerbach provide Marx with the tools for a fundamental critique of Hegel, but also his *naturalism,* which emphasizes the needy nature of man, will have a deep influence on Marx, who will gradually give up his idea that human self-consciousness is man's only real reality.

MARX'S CRITIQUE OF THE APOLITICAL CHARACTER OF FEUERBACH'S AND BAUER'S PHILOSOPHY

Marx, however, had one important point of critique on Feuerbach: Feuerbach considered the critique of religion as a precondition for a critique of social and political relations. "He, who is a servant of his religious feelings," he wrote, "does not deserve to be treated differently politically. He, who does not control himself, also does not have the strength, nor the right, to liberate himself from material and political pressure. He, who lets himself internally be dominated by strange, dark beings, remains in the darkness externally, dependent on alien powers."[9] Marx thinks that Feuerbach is too much focused on religion and nature. "Feuerbach's aphorisms are not right in the sense that he refers too much to religion and nature," Marx wrote in a letter to Ruge, "and not enough to politics. However, that is the only union through which contemporary philosophy can become a truth."[10]

According to Marx, philosophy had, on the contrary, an eminently *political* task. It should actively participate in the struggle for political emancipation. This meant that it had to deal with concrete situations and should not let itself be drowned in abstract pseudo-critiques, which might, perhaps, enjoy a warm reception in literary salons and academic circles, but beyond these spheres would be irrelevant to political reality. By taking this position Marx not only distanced himself from Feuerbach, but also from his friend Bruno Bauer. In fact he distanced himself already from the latter in the period that he was working at the *Rheinische Zeitung.* At that point he was already upset by the arrogant behavior of the so-called *Freien* ('the Free Ones'), a group to which Bruno Bauer belonged. In a letter to Ruge Marx had described his difficulties with the *Freien.* He wrote about having suppressed at least as many of their articles as had the censor, because most of the time it was 'hollow humbug in a poor style, pregnant with the world revolution.' Marx had asked them, "rather to criticize religion in the critique of the political situation, than to criticize the political situation in religion ... because religion, in itself is without content, it owes its life not to heaven, but to the earth and it will disappear together with the distorted reality of which it is the theory."[11]

Marx's thesis that religion 'owes its life to the earth and will disappear together with the distorted reality of which it is the theory' is of great importance to the further development of his theory of alienation. Here is the first evidence of the transformation

of his theory of religious alienation into a theory of *political* alienation. Feuerbach had already considered religion as the product of the needy, *natural* man. Marx will consider religion as the product of the needy, natural man, who is at the same time a *political* and *social* man. One should, in his opinion, not look primarily for the roots of religious alienation in the consciousness of the people, but in the political and social conditions in which they live: political alienation is the root of religious alienation.

MARX'S AFFINITY WITH THE POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT OF ARNOLD RUGE

The greater emphasis that Marx gave to political action and concrete societal change led on the one hand to a greater distancing from Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Feuerbach, but, on the other hand, his relationship with Arnold Ruge became closer. Ruge's prominent position in the Young Hegelian movement was due less to the originality of his ideas than to his role as editor of the most important Young Hegelian magazines. In 1838 he had founded the *Hallische Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst* (The Halle Yearbooks for Science and Art). These were banned by the Prussian government in 1841. To escape the censors in Prussia Ruge moved the same year to Dresden in Saxony, where he started a new magazine, the *Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst* (The German Yearbooks for Science and Arts). However, in January 1843 this magazine was also banned - at about the same time as the *Rheinische Zeitung.* Because repression and censorship became harsher in almost all German principalities, Ruge was obliged to continue his activities in Zurich in Switzerland. There, in 1843 he edited the *Anekdota* – a compilation of articles by Young Hegelians, including Marx, Bauer, Feuerbach, and Ruge himself.

Ruge was successively a follower of Strauss, Bauer, and Feuerbach. Overall, therefore, he followed the same trajectory as Marx – although Marx had never been a follower of Strauss. Ruge's most important contribution to the Young Hegelian philosophy was that he was one of the first to isolate Hegel's dialectical method from Hegel's philosophical system.[12] According to him, the dialectic was not a law of development of an *Absolute Spirit*, but only a method of thinking. By thinking in a dialectical way one no longer considered things as constant and immutable. One could, on the contrary, *negate* them in one's thinking. Philosophy's role, therefore, was not restricted only to trying to understand what - here and now - existed, but – by negating the present – it could explore how the present could be changed. Ruge transformed Hegel's dialectical logic into an instrument for philosophy to play a critical and, in particular, a *political* role. By suggesting *alternatives* to this reality, it functions as a guide for human action. Marx's idea of philosophical critique was based on a similar tension between ideal and

reality. But in one point Marx remained a good pupil of Hegel: the rational ideal should, according to him, not be an abstract ideal, a utopia that floats above reality without having any contact with it: it should be an ideal that had its roots in reality itself.

In this vein Marx wrote to Ruge: "Therefore the critic can take up each form of theoretical and practical consciousness and from the forms, inherent in the existing reality, develop the true reality as its *Sollen* and its final goal."[13] Marx will try to put this idea into practice. His later study of political economy finds here one of its motives. Through this study he wanted to find the objective tendencies in society that pointed towards the socialist ideal. The importance of Ruge's reinterpretation of Hegel's dialectic is that the transformation of society is no longer left to an immanent development of a *Weltgeist* (World Spirit) – or, in the case of Bruno Bauer: *history* – but is a task that humanity sets *itself*. This emphasis on political praxis is clearly expressed by Ruge in the critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right that he published in 1842 in the German Yearbooks:

> [Hegel said], wrote Ruge, "that philosophy expresses its time in its thoughts, that existing philosophy articulates the word of its time; but he interprets this word only as a word that is directed *exclusively to the intellect,* not to the will of the people. *This is the theoretical point of view.* From the calm of Olympus he observes everything that Reason has made, and behold: *it was good*… And, miraculously, as long as one remains on the rational side of the matter, *one need do nothing*… However, as soon as reason throws itself on the other side, on the irrationality of what exists, emerges restlessness, dissatisfaction, longing, and the tiresome *Sollen* of praxis. *Now something must be done*… the theoretical point of view is abandoned, the word of the critique turns itself toward the will of the people…"[14]

In his letters to Ruge Marx expressed himself in a similar way. "Nothing prevents us," he wrote, "from relating our critique to the critique of politics, from taking sides in politics, the *real* struggle, in order to identify ourselves with it."[15] This taking of sides, which Bauer qualified as 'unphilosophical', was necessary to realize Reason, because "reason has always existed, but not in a reasonable form."[16] It is in the practical consequence of the philosophical critique that Marx and Ruge relate to each other.

THE KREUZNACH EXCERPTS

At the time when Marx had had to give up his work as a journalist, initially he fell under the spell of Feuerbach's naturalistic critique of religion. But soon he distanced himself

from both Feuerbach and Bauer because of their idea of philosophical praxis and moved closer to Arnold Ruge. Through the experiences while a journalist he had become more interested in socio-economic questions. He had found that it was impossible to realize a 'rational' state if the material conditions in civil society were not taken into account. The realm of politics, it was now clear for Marx, was determined by economic interests. This new insight brought him to study in greater depth the relationship between civil society and the state.

In the period between March and November 1843, and in particular in the summer of that year, when, after his marriage to Jenny von Westphalen, he was living in the village of Kreuznach, not far from Trier, he was to develop an enormous determination to get to grips with the new issues with which he had been confronted as a journalist. He read a great number of historical studies on the development of the different European states and also showed a great interest in the history of the French Revolution.[17] He read and re-read the works of the most important political thinkers – i.a. Machiavelli, Montesquieu and Rousseau – to get not only a historical, but also a theoretical grip on the problem of the origin and development of the state and civil society in their mutual interdependence. The so-called 'Kreuznach Excerpts' - a collection of notebooks from this period – give a good idea of Marx's theoretical 'tour de force'. From now on the focus of his interest is clear: it is and remains the relationship between civil society and the state. "When one regards the 'Kreuznach Excerpts'," wrote Mosolov, "it is noticeable that in his study of world history Marx has a special interest in that side of the historical process which concerns the relationship between property relations and the nature of political institutions."[18]

NOTES

[1] In Marx's letter to Ruge of January 25, 1843, Marx mentions his own article on the Mosel affair as one of the possible reasons for the ban. "Various special causes have led to this ban…," he wrote, "*my* defense of the Mosel correspondent in which high placed politicians were very much embarrassed." *MEW*, Vol. 27, 414. (Emphasis in original).

[2] Marx, Letter to Ruge of January 25, 1843, 415.

[3] Cf. Marx, Letter to Ruge of March 5, 1842: "Another article which I also had intended to be published in the German Yearbooks, is a critique of Hegel's philosophy of nature ... The central point is the fight against *constitutional monarchy* as a deeply contradictory, self-destroying, hybrid creation." *MEW*, Vol. 27, 397. (Emphasis in original).

[4] Cf. Bruno Bauer, *Die Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts über Hegel, den Atheisten und Antichristen*, (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1969), 148: "That is according to Hegel the reconciliation of Reason with religion, that one understands that there is no god and that the 'I' in religion has only to do with himself."

[5] Ludwig Feuerbach, "Zur Beurteilung der Schrift: 'Das Wesen des Christentums'," in Ludwig Feuerbach, *Philosophische Kritiken und Grundsätze*, op. cit., 155.

[6] Feuerbach, "Zur Beurteilung der Schrift: 'Das Wesen des Christentums'," 155.

[7] Ludwig Feuerbach, "Vorläufige Thesen zur Reformation der Philosophie," in Ludwig Feuerbach, *Philosophische Kritiken und Grundsätze*, op. cit., 176.

[8] Cf. Werner Schuffenhauer, *Feuerbach und der junge Marx – Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der marxistischen Weltanschauung*, (Berlin/GDR: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1972), 48 ff. And Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 10.

[9] Feuerbach, "Zur Beurteilung der Schrift: 'Das Wesen des Christentums'," 158.

[10] Marx, Letter to Ruge of March 13, 1843, *MEW*, Vol. 27, 417.

[11] Marx, Letter to Ruge of November 30, 1842, *MEW*, Vol. 27, 412.

[12] Cf. Aldo Zanardo, "Arnold Ruge giovane hegeliano 1842-1949," in *Annali dell'Istituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli*, Anno XII, 1970, Milano, 1971, 189-200, and Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx – Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx*, (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1971), 129 ff.

[13] Marx, Letter to Ruge, September 1843, *MEW*, Vol. 1, 345.

[14] Arnold Ruge, "Die Hegelsche Rechtsphilosophie und die Politik unsrer Zeit," published in the *Deutsche Jahrbücher*, Nos. 189, 190, 191, and 192, on respectively August 10, 11, 12, 13, 1843. Published in G.W.F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein Verlag, 1972), 635.

[15] Marx, Letter to Ruge, September 1843, 345.

[16] Marx, Letter to Ruge, September 1843, 345.

[17] For a good analysis of Marx's theoretical elaboration of the French Revolution, see Paul Kägi, *Genesis des historischen Materialismus – Karl Marx und die Dynamik der Gesellschaft*, op. cit., 169-89.

[18] V. Mosolov, "I quaderni di Kreuznach: gli studi storici del giovane Marx nella genesi della concezione materialistica della storia," in *Critica marxista*, 1973, No. 2, 166.

Chapter Eight

Marx's Theory of Political Alienation

MARX'S CRITIQUE OF HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT

In the same period that Marx was undertaking these studies he began to implement a plan that he had been cherishing for a long time, namely writing a critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. In his Philosophy of Right Hegel addressed in detail the subject Marx was interested in: the relationship between state and civil society. For Marx the writing of this critique served to bring greater clarity to his own ideas. For Hegel the state is neither the product of historical coincidences, nor a purely human construction. On the contrary it is the realization of a transcendental Idea that – in principle (*an sich*) – has always existed.[1] Starting from this metaphysical 'Idea of the state' Hegel developed the relationships between the state, the family, and civil society. He could not, of course, deny that historically the family and civil society were the basis on which, in a later stage, the modern state would be built. However, against this *historical* primacy of the family and civil society as conditions for the formation of the modern state, Hegel puts the *logical* primacy of the state. This means that for him the family and civil society are 'used' by the 'Idea of the state' as logical parts (*Begriffsmomente*) to help this Idea achieve its objective: the realization of the rational state (*Vernunftstaat*). The 'Idea of the state' can only realize itself by a process of objectification in which the family and civil society are born. In the next phase of the dialectic these two 'moments' are elevated (*aufgehoben*) to a higher unity: the state. Although Hegel considers the family and civil society as historical preconditions for the emergence of the state, in his opinion they lack any independent character. Both are determined by the metaphysical 'Idea of the state'.

HEGEL AS THE DEFENDER OF THE POLITICAL STATUS-QUO:

HIS 'UNCRITICAL POSITIVISM'

Marx qualified Hegel's theory of the state as 'logical, pantheistic mysticism'. Although Hegel acknowledges that the state cannot exist without the basis of the family and civil society, he makes both dependent on the 'Idea of the state'. Marx vehemently criticized this view: "Family and civil society make *themselves* into a state. They are the driving forces. According to Hegel, on the contrary, they are a result of the real Idea; it is not their own existence that unites them into a state, but it is the existence of the Idea."[2] "Family and civil society are the presuppositions of the state," he continued, "they are the truly active [elements], but in [Hegel's] speculation this is inverted."[3]

The crux of Hegel's mysticism was, according to Marx, "that Hegel everywhere makes the Idea the subject and the real subject … the predicate."[4] Hegel presents the family and civil society, which produce the state, as the products of the 'Idea of the state'. In his philosophy subject and predicate consequently change places. This inversion of subject and predicate is for Marx typical of Hegel's philosophy of the state: time and again abstract-logical categories – Ideas - are transformed into subjects which generate real phenomena. "Logic does not serve as a proof of the state, but the state serves as a proof of logic."[5] Marx tried to 'demystify' Hegel's philosophy of the state with Feuerbach's *transformative method.* This method of turning things upside down provided him also with the tool with which to criticize the *contents* of Hegel's philosophy more thoroughly than most Young Hegelians had done before him. Already in the remarks which accompanied his dissertation Marx had taken a stance against the inclination of many Young Hegelians to interpret Hegel's adaptation to the authoritarian Prussian state as a *moral* failure of Hegel the man. Marx had rejected such a moral criticism as *blosse Ignoranz* (pure ignorance).[6] The Young Hegelians saw a contradiction between the revolutionary dialectic of Hegel's philosophy and the conservative conclusions he drew from them. Marx had already argued that Hegel's political conservatism was, perhaps, less a question of Hegel's inconsequential application of this dialectic, than an essential characteristic of this dialectic itself. However, at that time the exact character of Hegel's dialectical method was not yet fully clear to him. Now, with the help of Feuerbach's transformative method, he is able to 'unmask' Hegel's dialectical method and make the supposition, he had expressed two years before, more substantial.

Hegel's abstract logical dialectic and the conservative conclusions that he drew from them, are, according to Marx, aspects of one and the same speculative theory.[7] Hegel

first isolates and dissociates a category from the concrete reality to which it refers. Then this isolated and dissociated category is made into something substantial and independent and becomes an 'Idea' or 'Concept' (*Begriff*), writ large. Finally this abstract Idea has to be 'realized' in the concrete reality. For an uncritical Hegel this 'realization' took place in the *existing* institutions of Prussia. A clear example of this for Marx is the way in which Hegel presents the hereditary monarch as the incarnation of the 'Idea of Sovereignty'. In an intelligent way Marx reconstructs Hegel's method: "Sovereignty, the essence of the state, is presented first as an independent being, [is] objectified. Then this objective [being] has, of course, to become a subject again. This subject appears then, however, as the self-incarnation of sovereignty … It is Hegel's objective to present the monarch as the real "god-man", as the real incarnation of the Idea."[8] The result of Hegel's abstraction procedure is that he presents the status-quo – in this case the hereditary monarchy – as the realization of the Idea. Hegel's *Akkomodation,* his uncritical acceptance of the existing Prussian political situation, is for Marx therefore not the consequence of a discrepancy between his revolutionary dialectical method and his conservative philosophical system, but a direct consequence of his *abstract* logical dialectic. Speculative abstraction and 'uncritical positivism' that justifies and legitimates the existing political reality go hand in hand.

Hegel's 'uncritical positivism' also becomes clear in the way in which he relates the state – the sphere of public interest – with civil society – the sphere of private interests. During the time Marx had worked as a journalist he had experienced how the parliament had degraded the state to an instrument of the private interests. In the case of the Law on the Theft of Wood especially, he had observed how rich landowners misused the state for their own group interests. In the case of the wine farmers of the Mosel region he had observed that state bureaucracy, acting slowly and formalistically, tended to neglect the urgency of an emergency situation, hindering rather than promoting the public interest. It was for Marx an unpleasant surprise that Hegel presented as intermediaries between the state and civil society precisely those three institutions which Marx considered hindered the realization of the public interest: large landownership, the state bureaucracy, and a parliament based on a representation of the social estates. It is therefore logical that Marx's critique is directed mainly against these three parts of Hegel's philosophy of the state. In this critique Marx develops for the first time his theory of *'political alienation'*.

POLITICAL ALIENATION: A CONSEQUENCE OF THE SEPARATION BETWEEN STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY?

In his critique Marx needed a regulative idea. However, even at this stage, he still only seldom uses the terms 'rational state' (*vernünftige Staat*) or 'true state' (*wahre Staat*). Instead he introduces the term 'democracy' (*Demokratie*) or 'true democracy' (*wahre Demokratie*). But this 'democracy' is not a modern, liberal democracy. It is rather the ideal of a (mythical) state in which the public interest is *directly* realized by the people. He confronts this 'democracy' with the existing state, which he calls an 'abstract state' – because here the sphere of the public interest is disconnected and isolated from the rest of society. For Marx the existing state has only a *formal* character. In this 'abstract state' he wrote, "political man has a particular existence alongside apolitical, private man. Contract, property, marriage, civil society appear here … as particular modes of existence alongside the political state, as the contents of which the state is the organizing form, actually only as the mind … which, itself, is empty."[9] The state, the sphere of the public interest, is an empty shell, lacking concrete contents. As a consequence it is not a *real* sphere of public interest, but a sphere that, behind its quasi-public character, hides only private interests. In modern society, Marx concludes, the sphere of public interest has become the playing field of private interests.

> "The political state," wrote Marx, "developed itself as a common Reason *(Vernunft)* against the other spheres, as something transcendent. … The political constitution was until now the religious sphere, the religion of the life of the people, the heaven of its communality against the earthly existence of its reality. The political sphere was the only state-sphere within the state, the only sphere in which content, as well as form was public, the true communal, but at the same time, because this sphere stood against the other spheres, also her contents became formal and particular."[10]

Here, Marx is applying the model of *religious alienation* to the state. Just as man alienates his own essence in religion, he also alienates the essence of his public life - the public interest - by putting it in a separate sphere to the one in which he lives his daily life. The question for Marx is how this political alienation can be eradicated. His answer is that in order to eradicate this political alienation the public interest has not only to be realized *formally* – that is to say on the level of the state – but also *concretely* – that is to say in civil society. Only then, he argues, can one speak of a 'democracy'. Because in a 'true democracy' the public interest is realized not only in a formal, but also in a concrete

way. In a 'true democracy', as it is conceived by Marx, not only the state, but also civil society becomes a sphere of the public interest. "The modern French," wrote Marx, "have interpreted this thus: that in the true democracy the political state will disappear."[11] Prompted by his disappointing experiences in his time as a journalist, Marx comes to the conclusion that one cannot leave responsibility for the realization of the public interest to a special sector, the state, when, at the same time, in the rest of society particularism and self-interest prevail. If one really wants to realize the public interest, then it should be the principle not only of the state, but of society as a whole.

THE UNITY OF STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IS NO GUARANTEE FOR THE ERADICATION OF POLITICAL ALIENATION: THE EXAMPLE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Did this mean that eliminating the separation between the state and civil society would, in itself, be sufficient to speak of a 'true democracy'? No, because Marx did not think that an immediate unification of the state and civil society would be enough to guarantee the realization of the public interest. In the Middle Ages, for example, state and civil society were not at that stage separated. During that period economic life and political life were still an organic unity. "In the Middle Ages property, trade, society, and man are *political* … each private sphere has a political character or is a political sphere, in other words politics is also the character of the private spheres."[12] This identity of economic and political relations had its roots in the feudal structure of medieval society. The serfs and tenants were economically, as well as politically, dependent on the feudal lord. Duties to the lord, therefore, were by nature *economic* duties (for example to pay the rent for the land), as well as *political* duties (for example to pay taxes). In exchange the lord offered protection.[13]

"In the Middle Ages," wrote Marx, "the life of the people and the life of the state is identical."[14] Is this medieval society therefore a 'democracy' in Marx's terms? Not at all. Because it may be true that "man … is the true principle of the state, but the unfree man. It is therefore the democracy of unfreedom, complete alienation."[15] In medieval society state and civil society were still united. State functions were exercised by the feudal lord. The feudal lord was judge, policeman, and also ruler. At the same time he was also the economic master. There existed an organic unity in society, but there was no freedom. Therefore there was still alienation. In a 'true democracy' society has to be

ruled by the people themselves. The state, said Marx, has to be a 'free product of man': a 'democracy' presupposes *free* people.

However, the alienation, observed by Marx in medieval society, is quite different from alienation in modern society. The concept of alienation, used by Marx in relation to the Middle Ages, is reminiscent of Rousseau. It is the fact that the people are not free. Like Rousseau Marx uses the implicit supposition that man is essentially free. If in his daily life man is not free, then there exists a discrepancy between his deeper essence and his actual existence: man is alienated. The alienation, observed by Marx in modern society, is quite different. In modern society a special sphere of the public interest has developed - the state, which is separate from the rest of society. This independent political sphere could only develop because the private spheres began to lead an independent existence. In the Middle Ages, "where trade and property of the land are not free, not yet autonomous, there exists also not yet a political constitution."[16] The foundation of the modern state became possible by the emancipation of the economy from feudal bonds. Thereby a civil society could develop, which became independent from the influence of the political leadership and a new class of free citizens came about. The emergence of the 'political state' was the consequence of this development: because economic life was de-politicized, politics had to withdraw from society into its own, separate sphere. When the 'political state' emerges, free citizenship already exists. This means that the first alienation, which was characteristic of the Middle Ages: unfreedom, has been eradicated. This new freedom, however, comes at a cost: the loss of society's original unity of society, which is replaced by two relatively autonomous spheres: state and civil society. This leads to a *new*, different, kind of alienation: the discrepancy between man's social nature and his egoistic existence which expresses itself not only in civil society, but also in the state.

MARX'S THEORY OF POLITICAL ALIENATION: A VARIANT OF FEUERBACH'S THEORY OF RELIGIOUS PROJECTION

Political alienation is the result of the separation between state and civil society. A consequence of this separation is that the essence of civil society – which is, according to Marx, the public interest – has been removed from civil society to achieve an independent existence in the state. The state has become the sphere of Reason vis-à-vis the other spheres, it has become its *Jenseits,* its metaphysical heaven. "The political sphere," wrote Marx, "was until now the religious sphere, the religion of the people's lives, the heaven

of its universality against the earthly existence of its [daily] reality."[17] The alienation of modern society is caused by the *projection* of the essential characteristic of civil society onto a different, quasi-'transcendent' reality: the state. Here one can clearly recognize Feurbach's theory of religious alienation, interpreted by Marx in a new, political way. Like Feuerbach, for whom religion is the objectified essence of man, the state is for Marx the objectified essence of civil society.

This alienation of civil society is reproduced at the individual level by the separation between 'political man' and 'private man'. This inner split is a consequence of the loss of the organic unity of society and its division into two separate spheres. Man becomes a split individual: he is at the same time someone who - as a member of civil society - looks after his private interests, and - as a citizen of the state - is oriented toward the public interest. It is not difficult to recognize here also Rousseau's separation of man into an egoistic *bourgeois* and an altruistic *citoyen.* Marx, therefore, in his theory of political alienation, is using *several* concepts of alienation, coming from different origins.

MARX'S BASIC PROPOSITION: MAN IS ESSENTIALLY SOCIAL

The basis of Marx's theory of political alienation is that the essential characteristic of civil society is the public interest. This marks a clear break with Hegel. For the latter civil society was a *System der Bedürfnisse,* a system based on human needs in which men, egoistically, strive to fulfil these needs. The essence of civil society was for Hegel the egoistical need and *not* the public interest. On the contrary, because man in civil society is only focused on his own interest he cannot know the public interest and he cannot realize it in civil society.[18] The realization of the public interest can only take place in the spiritual (*geistige*) sphere of the state.

Marx, however, does not agree with Hegel. He considers the public interest as the principle of civil society. He is not blind, however, to the fact that, in reality, it is the sphere of private interests, which he considers to conflict with its essential nature. Unlike Hegel he thinks that the public interest can be realized in civil society. Marx seems here to be more idealistic than Hegel, who is often accused by Marx of idealism. Marx's 'idealistic' conception of civil society can be imputed to his implicit anthropology. Marx's basic anthropological supposition is namely that man is a *social being.*[19] Marx, therefore, disagrees fundamentally with Hegel that "particular activities of the state (…)

are only in an external and coincidental way connected with the particular personality [of the individuals]."[20] His commentary on this statement is that activities of the state (i.e. activities to realize the public interest) are not connected to individuals in a coincidental, but in an essential way, "However, not to the individual as a physical [individual], but as a political [individual], to the political quality of the individual." Activities undertaken for the public interest are "the natural action of his essential quality … Hegel … forgets that the essential nature of the 'particular personality' is not his beard, his blood, his abstract physical appearance, but his *social quality,* and that state activities etcetera are nothing but modes of existence and activity of the social qualities of man."[21]

Marx considers the division of state and civil society in Hegel's philosophy of Right as a theoretical legitimation of political alienation. It is true that Hegel by creating 'intermediary spheres' tries to bridge the gap between state and civil society. Hegel mentions as such the social estates (*Stände*), the corporations (economic interest organizations), the *Majorat* (primogeniture inheritance amongst the landed aristocracy), state bureaucracy, the judiciary, and the police. But for Marx these intermediaries do not answer the deeper problem: they don't remove the principal incompatibility between state and civil society and therefore only perpetuate political alienation. It is only logical that in his critique of Hegel's philosophy of the state Marx will concentrate on these 'intermediary spheres' because they are the Achilles' heel of Hegel's theory. We will hereafter analyze in greater detail Marx's critique of three of these 'intermediary spheres': state bureaucracy, the *Majorat*, and the parliament based on the representation of the different social estates (*Ständeparlament*).

MARX'S CRITIQUE OF STATE BUREAUCRACY

According to Hegel the role of state bureaucracy was to implement laws and decrees, issued by the government, in civil society. It had the task of defending the public interest against the particular interests of civil society – especially those of trade and industry, organized in so-called 'corporations', and the local interests of the municipalities. How should state bureaucracy fulfil its task as intermediary agency between the public interest and private interests? Hegel suggests several different ways. One of his proposals is to give local governments and the boards of corporations a *mixed* structure of partly elected and partly appointed members. But for Marx this does not resolve the fundamental conflict between the public interest and private interests. The problem is merely relocated. Because the conflict is now reproduced within local governments and the

boards of corporations. “The board of the corporation is characterized by the opposition: private interest and interest of the particular spheres versus the higher interest of the state: opposition between private property and the state. It is not necessary to observe that the resolution of this opposition by a mixed election is a pure accommodation … an avowal of the unresolved dualism, itself a dualism, a ‘mixture’.”[22] Appointing government commissars to the boards of corporations does not for Marx resolve the conflict between state and civil society, but just makes this conflict sharper. State bureaucracy cannot play an intermediary role, because it is itself a product of the separation between state and civil society: “Hegel takes the separation of state and civil society as his point of departure, and certainly bureaucracy is based on this separation.”[23]

State bureaucracy is for Marx a product of political alienation. It is therefore not capable of eradicating this alienation. Its mere existence stands in the way. Marx rejects an intermediary role for state bureaucracy between the public interest and private interests not only for reasons of principle. For other, more practical, reasons also, he thinks it not very plausible that bureaucracy would take care of the public interest. In his description of state bureaucracy Hegel had mentioned a number of mechanisms which were to prevent bureaucracy from developing specific group interests. He insisted, for example, on the necessity for civil servants to be well paid by the state, in order to prevent them from becoming dependent on civil society for their means of subsistence. To avoid particularism developing within the state bureaucracy, he also pleaded for a *hierarchical* organization, leading to permanent control from above. This control from above should be complemented by control from beneath by the corporations.

However, the hierarchy, which Hegel considered a guarantee against the emergence of bureaucratic group interests, for Marx was itself a bureaucratic group interest. The essence of the bureaucratic hierarchy was that each level was a “hammer for those beneath, [and] an anvil for those above,” it was a “hierarchy of knowledge. The top entrusts the understanding of details to the lower echelons, and the lower echelons entrust to the top the general overview and thus they deceive one other.”[24] “The hierarchy punishes the civil servant when he sins against the hierarchy, but it protects him as soon as the hierarchy sins through him …”[25] When Hegel presents the bureaucracy as a protector of civil society, said Marx, we should ask him: “Where is the protection against the hierarchy?”[26] Because the hierarchy is itself the main abuse with which “the few personal sins of the civil servants” cannot be compared. According to Hegel, the hierarchical organization of state bureaucracy was not the only guarantee against the development of specific group interests by civil servants. Another condition he mentions, is an *equal access* to these positions, which should be open to all, without distinction.

Access to government jobs should not be the privilege of a certain caste or social class. It should, in principle, be open to everyone. The only condition should be "knowledge and the proven ability to acquire this."[27] In practice this led to a situation – a fact, by the way, which Hegel acknowledged – that most civil servants came from the middle class, the class "in which one can find the educated intelligentsia and the sense of justice of the majority of people."[28]

Hegel considered this *universal* access to the state bureaucracy (which was dependent on strict examination requirements) another link between the state and civil society. However, for Marx this was an identity "of a very superficial and dualistic character. Every catholic has the possibility of becoming a priest (which means separating himself from laymen and the world). But does the papistry therefore stand less opposed to the catholic as a transcendent power? That everyone has the possibility of obtaining the rights of *another* sphere, is only a proof that *his own* sphere is not the reality of this right. In the true state it is not about the possibility for every citizen to dedicate himself to the universal class as a particular class, but about the capacity of the universal class to be really universal, which means the class of every citizen."[29] The 'universal spirit' of bureaucracy is, according to Marx, characterized by closedness, worship of authority, passive obedience, and, especially, *formalism*: "Because bureaucracy everywhere makes its "formal" aims into her material [objectives], it comes into conflict everywhere with the "real" aims. It is thereby forced to present the formal as the content and the content as the formal. State aims are changed into bureau aims or bureau objectives into state objectives. Bureaucracy is a circle out of which no-one can escape."[30]

The bureaucrat considers himself, continues Marx, to be the incarnation of the state. He makes his bureau the center of the world. The realization of the public interest is reduced to the scrupulous application of petty, formal rules. In this process the relationship between the bureaucracy and civil society loses its authentic, human character, it is reduced to a cold and impersonal interaction. The civil servant may experience feelings of sympathy and compassion *as a man,* however *as a civil servant* he has to suppress these feelings in order to apply the rules strictly. As a man he may be touched by the specific problematic character of the situation with which he is confronted, as a civil servant he has to reduce these situations to "cases" to which rules do or do not apply.[31] Here, interestingly, Marx is already developing a sociological notion of the workings of bureaucracy. His ideas show a striking resemblance to the theories that will be developed later by the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920).[32] However, there is one important difference between their theories and this concerns the evaluation of bureaucratic formalism. Marx criticizes this formalism for the cold and emotionless

character with which it applies the principle of 'sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander', abstracting from the concrete situation. This fact is also acknowledged by Weber. The bureaucratic rule is for him the "rule of the formalistic *impersonality*: sine ira et studio, without hate and passion, therefore without 'love' and 'enthusiasm'."[33]

For Marx this is a reason to reject this formalism. Weber however, rightly emphasizes the positive side of this bureaucratic formalism, which includes equality before the law and guards against government arbitrariness. According to Weber "the view of any 'democratic' trend, which means in this case [a trend] oriented toward a minimalization of 'power', necessarily falls between two stools. 'Equality before the law' and the demand for legal guarantees against arbitrariness require the *formal,* rational 'objectivity' of governance … The 'ethos', however … [which] comes with its demand for *material* 'justice', [and] which refers to a concrete case and a concrete person, collides with the formalism and the cool 'objectivity' of bureaucratic governance and has, for this reason, to reject emotionally what is required rationally."[34]

THE ASOCIAL CHARACTER OF THE *MAJORAT* INHERITANCE LAWS

Another entity that, according to Hegel, should 'mediate' between the state and civil society was the *nobility,* a class which was differed from the other classes of civil society because of its hereditary land ownership. The inheritance law in Prussia was based on the principle of the so-called *Majorat.* The 'Majorat' (from the Latin word 'maior' – the older) meant that only the first-born son could inherit the land – a legal system set up to avoid the family's land ending up in small parcels. The same system existed in Great Britain, where it was called *entails,* and in France where it was known as *substitution héréditaire.*[35] The first-born son had the duty to manage the family land and, if he could not increase it, at least to maintain its original size. To guarantee the preservation of the family land it was forbidden for the inheritor to sell the land. This stable, unsellable land ownership, which characterized the landed gentry, was for Hegel a reason to endow this nobility with a special status. Because of its property, he said, the nobility was "independent from state property, as well as from the insecurity of a profession, [and] from the greed and the changeability of property as such."[36] The ban on the sale of land, however, placed the nobility in a certain sense *outside* civil society, because civil society is based on the principle of the free disposal of one's own property, a freedom which implies the right to sell *all* the goods one owns. For Hegel it was particularly this special, independent position between the state and civil society which made this

class, the nobility, pre-eminently appropriate to a mediating function between the two spheres. On the basis of their birth the members of this class could claim a permanent seat in parliament. Hegel is thus in favor of a *hereditary* political position for the nobility – modeled on the English House of Lords. It is clear that such a special privilege for members of the nobility was an encroachment on the civil principle "equal rights for all". In the same vein, the impossibility of selling the family land was a *Fremdkörper* - an alien element - in civil society. Here, Hegel is harking back to feudal remnants to bridge the gap between state and civil society.

Marx's critique is interesting because he throws the ball back into Hegel's court and turns Hegel's arguments upside down. While Hegel tried to present the Majorat property as a political sphere that is elevated *above* civil society because the land cannot be sold, Marx, for his part, tries to show that, on the contrary, the Majorat is not elevated above, but rather finds itself *beneath* the level of existing civil society. What is a political sphere? Marx asks. It is a sphere of social relations that through its focus on the public interest has a positive-ethical charge.[37] This is the difference with civil society where relations, focused on one's own private interest, lack this positive-ethical charge. Why would the Majorat – which is based on the private ownership of land – belong to this political sphere? Private property, continues Marx, is an individual right to dispose of a good, excluding all the others. It is, therefore, by definition, a-social. It is part of civil society. But does a-social also mean un-social or anti-social? No, because private property can in civil society be the occasion for manifold social relations, such as are implied in purchase and sale, in rent and lease. However, this is not the case for the Majorat property: "Through the fact that it cannot be sold, its social nerves are cut off and its isolation from civil society is assured."[38] The Majorat property is the *pre-eminent* private property, Marx concludes, because the exclusion of the others is absolute.

The Majorat is not only a-social, it is equally *un*-social. It has its place not only outside the political sphere, but does not even reach the level of civil society. The stability and independence of Majorat property which Hegel considered as greatly *superior* to the insecurity of income, property, and profession in civil society, are for Marx symptoms of a *social inferiority.* Civil society may be alienated, is Marx's message, but confronted with the barbarian Majorat it resembles rather a temple of the Muses: "Compared with the crude stupidity of independent private property [i.e. the Majorat], the insecurity of the profession[s] is elegiac, the greed pathetic (dramatic), the dependence on the state resources ethical. In short, in all these qualities [one can hear] the human heart beating through the property, it is the dependence of man on man."[39] The mutual dependence of people on each other is for Marx by far preferable to the social isolation of the Majorat.

Marx does not attack the Majorat only for its presumed unsocial character. Even worse for him is the fact that in the Majorat system the individual cannot dispose freely of inherited land, but that his heritage, as it were, disposes of him:

> "The permanent [thing] is the inheritance, the landed property. It is the constant [thing] in the relationship – the substance. The lord, the owner, is in reality only accidental. The land property anthropomorphizes itself in the different generations. Land property always inherits, so to speak, the first-born of the family as an attribute that belongs to it. Each first-born in the series of land owners is the inheritance, the property of the unsellable land … The subject is the thing and the predicate is man."[40]

The same is true in regard to the political rights that are coupled with the Majorat property: "The political quality of the lord is the political quality of his inheritance, a political quality inherent in this inherited wealth. Here, the political quality appears also as the property of the land, as a quality which directly belongs to the purely physical earth (nature). As concerns the first, one may conclude that the lord is the serf of the land …."[41]

Here, the essence of Marx's argument is that in the Majorat the relationship between person and (material) thing is inverted. In the tradition of classical German philosophy Marx's point of departure is that man's essential characteristic is his freedom and that un-freedom is the essential characteristic of a thing.[42] In a normal situation a free person will dispose of the un-free thing. However, when man becomes subjected to a thing, his freedom is threatened: he becomes alienated. This is, according to Marx, what happens in the Majorat system. The person becomes an accessory of the land. Inheriting looks less like the free act of the inheritor, but rather a self-perpetuating mechanism of the family estate land that takes over the inheritor.[43] A similar inversion of person and thing takes place in the case of the political rights which the inheritor acquires. He does not receive these rights because of his personal moral and intellectual qualities, but only because of the ownership of his land. Neither is he himself the determining factor, nor are these his particular political talents, but only his material possessions. He becomes, in Marx's striking comparison, a serf of his land – although this 'serfdom' brings him more advantages than disadvantages.[44]

Another 'intermediate sphere' between state and civil society, mentioned by Hegel in his Philosophy of Right, was the *Ständeparlament.* This was a parliament in which citizens were represented according to their social 'estate' (*Stand).* The three 'estates' (read: classes) which were represented were the nobility, the bourgeoisie, and the farmers. Marx had already criticized this kind of parliament earlier. His main objection was that in such a parliament the people were not represented, but only specific *group* interests. He reiterates this position in his critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, but rephrases it in the new terminology of his theory of political alienation. A parliament organized on the basis of social estates does not abolish the separation of state and civil society, but, according to Marx, maintains this separation. Rather than putting an end to the political alienation, it is its expression:

> "The state and the government are always presented [by Hegel] as identical on one side, and on the other, the people - dissolved in particular spheres and individuals. The social classes stand as a mediating organ between the two … The social classes are the synthesis between the state and civil society. However, how the social classes might succeed in combining both opposing tendencies is not indicated."[45]

If the social classes were ever to really present a synthesis between the state and civil society, says Marx, private interests would coincide with the public interest. However, this is an illusion, because "as concerns the mentality, the will of the social classes, this is suspect because it comes from the private point of view and private interests. In reality the private interest is their public affair and not the public affair their private interest."[46]

The contradiction in the parliamentary representation of the social classes is the supposition that those who are elected to parliament as the representatives of their own class, would undergo a sudden change and become servants of the public interest. For Marx it is evident that the public interest would not be realized. What would happen is that the strongest groups would present their own interest as the public interest. However, Marx appreciates Hegel for trying to reconcile state and civil society: "The deeper [sense] in Hegel is that he experiences the separation of civil society and political [society] as a contradiction."[47] Hegel does not succeed in resolving this contradiction. By making the social classes into 'mediating organs' the contradiction as such does not disappear, but is simply reproduced within the social classes.

According to Marx, a social class, as such, cannot be focused on the public interest, because "its essential feature is not to have the public interest as an objective."[48] If a social class were to present itself as a *political* class – which means as a class that is focused on the public interest - this would imply a complete self-denial. The social class would then have "to realize a part of its nature which not only has no connection with the real civilian existence of its nature, but is directly opposed to it."[49] Marx thinks that such a transformation is impossible. It is demanding from the social classes something they cannot achieve. Hegel's transformation of the social classes into pillars of the public interest must therefore be considered impossible. Instead one must go back to the *real* pillars of the public interest: individual citizens. To be active as *state citizens* they have to distance themselves from the social classes and other organizations of civil society, because these organizations are by definition not focused on the public interest, but on particular group interests. Marx's conclusion is that *isolated, atomized* individuals are the pillars of the public interest. But does this resolve the central problem? No, because for Marx the alienating separation of state and civil society is reproduced *within* the individuals, and even, perhaps, in a more fundamental and more acute way. "In the individual there appears here what is a general law. Civil society and the state are separated. Therefore also the state citizen and the citizen, the member of civil society, are separated. He has to split himself in two. As a real living citizen he finds himself in a dual organization, the bureaucratic (organization] … of the social [organization; i.e. the state], [and] the organization of civil society."[50]

The alienation caused by the separation of state and civil society is reproduced at the individual level in man's inner schism, in his dual condition as citizen and *state* citizen. In his condition as state citizen man has to abstract from civil society. This means that he only can realize his social nature by distancing himself from his daily, material reality: "the separation of civil society and the political state appears necessarily as a separation of the *political* citizen, the state citizen, from civil society, from his own real, empirical reality, because as a state idealist he is a completely different being, who is different from his reality, distinguished, opposite."[51] The internal split within man, caused by his simultaneous identity of citizen and state citizen – or, to speak in Rousseau's terms: of *bourgeois* and *citoyen* – can only be ended when the public interest is also realized in civil society. According to Marx this can only happen when one has put an end to the separation between the state and civil society. It is the great challenge that awaits humanity.

NOTES

[1] The state is for Hegel no accidental *Dasein,* no 'mere reality', but the 'reality of the ethical Idea' (Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* op. cit., Paragraph 257). The emergence of the state in a particular historical phase is for Hegel the necessary realization of the *Begriff* of the state, the necessary development of 'a spirit which deploys itself into the real form and organization of a world.' (Ibid., Paragraph 270).

[2] Karl Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," *MEW,* Bd. 1, 207.

[3] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 206.

[4] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 209.

[5] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 216.

[6] Karl Marx, "Anmerkungen zur Doktordissertation," *MEW Ergänzungsband,* 327.

[7] Cf. Lucio Colletti, *Il marxismo e Hegel,* (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1969), 94.

[8] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 225.

[9] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 232.

[10] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 233.

[11] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 232.

[12] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 233.

[13] Cf. Eugen Paschukanis, *Allgemeine Rechtslehre und Marxismus – Versuch einer Kritik der juristischen Grundbegriffe,* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Neue Kritik, 1970), 116: “An authority of a feudal or patriarchal type does not recognize boundaries between the private and the public. The public rights of the feudal lord over his farmers were simultaneously his rights as a private owner, while, on the contrary, his private rights, eventually, could be interpreted as political, that is public rights.”

[14] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 233.

[15] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 233.

[16] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 233.

[17] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 233.

[18] Cf. Manfred Riedel, *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft und Staat bei Hegel – Grundproblem und Struktur der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie,* (Neuwied am Rhein: Luchterhand, 1970), 57.

[19] The term ‘social’ should be understood here not only as descriptive, in the sense that man is a being that enters into social relations, without saying something about the *character* of these relations. The word ‘social’ must be understood here in particular in a *normative* sense. The human animal is, according to Marx, essentially focused on the other as other and he wants, therefore, also the realization of the public interest.

[20] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 277.

[21] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 222.

[22] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 251.

[23] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 247.

[24] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 249.

[25] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 255.

[26] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 255.

[27] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 291, 262.

[28] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 297, 264.

[29] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 252-253.

[30] Marx, “Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 248-249.

[31] Cf. Leo Kofler, *Stalinismus und Bürokratie - Zwei Aufsätze,* (Neuwied am Rhein: Luchterhand, 1970), 29: “This ‘inhuman character’ of bureaucracy is essentially caused by the fact that it, by its formalistic treatment of ‘cases’ blindly abstracts from the qualitative pluriformity of human life … The alienation between that which is humane and bureaucratic-formalistic activity leads necessarily to an impoverishment of that [faculty] which, as the expression of mutually binding human relations, we use to call morals.”

[32] Max Weber also considers the “hierarchy of knowledge” as the essence of bureaucracy: “Bureaucratic governance means: power through knowledge: this is its specific basic rational character.” (Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft – Grundriss*

der verstehenden Soziologie, 1. Halbband, (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1964), 165. Weber also agrees with Marx's thesis that the bureaucrats have specific private interests. He refers to a "community of interests of all in this mechanism participating civil servants that it continues to function and [that] the socially organized form of power continues." (Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft – Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie,* 2. Halbband, (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1964), 727).

[33] Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft,* 1. Halbband, 166.

[34] Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft,* 2. Halbband, 721.

[35] Cf. Thomas Piketty, *Le capital au XXIe siècle,* (Paris: Seuil, 2013), 574. In France this system was temporarily abolished by the French Revolution. In the *Code civil* of 1804 was included an article on the egalitarian division of inheritance. In 1807, however, Napoleon reintroduced the Majorat and it was only definitively abolished in 1848. In Germany the system would prove to be more resistant: one had to wait for the Weimar Republic to abolish, in 1919, the Majorat. (Cf. Thomas Piketty, op. cit., 576).

[36] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 306, 272-273.

[37] For this relationship between politics and ethics in Marx's theory, see chapter 9.

[38] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 303.

[39] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 307.

[40] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 311.

[41] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 311.

[42] Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysik des Sitten,* 1. Teil, Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1966), 26-27: "The moral personality is nothing more than the freedom of a rational being under moral laws … *Sache* is a thing that cannot be held accountable. Each object of free arbitrariness which itself lacks itself freedom, is therefore a thing …" Hegel spoke about a personality which "knows itself as the infinite, universal, and free." (Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 35, 50). A thing, on the contrary, is for Hegel something "unfree, unpersonal, [and] without rights." (Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 42, 54).

[43] Compare what Kant wrote about the position of the monarch in a hereditary monarchy (*Erbreich*): "The state gains a regent, not he, as such … the state." (Immanuel Kant, "Zum ewigen Frieden," in *Kleinere Schriften zur Geschichtsphilosophie, Ethik und Politik,* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1973), 119.

[44] This criticism of the inversion of person and thing will continue to play an important role in Marx's theory of alienation. When later, in the first chapter of *Capital,* he attacks the so-called 'fetishism of goods', he is speaking, essentially, about the same: the fact that people do not dominate things, but let themselves be dominated by their own products.

[45] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 270.

[46] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 266.

[47] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 279.

[48] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 280.

[49] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 280-81.

[50] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 281.

[51] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 281.

Chapter Nine

The Relationship between Ethics and Politics in Marx

FEUERBACH'S INFLUENCE ON MARX'S NORMATIVE IDEA OF THE 'ESSENCE' OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Marx's theory of political alienation is an application of Feuerbach's theory of religious projection on the society of his time. Like man, who projects in religion his essence on god, so is the state the alienated essence of civil society. God and the state are, therefore, analogous phenomena: they are the expression of the alienation of man and civil society respectively. This is why Marx speaks about the state as 'the religion of people's lives'. Marx transforms Feuerbach's theory of religious alienation from a (socio-) psychological into a *social* theory of alienation. His point of departure is not the individual psyche or the group psyche, but social development. Therefore he does not seek the reason for the separation of state and civil society in the needs or the passions of *individuals,* but in a socio-economic phenomenon: the liberation of trade and land ownership from the restrictions of feudalism, a process that gave birth to a civil society which was relatively autonomous against the political sphere. Through his attention to *supra*-individual mechanisms Marx transforms Feuerbach's theory of alienation into an instrument of sociological analysis. This sociological approach becomes clear in particular when one takes a closer look at Marx's treatment of political alienation on an individual level. This individual alienation – the inner schism of the citizen into private citizen and state citizen – is for him the consequence of a societal alienation: it is the product of the alienation which exists in society.[1]

Marx's application of Feuerbach's theory of alienation on social phenomena, however, is only possible by accepting a number of suppositions of this theory. Like

Feuerbach, who considered god as the 'alienated essence' of humanity, Marx must reconstruct the state as the 'alienated essence' of civil society. This implies that

- civil society has an 'essence'
- civil society can alienate (lose) this essence
- this process would, indeed, have taken place and the state is in fact this 'alienated essence'

The first question we should ask is: what exactly for Marx, is the 'essence' of civil society? Marx explained the emergence of civil society from the emancipation of trade, labor, and property from feudal bonds. We may, therefore, assume that the free practice of trade and industry, based on a system of free disposal of property – i.e. an economically founded *civil freedom* – was for him essential for civil society. However, this was not all. When Marx describes the state – the sphere of the public interest – as the 'alienated essence' of civil society, it is clear that for him the *public interest* also is an essential characteristic of civil society. We have seen that in this respect he was diametrically opposed to Hegel. For Hegel civil society was the sphere of the economic (re)production in which men satisfy their needs through their labor. In this labor Hegel saw a liberating property, because in this process man learnt to dominate not only external nature, but also the nature inside himself (man's passions). Therefore, we must bear in mind that for Hegel also civil society was a sphere of freedom. However, this freedom was for Hegel only 'formal', because in the end it was focused on the satisfaction of subjective needs and not on the realization of the public interest. This was also impossible, because civil society was for Hegel only a *System der Bedürfnisse,* a 'system of needs'. In civil society the citizen enters into social relations with other citizens, but these are determined mainly by the necessity of satisfying their needs: "In civil society everyone is his own end, all the rest is nothing to him. But without relations with others he cannot achieve the totality of his objectives; these others are therefore a means for the objective of the particular."[2] In other words: relations, established in civil society are for Hegel not social relations in the positive sense. They are focused not on the realization of the public interest, but on the realization of everyone's private interest. This means that Marx's and Hegel's ideas as regards civil society are diametrically opposed. For Hegel civil society is *qualitate qua* the sphere of particular interests, for Marx, on the contrary, it is *in its essence* the sphere of the public interest. This does not mean that Marx is closing his eyes to the fact that in reality civil society is the sphere of particular interests. However, he considers this reality to be in conflict with its essence. Unlike Hegel he considers that the public

interest can be – and *should* be – realized in civil society. This should take place by a process through which civil society 're-appropriates' the state and transforms itself into a 'true democracy'.

How did Marx arrive at this 'optimistic' assessment of the essence of civil society and what basis does he present for it? Marx tries to formulate an *anthropological* foundation for his assumption that the public interest is the essence of civil society. The essence of civil society is the public interest, according to Marx, because *individuals* – the basic elements of civil society – are focused on the public interest. Marx's anthropology during this period consists of two basic propositions, the first of which is that man is essentially *free*, and the second, that man is essentially *social*. The meaning Marx attributes to the word 'social' is of particular interest. 'Social' can have a *descriptive* meaning, in which case it indicates merely that man enters into social relations, without referring to the *quality* of these relations. In this case it makes no difference whether one enters into relations motivated by one's private interest or the public interest. However, 'social' can also have a *normative* meaning in the sense of 'being focused on the realization of the public interest'. It is clear that Marx uses 'social' here in the latter sense.

The question is why has Marx come to this very normative idea of civil society. Here also, Feuerbach has probably had a great influence on him. Ivan Dubský[3] has indicated that Feuerbach in the course of his theoretical development has given three different answers to the question of what he considers the essence of man, namely, "1. The essence of man is reason, the will and the heart. 2. The essence of man is 'in society, in the unity of man with man' and 3. The essence of man is sensuousness [*Sinnlichkeit*] and therefore also nature."[4] The interesting fact is that during the years 1841-1843 – exactly the period in which Feuerbach's anthropology influenced the young Marx – in Feuerbach's writings the *second* definition prevailed. Feuerbach defined man's essence in this period as 'society', 'the unity of man with man', as essentially *social*. Also for Feuerbach this social essence had a strong normative character – even stronger than would ever be the case for Marx. Realization of this social essence is for him not only the realization of the public interest, but the realization of a *universal love* between mankind.

Marx's critique of Hegel's theory of the state now becomes more understandable. He criticized the Majorat, because it prevented the land of the nobility from being sold on the market: its 'social nerves' were cut off and the property was 'isolated' from civil society. One might ask oneself why Marx prefers relations between people, who sell and buy, above the absence of such relations. Are not selling and buying typical relations of civil society, based on the self-interest of the people? The reason is that for Marx creating social relations (even when these still have a selfish character) is a *precondition* for the

development of ethical, positive social relations. That is why the fact that the nobility has no access to the market to sell its land places it 'below' civil society. At the same time Marx is conscious of the fact that a positive normative development of social relations in *existing* civil society is impossible. Again, we see here the strong influence of Ludwig Feuerbach, who – before Marx – had already attacked the egoism of civil society. For Feuerbach, however, the cause of this egoism was man's *religious* alienation. Religious man projected his love onto god and took it away from his fellow men. For Marx, on the contrary, the cause of this egoism was *political* alienation – the fact that the state had developed into an independent entity outside civil society. This led Marx to demand the end of the separation of state and civil society and the establishment of a 'true democracy' in which state and civil society form a direct unity. Only then, he believed, could an end be put to the separation between the egoistic bourgeois and the ethical citizen. While Hegel seemed to accept the egoistical way of life in civil society - although softened by a number of 'intermediate spheres' - reserving the realization of the public interest for the sphere of the state, Marx was seeking a moralization of human relations in civil society itself.

THE 'AUTOMATIC' REALIZATION OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN CIVIL SOCIETY: BERNARD MANDEVILLE AND ADAM SMITH

At first sight Marx's ideas resemble theories that were popular in the eighteenth century. Bernard Mandeville and Adam Smith, for example - unlike Hegel - considered it possible to realize the public interest *inside* civil society.[5] However, unlike Marx, they considered this public interest to be not the result of the *conscious ethical* behavior of citizens, but as the *unintended consequence* of the egoistic satisfaction of their needs. Mandeville even makes this subject the central focus of his book *The Fable of the Bees.* Published for the first time in 1714, it had the telling subtitle *Private Vices, Publick* (sic) *Benefits.* According to Mandeville it was simply citizens' vices and egoism which promoted the welfare of society. Vanity, profligacy, and jealousy may be vices, but they have the positive consequence that they lead to increased consumption and thereby stimulate both the economy and employment. One has to look farther than the 'short-sighted Vulgar', said Mandeville, because "the short-Sighted Vulgar in the Chain of Causes seldom can see further than one Link; but those who can enlarge their View, and will give themselves the Leisure of gazing on the Prospect of concatenated Events, may, in a hundred Places see *Good* spring up, and pullulate from *Evil,* as naturally as Chickens do from Eggs."[6]

The consequence of all these vices, said Mandeville, is full employment, a pre-eminent public interest.[7] We find a similar way of thinking in Adam Smith, although this founding father of modern economics considered not so much the vices, as rather the 'normal' human self-interest as the motor of the public interest. It is an individual's self-interest, he said, that pushes an individual to work as hard as he can. At the same time as he promotes his own interest, however, he aggrandizes the national income and serves the public interest. "He generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it … he is … *led by an invisible hand* to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it."[8]

Both Mandeville and Smith present the public interest as the unintended consequence of the egoistic satisfaction of his needs by the citizen.[9] The vices and the egoism of citizens develop their own dynamic and it is this dynamic that leads to the *spontaneous* realization of the public interest. It is a dynamic, in the words of Adam Smith, which is led by an 'invisible hand'. Mandeville and Smith employed the *causal* model of explanation of the Newtonian natural sciences, in which they followed Thomas Hobbes, who, in his book *Leviathan,* had already applied the causal model of the natural sciences to the social and political reality. The public interest is no longer exclusively regarded as an *ethical objective* of citizens, but increasingly as the result of a causal chain. Mandeville, for instance, speaks explicitly about 'the chain of causes'. This means that the realization of the public interest – an important political objective – is considered less a *possible* result of the ethical behavior of citizens, as the *necessary* result of a certain kind of *non-ethical* behavior. Politics and ethics are separated. A similar separation of politics and ethics can be found in Immanuel Kant, who wanted to restrict the role of politics to the formation of a 'neutral state' which guarantees the citizen a zone of freedom.[10] This brings Kant to the famous dictum: "However hard this sounds, the issue of the constitution of the state can be solved even by a people of devils (if only they have minds) …"[11]

Hegel was to attack this view. In his *Philosophy of Right* he is seeking to restore the Aristotelian relationship between ethics and politics. He proceeds by defining the public interest again as an objective of the *will* [12] and replaces causality by teleology. However, this Hegelian teleology has a very particular character. The public interest is for him not an objective of individual citizens, but the objective of a god-like, *supra-individual* 'absolute will' which realizes its aims through the passions of individuals. In this context Hegel refers to the 'Cunning of Reason' (*List der Vernunft*) which "let the human passions work for it."[13] At first sight Hegel's 'Cunning of Reason' shows a certain similarity to the 'Invisible Hand' of Adam Smith. But for Smith the public interest was the result of a purely causal process. It was the blind realization of something that previously was not an objective. Hegel, on the contrary, defines citizens' actions as moments of a teleological process, as the realization of the objective of a god-like 'absolute will'. However, Hegel does share Smith's view that individuals, by satisfying their own needs, will promote the public interest. For Adam Smith this was a down-to-earth, empirical observation. Hegel, however, will situate it within a metaphysical framework. He considers the satisfaction of their needs by citizens not just as a simple fact, but as "the material in which the rational objective [of the Spirit] is realized."[14]

However, for Hegel a genuine, authentic realization of the public interest is not possible in civil society, the sphere of the satisfaction of the needs. It is only possible in the ethical sphere of the state. But also in the state it is not citizens, but the god-like Spirit which is the final subject: "The state is the Spirit that stands in the world and realizes itself there consciously … [when one speaks about] freedom, one should not take the starting point what is individual, the individual self-consciousness, but the essence of self-consciousness, because man may be aware of it or not, this essence realizes itself as an autonomous power in which particular individuals are only 'moments': the state is god's passage in the world, its foundation is Reason which realizes itself as will."[15] For Hegel the state is the result of a metaphysical process in which God interferes in the history of mankind. In this process God makes use of the human will. Although in the Philosophy of Right Hegel develops the state out of the *individual* will, this will has already - in the section on 'the philosophy of the Spirit' (*Philosophie des Geistes)* – been 'cleansed' of all egoism and physical determinism. The individual will, which is the basis of the state, is no longer a will determined by the passions and the selfish satisfaction of its needs, but a will which is one with its essence, the divine rational will

(*Vernunftwille)*.[16] Hegel wants to reconnect politics and ethics, but the final subject which realizes the public interest is not individuals, but the divine Spirit.

MARX: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHICS AND POLITICS IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Notwithstanding Marx's criticism of Hegel's philosophy, he is to follow Hegel in terms of the restored relationship between ethics and politics. However, he rejects Hegel's view that the final subject which realizes the public interest is the godlike Spirit. The subject of ethical-political behavior is for him man and man *alone*: man, who autonomously and not according to a pre-ordained 'Cunning of Reason' chooses his objectives and tries to realize them. As well as rejecting his metaphysical presuppositions Marx also rejects Hegel's view that the public interest could only be realized in the state and not in civil society. At first sight his ideas seem here to be more in line with those of Bernard Mandeville and Adam Smith, who similarly thought it possible to realize the public interest in civil society. The question, however, is whether Mandeville and Smith define the 'public interest' in the same way as Marx. This is clearly *not* the case. The 'public interest' is for Mandeville commensurate with material prosperity and full employment. For Adam Smith – at least in the *Wealth of Nations* – it equates to 'national wealth'. The 'public interest' is for both authors a concept which expresses the *economic and material well-being* of society. This concept not only fails to emphasize the desirability of positive-ethical social relations, but even assumes (in the case of Mandeville) that culpable actions can promote this kind of public interest.[17] For Mandeville and Smith 'the public interest' refers mainly, therefore, to the material living conditions of citizens and not to the moral quality of their mutual relations. For Marx, however, 'the public interest' is primarily an *ethical* concept. It refers to a situation in which the natural altruism of citizens can freely express itself.

Compared with Mandeville and Smith, Marx also proposes a radically different approach to resolving the problem of individual's satisfaction of their needs. For Mandeville and Smith this satisfaction could best be guaranteed egoistically, where everyone takes care of himself and his family first. For Marx, however, the satisfaction of the individual's needs should not take place in an egoistic way, but in a *social* way. If everybody works for the general interest, everyone works for others. But because everyone belongs to 'the others' of other citizens, the others work for me. The satisfaction of everyone's needs would, therefore, be guaranteed. In the case of Mandeville and Smith

the public interest was the result of the egoistic satisfaction of needs, which appeared like 'a chicken out of an egg' (Mandeville), in the case of Marx it is precisely the other way round. The satisfaction of the individual's needs does not lead to an – unconscious – realization of the public interest, but a conscious realization of the public interest leads to the individual satisfying their needs, thereby losing its egoistic character. Marx believed that a socialist society had a higher moral character than a capitalist society, because it would have been capable of resolving the *bourgeois-citoyen* problem. This belief could still be found in a Russian book, published in 1975, where one could read that "the epoch of free competition capitalism, having created new social-economic relations between the people, gave morals a universal and general character by expanding its principles (although only formally) to all people on an equal level. The hierarchical system of closed moral codes of the feudal society was destroyed. Socialism not only develops the 'universalism' of morals still further, bestowing the same normative value to each individual, but it represents a step forward on the road to the realization of real social equality of the people, [and thereby] *significantly increases the influence of morals."*[18]

MARX'S PRE-KANTIAN ETHICS

Marx is quite optimistic about human motives. According to him individuals are naturally focused on the public interest, inspired by an inherent altruism. In his vision this natural altruism would have been corrupted in modern society by *societal* causes. For Marx it is private property and the separation of the state and civil society which are the causes of moral evil. Marx thinks that man's social nature will express itself spontaneously when these societal barriers to moral behavior are removed. When private property and the separation of state and civil society are abolished, a complete social harmony will result. Conflicts would no longer take place, because these were the result of the egoistical satisfaction of needs in civil society. After the reunification of state and civil society everyone would work spontaneously for his fellow citizens and conflicts would belong to the past.[19]

Marx denies that in human nature there exists a conflict between what Kant labeled 'duty' and 'inclination' (*Pflicht und Neigung).* "Man," wrote Kant, "feels within himself, in his needs and inclinations, a powerful counterweight against all the commands of duty, which reason charges him to uphold."[20] For Marx such a conflict between ethical duty on the one hand and natural inclinations on the other does not, apparently, exist. Ethical duty and natural inclination coincide *directly.* His ethics resembles Spinoza's,

who also stated that man acted morally when he acted according to his nature. "Virtue," wrote Spinoza, "is nothing but acting from the laws of one's own nature."[21] This idea can also be found, in a different form, in Hegel. In his *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel proposed 'the harmony of morality and nature'.[22] Hegel, however, does not go so far as to assume a natural altruism in man. Rather he rejects the way in which Kant opposed 'duty' and 'inclination' as two mutually exclusive categories.[23] For Hegel the realization of ethical objectives is always connected with subjective, 'egoistic', motivations, such as the quest for honor and fame.[24] However, in his eyes, this does not diminish its ethical character. In his opinion, one should measure the ethical quality of a deed or action not exclusively with the yardstick of ethical *motivation* – as was stated by Kant - but primarily with the yardstick of *objective results.* Against Kant's *Gesinnungsethik,* Kant's ethics of *good intentions*, Hegel emphasizes a teleological ethics of *good results.* However, he tries to retain – in part – Kant's ethics of motivation by incorporating it into the Philosophy of Right under the heading 'morality' (*Moralität),* which is a 'moment' of realized ethics (*Sittlichkeit).*

In the writings of the young Marx an explicit ethical theory, in which he takes sides in the discussion of his time, is lacking. In fact his implicit ethical theory is still completely *pre-Kantian*. The debate on the problem of ethical motivation, introduced by Kant, is absent in his writings. This is hardly surprising, because he believes that in a 'rational' (*vernünftig*) society man is spontaneously focused on his fellow men on the basis of an inborn, natural sociability. Ethical motivation, apparently, does not have to tame egoistic passions. Marx transfers the ethical problem - summarized by Kant in the opposition of 'duty' and 'inclination' - from the level of the individual to the level of society. For him it is the existing organization of civil society that stands in the way of the complete development of the social essence of man. One should, therefore, seek the solution to the ethical problem not in individuals but in society. Marx's ethics seem to be a variant of pre-Kantian French Enlightenment philosophy in which the moral question was also reduced to a problem of the organization of society.

"We are what the surrounding world makes of us," Helvétius formulated as the basic idea of this philosophy in his book *De l'Esprit* (1758).[25] According to Helvétius "the customs of a country [are] related to the laws of a country by a necessary relationship of dependency and this teaches us that the science of morals is nothing but the science of lawgiving."[26] For Helvétius one cannot leave their own moral improvement to the citizens themselves. Such a moral improvement should be realized by *societal* change, in particular by changing laws. It is clear that Marx – who considers the existing 'abstract' state as the cause of moral failure amongst its citizens – cannot follow Helvétius in his

choice of using the laws as an instrument for the moral elevation of citizens. However, Marx's basic idea is the same – namely to solve the ethical problem by changing man's social surroundings. In Marx's case this means the abolition of private property and ending the separation of state and civil society. It is evident, however, that the social changes, propagated by Marx, would no more lead to the formation of an ethical citizen, as Rousseau's social contract would produce an ethical *citoyen.* Marx did not sufficiently realize that the ethical question lies at the intersection of the individual and society and cannot, therefore, be reduced to a function of the social environment alone.

NOTES

[1] Eugene Kamenka, therefore, completely misses the point, when he writes: "The conflict between civil society and political State, then, is seen primarily as the expression of a conflict within man himself …." (Eugene Kamenka, *The Ethical Foundations of Marxism,* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 56.

[2] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 182, Zusatz, 169.

[3] Ivan Dubský, "Zur Frage des Wesens des Menschen bei Feuerbach und Marx," in *Annali dell'Istituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli,* VII, Milano, 1964-1965, 149-155.

[4] Ivan Dubský, "Zur Frage des Wesens des Menschen bei Feuerbach und Marx," 150.

[5] One should, however, be conscious of the fact that at this stage the difference between state and civil society had not yet been made explicit. Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Adam Ferguson, and also Immanuel Kant, often conceived of state and civil society as identical concepts. Kant, for instance, wrote: "The members of such a society (societas civilis), that is of a state, who assemble for lawgiving, are called citizens [*Staatsbürger*] …" (Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten,* 1. Teil, "Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre," Paragraph 46, 136). Here Kant is equating 'societas civilis', i.e. civil society, with the state. Hegel was to be the first modern philosopher to explicitly formulate the difference between state and civil society and integrate both as differentiated concepts in his philosophy. (Cf. Manfred Riedel, "Der Begriff der 'Bürgerlichen Gesellschaft' und das Problem seines geschichtlichen Ursprungs," in Manfred Riedel, *Studien zur Hegels Rechtsphilosophie,* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969), 135.

[6] Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees,* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 123.

[7] Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees,* 211-212: "The great Art then to make a Nation happy, and what we call flourishing, consists in giving everybody an Opportunity of being employ'd …"

[8] Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations,* Vol. I, (London: Dent, 1975), 400. (My emphasis, MHVH). A similar idea was expressed by Goethe, who said: "All that we do has a consequence. But what is rational and right does not always produce something positive and what is wrong not always something negative, often it is precisely the other way round." (Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens,* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1988), 143).

[9] It is a popular misunderstanding, however, that Smith would consider egoistic self-interest as the only human motivation. Certainly, he considers *self love* to be a necessary condition for successful *economic* activity. However, in parallel Smith emphasizes the moral value of altruistic behavior – which he calls *benevolence* or *beneficence.* The goal of a political community is for him not beneficence, but the non-ethical *utility:* "But though the necessary assistance should not be afforded from such generous and disinterested motives … the society … will not necessarily be dissolved. Society may subsist among different men, as among different merchants, from a sense of utility, without any mutual love or affection …" (Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments,* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1976), 166.

[10] In an interesting article William Galston tries to show that Kant's formal theory of the 'neutral state' is in fact – albeit implicitly – morally founded. Cf. William Galston, "Defending Liberalism," in *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 76, September 1982, 621-629.

[11] Kant, "Zum ewigen Frieden," 146.

[12] Cf. Joachim Ritter, "Moralität und Sittlichkeit – Zu Hegels Auseinandersetzung mit der Kantischen Ethik," in Joachim Ritter, *Metaphysik und Politik – Studien zu Aristoteles und Hegel,* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969), 295-296.

[13] G.W.F. Hegel, "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte," *Werke,* Vol. 12, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), 49.

[14] Hegel, "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte," 55.

[15] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 258, Zusatz, 218.

[16] Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, "Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften," III, *Werke,* Vol. 10, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), Paragraph 485, 303: "This unity of the rational will with the individual will, *which is the direct and actual element of activation of the former,* is the simple reality [*Wirklichkeit*] of freedom." (My emphasis, MHVH).

[17] As, for Mandeville, a thief who steals money from a miser, promotes employment (i.e. the public interest) by bringing hoarded money into circulation. Or, in the case of Adam Smith, a merchant's fear of investing his money abroad increases the prosperity (i.e. the public interest) in his home country.

[18] A.G. Myslivchenko and L.N. Suvorova, *Problemy gumanizma v marksistsko-leninskoy filosofii – Istoriya i sovremennost,* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1975), 162. (My emphasis, MHVH).

[19] Kamenka points out that the concept that virtues are believed to support each other and lead to harmony, while the vices not only conflict with the virtues, but also with other vices, could already be found in the first book of Plato's *Politeia.* (Cf. Kamenka, *The Ethical Foundations of Marxism,* 99).

[20] Immanuel Kant, "Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten," in Immanuel Kant, *Werkausgabe,* edited by Wilhelm Weischedel, Vol. VII, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1968), 32.

[21] Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics,* Part 4, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996), 125.

[22] G.W.F. Hegel, "Phänomenologie des Geistes," in G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke,* Vol. 3, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), 445.

[23] Hegel called Kant's morality "the demand to do with aversion what duty prescribes." (Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 124, 115).

[24] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 124, 114.

[25] Helvétius, *De l'Esprit,* (Verviers: Gérard et Co., 1973), 480.

[26] Helvétius, *De l'Esprit,* 148.

Chapter Ten

Marx and Human Rights: An Ambivalent Relationship

"ON THE JEWISH QUESTION" AND THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN RIGHTS

After leaving the *Rheinische Zeitung,* Marx, on June 19, 1843, married Jenny von Westphalen. At the end of the same year the couple went to Paris, where Marx became co-editor, with Arnold Ruge, of the German-French Yearbooks (*Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*). In the first edition of these Yearbooks (which would also be the last) Marx published "On the Jewish Question,"[1] in which he addressed a problem, which, since the French Revolution, had occupied a central place in the European intellectual debate: human rights. In this article Marx turns polemically against the ideas of his old friend and master Bruno Bauer, who, shortly before, in two articles[2] had opposed the struggle of German Jews to gain full citizens' rights – as had been the case in France since Napoleon. Bauer's criticism of Jewish citizens' rights campaign was based on the fact that as an emancipation movement it was, in his opinion, not radical enough. According to Bauer "... people are guilty of a huge mistake in disconnecting the Jewish question from the general question of the time and [they] did not consider that not only the Jews, but also *we* want to be emancipated."[3] The Jewish question was not, according to Bauer, resolved by the granting of citizen's rights to the Jewish community, because the roots of this question lay very deep, namely in religion – in this case the Jewish religion. The Jews would only be able to really emancipate themselves, said Bauer, if they were to give up their religion and become atheists. He added that state and religion should also be separated from each other, because a political emancipation of the Jews in a Christian state was per definition impossible.

Marx agrees in principle with Bauer's criticism of religion. However, in his opinion

it is not *religion* – although he too finds it objectionable – that is really the obstacle to human emancipation in general and Jewish emancipation in particular, but human *egoism* in civil society. That is why the separation of church and state – as Bauer pleads – is, according to Marx, only a cure of a symptom. Marx points in this connection to the United States where state and religion are completely divorced: "Nevertheless, North America is pre-eminently the country of religiosity ... Therefore we explain the religious limitations of the free citizens by their secular limitations. We do not assert that they must overcome their religious narrowness in order to get rid of their secular restrictions, we assert that they will overcome their religious narrowness once they get rid of their secular restrictions."[4]

What are these 'secular restrictions" which, according to Marx, have to be eradicated? It is – again – the separation of state and civil society, respectively the sphere of the general interest and the sphere of private interests. Due to this separation citizens lead a split life in two completely opposed worlds. On the one hand they are *citizens* in the state*,* and as such focused on the *general interest.* On the other hand they are *bourgeois*, inhabitants of civil society in which everyone is selfishly hunting for his exclusive self-interest:

> "Where the political state has attained its true development, man – not only in thought, in consciousness, but in *reality,* in *life* – leads a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly life: life in the *political community,* in which he considers himself a *communal being,* and life in *civil society*, in which he acts as a *private individual,* regards other men as a means, degrades himself into a means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers."[5]

In the civil society of his time Marx sees a modern variant of the Hobbesian state of nature. Civil society is a *bellum omnium contra omnes,* a war of all against all, in which man is bent on maintaining himself at the expense of others and is not afraid of degrading his fellow man – but also himself – to a *means* for the satisfaction of his own needs. Is Marx referring here to Kant's adage that man as a reasonable being may lay claim "to be an end in himself, to be regarded as such by everyone and to be used by no-one as a pure means to other ends?"[6] In any case Marx – just like Kant – presumes that man must always be a *Selbstzweck,* an end in himself. It is precisely this principle of human dignity which suffers, according to him, in civil society. Civil society embodies, therefore, for Marx the *negation of human dignity.*

It is exactly at this point that Marx's problems with human rights declarations begin. While these lay claim to raising human value to the highest principle, Marx sees in these declarations only the ideological expression of the alienated man's degrading situation in civil society. "Above all," wrote Marx, "we note the fact that the so-called *rights of man,* the *droits de l'homme* as distinct from the *droits du citoyen,* are nothing but the rights of a *member of civil society,* i.e. the rights of egoistic man, of man separated from other men and from the community."[7] He inspects successively various human rights – the right to liberty, equality and private ownership – of the French constitution of 1793. What is liberty? Liberty, according to Marx, is the right " ...to do everything that harms no one else ... It is a question of the liberty of man as an isolated monad, withdrawn into himself ... But the right of man to liberty is based not on the association of man with man, but on the separation of man from man."[8] And how does he assess another human right: the right to private ownership? "The right to private ownership is the right to enjoy one's property and to dispose of it at one's discretion (à son gré), without regard to other men, independently of society, the right of self-interest."[9] And what about equality? Equality, Marx continued, "... is nothing but the equality of the *liberté* described above, namely: each man is to the same extent regarded as such a self-sufficient monad."[10] And security? "Security," he said, "is the highest social concept of civil society, the concept of *police,* expressing the fact that the whole of society exists only in order to guarantee to each of its members the preservation of his person, his rights and his property."[11] Marx's final conclusion on human rights is destructive: "None of the so-called rights of man, therefore, go beyond egoistic man, beyond man as a member of civil society, that is, an individual withdrawn into himself, into the confines of his private interests and private caprice, and separated from the community."[12]

MARX'S ANTHROPOLOGY

This destructive criticism of Marx on human rights can be understood only when one is familiar with his *anthropological* presuppositions and the specific meaning - deducted from these - which he gives to the concept of "civil society". Marx considers man as a natural *social being.* The concept of "social" really means more than merely the fact that man is naturally keen to engage in social relationships and therefore has social

ties. Because this kind of social nature does not exclude that the basic nature of these relationships can be very *ungesellig* (unsocial) – something which Kant has very aptly termed *ungesellige Geselligkeit* (unsocial sociability). No, according to Marx, man is naturally a *Gattungswesen* – a 'species being' that not only out of a biological need, but also morally and fundamentally, is focused on his fellow man, due to an inherent altruism. Marx has borrowed this Rousseau tinted anthropology directly from Ludwig Feuerbach. The concept of 'species being' (*Gattungswesen*) also had a strong ethical character for Feuerbach. As a matter of fact Feuerbach went further than Marx because for him not the *general interest*, but a universal *love* was the realization of man's essence.[13]

CIVIL SOCIETY VERSUS THE STATE

Marx gave his anthropology a different twist to Feuerbach's. In contrast with the latter, he does not treat religion as the principal hindrance to the free development of the real essence of man, but the organization of human living together in civil society. For Marx it is the tragedy of modern man that he can only realize his social essence in an abstract, formal way – through the state. On the other hand, in civil society – the sphere in which he daily lives and works – he acts on the basis of pure egoistic self-interest. Marx looks for the cause of people not living in accordance with their deepest essence not in their psychological human condition, but in a *social* factor: in the separation of state and civil society into two opposing spheres. He is, therefore, completely in keeping with the tradition of Rousseau and Helvétius, who also hold social organization responsible for the moral failure of people. Marx sees the solution in a complete integration of 'state life' in civil society. Only then would citizens take note of the general interest in their tangible daily lives too, or – as Marx in his famous expression says: "Only when the real, individual man re-absorbs in himself the abstract citizen, and as an individual human being has become a *species being* in his everyday life, in his particular work, and in his particular situation... only then will human emancipation have been accomplished."[14]

In his idea that in civil society selfish private interest prevails Marx concurs with the ideas of Hegel,[15] who wrote in his Philosophy of Right: "In civil society everyone is his own end, everything else is nothing to him."[16] But Hegel saw in civil society more than merely a *System der Bedürfnisse* (a system of needs). He also saw another principle working in it, that of the *division of labor.* People satisfied their needs through the division of labor not as monads, but as social beings, so that they satisfy simultaneously their *own* needs with those of *others*: "In this dependency and mutuality of labor and of

need satisfaction," wrote Hegel, "subjective egoism turns into the contribution to the satisfaction of the needs of all others..."[17] Indeed, this did not create in Hegel's eyes a real general interest, because, according to him, this could only exist in the moral sphere of the state. Nevertheless, he saw it as an important step in the realization of the moral general interest in the state.

Marx finds Hegel's dialectic development of ideas indigestible. Because for Hegel, despite its egoistical nature, civil society was still a necessary 'moment' in the development of the moral state. Marx had attacked Hegel's position a little earlier in his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.* As a result Marx keeps to Hegel's concept definition of civil society as a sphere of subjective egoism, but he throws out Hegel's other concept definition: civil society as a necessary 'moment' in the development of the moral state. While Hegel leaves room for human self-interest as an autonomous factor in his political philosophy and thereby – despite his metaphysical starting points – displays an Anglo-Saxon sense of reality, Marx's idealistic 'purism' does not allow for this. There is no place in his political philosophy for a sphere of special interests *alongside* the state as a sphere of general interest. For him civil society is *not* a necessary step in the development of the state – as Hegel would have it – because in this way it keeps its asocial character. Civil society should really blend into the state, which implies that it changes character fundamentally. Marx is thus striving towards a 'deontologicization' of civil society.[18]

THE INFLUENCE OF MOSES HESS

One can adequately understand Marx's criticism of civil society and the consequent criticism of human rights only from this anthropological viewpoint. For Marx, civil society is the negation of the social essence of man. It is the sphere of unbridled individualism, of a pursuit of profit which leaves no stone unturned and of an overpowering egoism. According to Marx human rights only *sanction* and *legitimize* this egoism and are, therefore, the ideological expression of human alienation.[19] This negative evaluation of human rights by Marx is in my opinion strongly influenced by the article Über das Geldwesen (On Money) by Moses Hess.[20] In this article Hess makes a similar moral attack on civil society from the same 'social essence' concept of man ("...the devotion, living and working for each other makes man a man") – although the power of his invectives often exceeds that of Marx. Civil society, according to Hess is a *Krämerwelt* (salesmen's world) in which people "devour each other", it is a world of "cannibals,

beasts of prey, blood suckers". Even *human rights* appear in his article. What does Hess say on this? "Practical egoism was sanctioned when people as particular individuals, as abstract, naked persons were declared the real people, when human rights, the rights of independent people were proclaimed, thus the independence of people from one another, when divorce and individualization were declared to be the essence of life and freedom, and isolated persons were declared free, real, natural people ..."[21] Like Marx Hess also sees in human rights exclusively a proclamation of the rights of the egoistical *bourgeois.*

SENSE AND NONSENSE IN MARX'S CRITIQUE

Through this one-sided negative approach to human rights Marx and Hess completely miss the positive meaning which human rights have had and still have. Through their equating of individualism with egoism and their exalted ideas on the deontologization of civil society they ignore *the* great merit of human rights declarations: the guarantee of an inviolable domain of freedom for the individual against the overwhelming power of the state. The classical human rights catalogue provided a list of *defensive* rights which should protect the individual citizen against the arbitrariness and the oppression on the part of the state. In this way equality before the law – which was unmasked by Marx as a mere formal equality – was also an enormous step forward. The guarantees of orderly court procedures, the right to be treated as innocent until found guilty, and the impossibility of being prosecuted for a deed which was not yet liable to punishment when it was committed – meant an equal number of limitations to the possibility of legal arbitrariness. The ideology behind human rights declarations was that the citizen was not there for the sake of the state, but the state was there for the sake of the individual citizen.[22] It was precisely this *individualism* of the human rights declarations which Marx attacked from his anthropological presupposition that man was a "species being". Therefore it can be ascertained that it was Marx's anthropology especially – together with his negative view of civil society - which obstructed an adequate understanding of human rights.

However, Marx's criticism of human rights definitely also had a positive side. Precisely because of his critical approach it was possible for him to unmask several pretentions which took refuge behind human rights declarations. It was clear that these declarations could not guarantee universal brotherhood. Marx shows that the two other – more "earthly" – aims of the French revolution: liberty and equality, also were only incompletely guaranteed. He also stated justifiably that behind *legal* liberty and equality of citizens the greatest un-liberty and inequality can be hidden, namely in the socio-

economic area. He emphasized this aspect strongly in his later work. It is precisely on the point of the *factual* unliberty and inequality of the working class that Marx's criticism of human rights has been the most fruitful. He showed clearly the inadequacy of these classical basic rights for the concrete realization of liberty and equality for all citizens. His criticism has also been an important stimulus for a program of political and social reform aimed at the emancipation of the working class. And it is certainly not in the last place thanks to Marx that the classical human rights catalogue in the 20th century has been extended by a number of basic social rights – such as, amongst others, those which can be found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (art. 22-26).

A NEW CONCEPT OF 'ESSENCE'

On the Jewish Question is the text in which Marx most outspokenly engages with the theme of human rights. The question is whether one may really present this text as *the* point of view of Marx as regards human rights, since his theoretical ideas underwent radical change shortly afterwards. Louis Althusser even talks in this connection of an "epistemological break" which must have come about between the "humanistic" writings of the period to 1845 and the "anti-humanistic", "scientific" writings thereafter.[23] According to him the year 1845 marks a "theoretical discontinuity between Marxist science on the one hand and its ideological prehistory on the other."[24] Althusser therefore seriously doubts whether *On the Jewish Question* really can be called a representative "marxist" text.[25] Althusser's rigorous division of Marx's work into "humanistic" and "scientific" sections in my opinion relies on an inadmissible narrowing of the concept of science which eliminates the normative elements in Marx's later work. It is certainly an indisputable fact that major theoretical shifts take place in Marx's work from 1845. The question is whether Marx's criticism of human rights – such as formulated in *On the Jewish Question* – is still applicable in the same way to his later work. I shall try to answer this question here.

Shortly after the publication of *On the Jewish Question* Marx definitively distances himself from Feuerbach in the *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845). In the same year he formulates in *The German Ideology* – written together with Friedrich Engels – for the first time his theory of historical materialism. This had in the first place great consequences for his *anthropology.* The Feuerbachian concept of "species being" (*Gattungswesen*) completely disappears from his terminology. Its place is taken by a new concept of essence which he first formulates in the sixth *Thesis on Feuerbach,* where he writes*:* "But the essence of

man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations."[26] In *The German Ideology* he elaborates this new standpoint further: "This sum of productive forces, capital funds and social forms of intercourse, which every individual and every generation finds in existence as something given, is the real basis of what the philosophers have conceived as 'substance' and 'essence of man', and what they have defied and attacked ..."[27] Now that Marx has replaced the ethically loaded concept of 'species being' by the *ethically neutral* concept of 'ensemble of the social relations', a moral critique on human rights seems no longer possible. Marx even gives a strong indication that he has given up every absolute value standpoint. Thus he writes in the *Communist Manifesto* – also written in collaboration with Engels: "There are, besides, eternal truths, such as Freedom, Justice, etc., that are common to all states of society. But Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience."[28]

Even communism seems to be for Marx no more than a *positive fact* – projected in the future, rather than a moral imperative: "Communism is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality (will) have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things."[29] Marx considers communist ideas as the expression of the "historical movement" and seems, therefore, to reduce its immanent ethos to sheer historical facticity. He makes, as it were, an inverse *naturalistic fallacy* because he does not try to induce values from facts, but, on the contrary, tries to *reduce* values to facts. Marx, therefore, runs the risk of falling into a value relativism. For as the "historical movement" justifies communist ideas, why should the "historical movement" not also justify *other* (e.g. fascist) ideas? Marx avoids this historical consequence of his train of thoughts by taking refuge in a *historical determinism.* According to him the "historical movement" can in the end only move in one direction, namely that of communism.

Marx avoids in this way the important question of the moral foundation of communism. However, as Karl Löwith justifiably remarks, "when Marx insists on not being influenced by moral biases and value judgements ... then that is an unprecedented wrong interpretation of himself."[30] Communism is definitely the central value complex of Marx's later work. This moral character is however less explicit than in his earlier work, because in his later idea concerning "communism" he puts less stress on the moral perfection which this brings, than on the *abundant production* to which he expected communist society would lead. Nevertheless the moral component is still clearly present because Marx expects from precisely this abundant production a positive moral influence on people. The

thought behind this is that moral deficiency is a consequence of scarcity and shortage. It is clear that this theory oversimplifies the complexity of the ethical problem. What we are really concerned with here is that Marx in his later work replaces the concept of 'species being' as a central moral category by the concept of 'communism'. The identical roots of both concepts can be quite accurately traced in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.* Communism, Marx states here, is the "... complete return of man to himself as a *social* (i.e. human) being... It is the *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and man ... between the individual and the species."[31]

MARX'S MONISM:

A HINDRANCE TO UNDERSTANDING THE NECESSITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

If we now compare Marx's ideas from 1845 with those prior to 1845 we see the following important changes:

- The development of historical materialism
- The concept of 'species being' as a central moral category is replaced by the concept of 'communism'
- The 'discovery' of the proletariat as the revolutionary class

What does this new theoretical framework now mean for his standpoint as regards human rights?

1. It is clear that Marx must throw out from the historical-materialist approach the concept of *innate, natural* rights of man. He considers all rights as *historical* and *social* products, the contents of which correspond with the level of the productive forces and relations of production. This only means, however, that Marx has now founded his criticism of innate human rights differently from before 1845. Because in *The Holy Family* (1844) he had already written: "the only critical thing criticism could say about the rights of man was they are *not* inborn but arose in the course of history. That much Hegel had already told us."

2. The *norm* from which Marx criticizes human rights has changed. In place of the concept of 'species being' there is now the concept of 'communism' – which, indeed, is not considered normative by Marx himself. The concept of 'species being' really

referred to an *origin,* on the other hand 'communism' referred to a *telos* in the future. This means that after 1845 Marx no longer founds his criticism of civil society and its 'ideological expression': human rights, on *a priori deductive* principles, but on *historically teleological* principles. The *Humanum* is no longer an original fact, but a *task* which humanity must realize in history (and which it, according to Marx's historical determinism, also *will* realize).

3. What does not change is that Marx in his later work still considers human rights as the ideological expression of civil society. But because he no longer bases his criticism of civil society, in an a priori deductive way, on the 'species being', *his appreciation of civil society changes*. From his a priori deductive critique – based on the 'species being' – civil society only appeared as the negation of this human essence: civil society was taken to be exclusively *negative*. From the new, historical teleological critique civil society, indeed, keeps this negative character, but civil society *simultaneously* acquires – from the future perspective – a *positive* meaning too. In this sense Marx moves back in the direction of Hegel. Marx wrote in the *Grundrisse:* "It is only in the eighteenth century, in 'civil society', that the different forms of social union confront the individual as a mere means to his private ends, as an external necessity. But the period in which this view of the isolated individual becomes prevalent is the very one in which the interrelations of society ... have reached the highest state of development."[32] In *On the Jewish Question* Marx had also already criticized civil society, because its citizens, as 'individualized individuals', were alienated. This alienation now becomes a *necessary phase* in the realization of communism, because this always presupposes surplus production, which can only be created through the development of civil society.

4. Marx's standpoint concerning human rights after 1845 also undergoes a serious change because of the introduction of the *proletariat* into his theory. In *On the Jewish Question* his criticism of civil society had only a general humanistic-moralistic character. He sees human rights primarily as the expression of human egoism, human lust for competition and possession, running riot in civil society. After 1845 he sees human rights above all as the ideological *veiling of the class character* of civil society. In his opinion, human rights serve principally the interests of the bourgeoisie, while they at the same time provide the latter with a humane aureole. We have already seen that it is namely on this point: the unmasking of ideological pretentions of classical human rights, that Marx's critique has been the most sound and fruitful.

5. What really does *not* change in Marx's later work are his ideas with reference to the abolition of the separation of state and civil society. And it is namely *this* idea that

is the reason behind Marx's systematic underestimation of the importance of human rights. Indeed, Marx saw the tension between the individual and the community, but he saw it not as a permanent fact which would be the case in all human societies. Therefore he did not see the necessity to build in institutional guarantees to protect the rights of the individual against those of the state. Marx diverts the solution of this problem *to the future*. The tension between the individual and the community is resolved, according to him, in communism, in which the general interest and the individual interest would coincide. It was due to this monism – which left no place for a divergence between the individual interests and the general interest – that Marx realized insufficiently the importance of human rights. Marx considered human rights at best as 'rights to struggle' of which the proletariat should thankfully make use for the realization of its historical task. He recognized no function of human rights which went beyond this and which was also of importance for a socialist society. This is very understandable from his theoretical presuppositions: in communist society there would no longer exist opposition between individual interests and the general interest.[33] However, if Marxism wants to arrive at a correct appreciation of the importance of human rights (not only of basic social rights, but especially of the classical freedom rights and the rights of political participation), then it will have to surrender Marx's monism and recognize that individual interests can never be brought into complete harmony with the general interest (whatever the latter may be) and that, consequently, a fundamental protection of the individual against the omnipotence of the state is *always* desirable and required.

NOTES

[1] Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *Marx/Engels Collected Works,* Vol. 3, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), 146-74.

[2] The two articles mentioned by Bruno Bauer were *Die Judenfrage* (The Jewish Question) and *Die Fähigkeit der heutigen Juden und Christen frei zu werden* (The Capability of Contemporary Jews and Christians to Become Free), which both appeared in 1843.

[3] Bruno Bauer, *Die Fähigkeit der heutigen Juden und Christen frei zu werden,* in Bruno Bauer, *Feldzüge der reinen Kritik,* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1968), 187-88.

[4] Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 151.

[5] Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 154.

[6] Immanuel Kant, "Mutmasslicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte," in Immanuel Kant, *Kleinere Schriften zur Geschichtsphilosophie, Ethik und Politik,* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1973), 55. See also Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten,* Part 2, "Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre," (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1966), passim.

[7] Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 162.

[8] Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 162.

[9] Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 163.

[10] Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” 163.

[11] Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” 163.

[12] Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” 164.

[13] This strongly ethically tinted anthropology is shared by most other Young Hegelians. Bruno Bauer saw the essence of man in “humanity” and Moses Hess wrote: “working and living for each other makes man a man.” Niklas Luhmann, in his interesting study *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik – Studien zur Wissenssoziologie der modernen Gesellschaft,* Vol. 1, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1980), explained the emergence of this new anthropology in the late 18th century as the transition from a segmented, layered society to a functionally differentiated society, through which many new problems of social integration had to be solved.

[14] Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” 168.

[15] Hegel was the only one who gave the concept of ‘civil society’ as a sphere of the special interests its own place in his political philosophy. Before Hegel the concept of ‘civil society’ was used as equivalent to ‘state’ (even by Kant). See Manfred Riedel, “Der Begriff der ‘Bürgerlichen Gesellschaft’ und das Problem seines geschichtlichen Ursprungs,” in Manfred Riedel, *Studien zu Hegels Rechtsphilosophie,* 135-166, and Manfred Riedel, *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft und Staat bei Hegel,* Paragraph 1.

[16] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 182, Zusatz, 169.

[17] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 199, 179.

[18] See Mario Rossi, *Da Hegel a Marx III – La scuola hegeliana. Il giovane Marx,* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1974), 419. Rossi spoke in this connection about a *deontologizzazione dell'interesse* ('deontologicization' of the interest)*,* but he avoids any critical comment.

[19] See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Holy Family," in: *Marx/Engels Collected Works,* Vol. 4, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), 113: "It was shown that the *recognition of the rights of man* by the *modern state* has no other meaning than the *recognition of slavery* by the *state of antiquity* had. In other words, just as the ancient state had slavery as its *natural basis,* the *modern state* has as its *natural basis* civil society and the *man* of civil society, i.e., the independent man linked with other men only by the ties of private interest and *unconscious* natural necessity, the *slave* of labour for gain and of his own as well as other men's *selfish* need. The modern state has recognised this its natural basis as such in the *universal rights of man."* (Emphasis in original).

[20] Moses Hess published his article "Über das Geldwesen" in 1845 in the *Rheinische Jahrbücher zur gesellschaftlichen Reform* (Rhenish Yearbooks for Social Reform). However, they were written in the beginning of 1844 and sent to Marx to be published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher.* Marx, therefore, knew the text when he wrote *Zur Judenfrage.* (Cf. Edmund Silberner, "Beiträge zur literarischen und politischen Tätigkeit von Moses Hess," *Annali dell'Istituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli,* 6, Milano, 1963, 431-436)

[21] Moses Hess, "Über das Geldwesen," in Moses Hess, *Philosophische und sozialistische Schriften 1837-1850, Eine Auswahl,* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1961), 339.

[22] Compare Article 12 of the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* of 1789: "La garantie des droits de l'homme et du citoyen nécessite une force politique..." (the guarantee of human and the citizen's rights makes a political force necessary). And the American "Declaration of Independence" of 1776: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men..."

[23] See Louis Althusser, *Pour Marx,* (Paris: Maspéro, 1966), 24.

[24] Louis Althusser, "Sur la dialectique de l'évolution intellectuelle du jeune Marx," in *Hegel-Jahrbuch 1974,* edited by Wilhelm R. Beyer, (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein Verlag, 1974), 130.

[25] Louis Althusser, *Pour Marx,* 56.

[26] Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 5, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), 4.

[27] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The German Ideology," in *Marx/Engels Collected Works,* Vol. 5, 54.

[28] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *Marx/Engels Collected Works,* Vol. 6, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976), 504.

[29] Marx and Engels, "The German Ideology," 49. See also Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," 498: "The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered by this or that would-be universal reformer. They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical going on under our very eyes."

[30] Karl Löwith, *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen,* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1967), 47.

[31] Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *Marx/Engels Collected Works,* Vol. 3, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), 296.

[32] K. Marx, *Marx's Grundrisse,* David McLellan (ed.), (London: Macmillan, 1971), 17.

[33] It is, therefore, no surprise to read the following from the hand of an East German author about the human rights situation in the former communist German Democratic Republic: "There is no unemployment and no emergency situation in education. Peace as a fundamental human right is the basis of overall state policy. The societal and state order that is created by the people themselves has developed into the decisive guarantee of the reality of human rights." (Willi Büchner-Uhder, *Menschenrechte: Eine Utopie? Tatsachen, Antworten, Beweise*, (Leipzig: Urania Verlag, 1981), 8). In his book *Naturrecht und menschliche Würde,* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1961), the German Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch pleaded for the guaranteeing of human rights in the countries of the Soviet bloc. However, this essentially sympathetic argument remained unworthy of belief as long as Bloch still based himself on Marx without subjecting his monism to a fundamental criticism.

Chapter Eleven

From Alienation to Revolution: Marx's 'Discovery' of the Proletariat

THE INFLUENCE OF LORENZ VON STEIN

One of the most intriguing texts written by Marx is an "Introduction" for a planned – but never realized in his lifetime – publication of his critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. This introduction was published in the beginning of 1844 in the German-French Yearbooks, a magazine he had started in Paris together with Arnold Ruge. In this article, quite suddenly, he presented the proletariat as a *deus ex machina,* to whom he attributed the historical role of liberating mankind from political alienation. The possibility of universal human emancipation, wrote Marx, was

> "the formation of a class with radical chains, a class in civil society that was no class of civil society, a social group that is the dissolution of all social groups, of a sphere that possesses a universal character because of its universal suffering and claims no particular right, because it suffered no particular injustice, but injustice *tout court,* that can claim no traditional title, but only a human title … a sphere, finally, that cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself of all other spheres of society, that in one word is the total loss of man, [and] therefore can regain itself [only] by completely regaining mankind. This dissolution of society as a particular group is the proletariat."[1]

This text, which has been often cited, needs to be read carefully. On what did Marx found the role for the proletariat as the universal liberator of mankind? In the first place he defines the proletariat as the *complete negation* of existing civil society. He speaks about the proletariat as "a class of civil society that was no class of civil society," even as the "dissolution of society". And why is the proletariat the negation of civil society? Because it is characterized by its *lack of property* in a civil society, which, as such, is based on private property. When the proletariat becomes conscious of the fact that private property is the cause of its own oppression, it will abolish private property by its revolutionary action.[2] "When the proletariat demands the negation of private property," he wrote, "it

only elevates to the principle of society what society has elevated to its [the proletariat's] principle, what already without its collaboration is embodied in it as a negative result of society."[3] By abolishing private property the proletariat will get rid of the main reason for man's alienation. It will, therefore, by its revolutionary action not only liberate itself, but it will emancipate the whole of society.

But why does Marx attribute so suddenly this role of liberator and universal emancipator to the proletariat? In the preceding years the proletariat had no place in his theories. On the rare occasions he wrote about have-nots – such as in the articles on the Law on the Theft of Wood of 1842 – he did not speak about the 'proletariat', but about the 'poor class', which he described as a suffering class, but absolutely not as a revolutionary class, and certainly not as a class which would emancipate mankind as a whole. Moreover, the passages in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* where Hegel wrote on the *Pöbel* (plebs), seem not to have had any influence on Marx's discovery of the proletariat. This is remarkable because Hegel emphasizes the *innere Empörung,* the inner indignation of the poor "against the rich, the society, the government, etc."[4]

Marx's discovery of the proletariat, probably, cannot be attributed to only one source, but rather to a combination of sources. One of these was his direct contact, immediately after his arrival in Paris in November 1843, with politically active workers. Marx met assertive workers who through self-tuition had reached a relatively high intellectual level. This led to a revision of his previous view of the proletariat as an ignorant, passive, and docile mass. In a letter to Feuerbach Marx expressed his enthusiasm. "You should have participated in one of the meetings of the French *ouvriers,*" he wrote, "in order to believe in the virginal freshness, the *noblesse,* which lights up among these worn-out people."[5] In Paris he met Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the author of *Qu'est-ce que la propriéte?* (What is Property?) (1840), a book which he had praised in the *Rheinische Zeitung.* After Proudhon's death in 1865, Marx would in a necrology refer to the long discussions the two men had together after Marx's arrival in Paris, discussions which often continued until deep in the night.[6]

In Paris Marx also read Flora Tristan's pamphlet *l'Union ouvrière* (The Workers' Union), which had been published four months before his arrival. In this publication Flora Tristan argues strongly in favor of the *self-organization* of the proletariat.[7] According to Maximilien Rubel, "Flora Tristan had evoked with a genial simplicity the idea about which he himself thought when in Kreuznach: to bring about a really revolutionary reform of the representative system it was necessary to found a new political party. In no one else of French socialism's famous representatives Marx had found such a realist sense of the political struggle."[8] These Paris experiences certainly had an important impact on Marx's sudden Paul-Saul conversion to communism. However, they only had a limited impact on Marx's theory of the proletariat in the "Introduction". This theory is influenced rather

by the – conservative! – German sociologist Lorenz von Stein. In marxologist circles Von Stein's influence on Marx is controversial. I will in the closing part of this chapter enter into this discussion in more detail and try to present new arguments which support my thesis. First, however, we need to pay attention to two other thinkers, Franz von Baader and Robert von Mohl, who even before Von Stein were analyzing the social question in Germany and developing new ideas about the role of the proletariat.

FRANZ VON BAADER'S 'PROLETAIRS'

In 1835 Franz von Baader (1765-1841) published an article titled "On the Existing Disproportion of the Propertyless or Proletarians to the Propertied Classes of Society,"[9] in which he expressed his concern about "the almost ubiquitous revolutionary condition or explosiveness of contemporary society,"[10] supposedly caused by the disproportion between rich and poor.

> "Everyone, who, as a witness, has glanced just once into the abyss of physical and moral misery and neglect in which live the majority of proletarians in England and France … has to admit … that serfdom, even in its most reckless form … was less horrible and inhumane and therefore unchristian … than this existence as outlaws, unprotected and helpless, of the great majority of the population of our – as it is called – most developed and cultivated nations."[11]

Von Baader was certainly not a revolutionary, not even a socialist, but a conservative-catholic philosopher and theologian who taught at the University of Munich. His plea for greater social justice seemed to have been inspired as much by the fear that existing society would be overthrown by revolutionary violence, as by a genuine concern for the fate of the working classes. *Fiat justitia et conservetur societas* ("May justice happen and society be saved") was, tellingly, the motto he placed at the beginning of his article.

It is his catholic-conservative background, which brings Von Baader to the – bizarre – proposal to let priests act in parliaments as advocates of the working class. Their task would be restricted to presenting petitions, it would not be a real political representation of the working class. Notwithstanding these conservative principles Von Baader was formulating some ideas which bear a striking resemblance to ideas that Marx would develop later. We can, for instance, find in Von Baader an early variant of Marx's *Verelendungstheorie* (immiseration thesis). Von Baader observed that for workers "at the same rate as their productivity grew, their salary in general decreased, their existence became more and more precarious and the profit and enjoyment of the increased production was shared by increasingly fewer individuals and [became] accumulated."[12]

Moreover, Marx's later *theory of surplus value* seems to be present, in principle, in Von Baader. He blamed the capitalist entrepreneurs for keeping the salary of the proletarians "permanently far beneath the natural value and price of their commodity (namely their labor)."[13]

One can even find in Von Baader Marx's theory that one cannot expect substantial help from the state to relieve the plight of workers, because of the state's *class character* which makes it an instrument of oppression in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Von Baader wrote that "this obvious injustice is least likely to be resolved in the Chambers and parliaments, because here the directors of the factories are defendants as well as judge and the interest of the poor working people is not represented in these Chambers."[14] This becomes a reason for Von Baader to claim freedom of association for the working class to allow it to organize itself in trade unions in order to acquire a more equal power position vis-à-vis the capitalist class. Von Baader's conservatism seems here more progressive than the hard core liberalism of his time that did not want to allow such professional organizations, because it was considered a return to a medieval corporatist-feudal society. Therefore, Ernst Benz called Von Baader not without justification "an anti-Marxist before Marx … who refutes in anticipation the Marxist theory of the necessity of the social revolution."[15]

ROBERT VON MOHL: A SOCIAL-DEMOCRAT AVANT LA LETTRE

In Germany, in the same year 1835 yet another interesting article on the social question was published. The author was Robert von Mohl (1799-1875), a professor of constitutional law, who taught first in Tübingen, and later in Heidelberg. Even less than Von Baader was Von Mohl a master of the short title. His article was titled: "On the disadvantages of industry, organized in factories, for the workers, as well as for the wealth and security of the whole society, and on the necessity of a fundamental means of prevention."[16] This article is clearly superior to Von Baader's as concerns the deep sociological insights that are evident in it. Von Mohl begins his article with a sharp criticism of "the regrettable influence exerted by the system of big factories on the economic, moral, civil, and political situation of the many ordinary factory workers …"[17] Like Marx, Von Mohl speaks about "the sense of permanent suffering" of the working class and one cannot help but think of Marx's later theory of alienated labor when Von Mohl writes about the worker, that " … an essential part of his person is the machinery, which belongs to a third person. Separated from this he is absolutely nothing."[18] As in the case of Von Baader also Von Mohl's concern for the fate of the working class is not only a question of compassion. It is also for him mixed with fear of revolution: "One should feel constrained to bring about a quick, fundamental, and sufficient improvement [motivated] by [feelings

of] humanity, as well as by prudence."[19] The workers, added Von Mohl, "cannot but be highly dissatisfied and prepared for every change."[20] The proletariat, according to Von Mohl, was characterized by a revolutionary spirit. And this spirit, due to the "semi-war situation" between workers and entrepreneurs, is easily ignited. Von Mohl even predicts that this "deadly hostile opposition" (*todtfeindliche Gegenüberstehen*) can lead to a class struggle. But unlike Marx, who applauds such a class struggle because of its supposed emancipatory character, Von Mohl does not expect much good to come of this: "It needs no comment as concerns the enormous injustice and misery which would undoubtedly result from such a war of the poor against the rich."[21]

Von Mohl is concerned in particular that the proletariat might attack private property. The capitalist class would then turn to the state for protection which would lead the proletariat to attack the state. For Von Mohl, therefore, "such a general attack on private property [is] necessarily linked with a simultaneous attack on the state …"[22] He warns of the danger of communist agitators gaining a grip on the working population. "How great would be the danger for all property (and consequently for all culture) should a fanatical sect ever succeed to inculcating in the mass of factory workers the ideas of the community of goods, the suppression of the rich …"[23] All the ingredients of Marx's theory of the proletariat: polarization of proletariat and bourgeoisie, the class struggle, revolution, abolition of private property and – eventually – of the state, seem already to be present in Von Mohl. However, what Marx considers as positive, is for Von Mohl purely negative. What the former considers as a part of a universal process of emancipation, is for the latter an expression of nihilism and utter destructivity.

THE IMPEDED SOCIAL MOBILITY OF THE PROLETARIAT

However, the importance of Von Mohl's article lies elsewhere. It lies in the deep sociological insights into the proletariat's position in society. The proletariat is, according to him, characterized by the structural impossibility of an upward *social mobility*. Unlike in the Middle Ages, when an apprentice could become a master craftsman, for the modern factory worker such a process of social mobility is almost certainly excluded. It is evident, wrote Von Mohl, "that it is extremely rare that the ordinary worker can settle in an independent craft, on his own account, and that he, therefore, has no other perspective, during his whole life, than to be the … day laborer who works himself to the bone."[24]

For Von Mohl it is this *lack of social mobility* – the absence of any prospect of social ascension - which is the cause of the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat. A direct improvement in the situation of the working class, such as the abolition of child labor, the shortening of the working day, etcetera, is necessary. However, it will be not enough to take away the proletariat's "highly dubious menacing position" vis-à-vis civil

society. Von Mohl proposes therefore that the state should oblige companies to introduce a system of profit-sharing. In this way the workers would consider profitmaking as a shared interest of both workers and capitalists and the dangerous polarization between both classes would disappear. To organize this profit-sharing in a just way the capitalists should open their books to the workers.[25] At the same time, "Mohl demands not only wage increases for the property-less, but also facilities for capable workers to start their own business by the creation of educational institutions and by subventions."[26] These were, undoubtedly, for their time surprisingly enlightened and progressive ideas, which one could best describe as social-democratic *avant la lettre.*

LORENZ VON STEIN: EDUCATION AS A REMEDY AGAINST REVOLUTION

Lorenz von Stein was, like Marx, a Young Hegelian, but unlike Marx, who was a radical left-Hegelian, Von Stein was a conservative right-Hegelian. The government of Prussia, which was very concerned about the new communist ideas, had sent Von Stein to Paris to study there the different communist tendencies. Von Stein got on with this task enthusiastically. He not only wrote a serious sociological study on French communism and socialism, but also found time to spy for the Prussian government on the activities of the émigré German workers who were active in the Paris revolutionary underground. Later Von Stein's cordial relationship with the Prussian government was to cool down, when he, as a nobleman from Schleswig Holstein, actively engaged himself in the struggle for the independence of this region. In 1851 he lost his chair at Kiel University and after a short stay in Munich he departed for Vienna, where he would live out the last thirty years of his life.

The book, written by Von Stein in his Paris period and published in 1842, titled "Socialism and Communism of Contemporary France",[27] became a classic work. It was read not only by conservatives, but also by the revolutionary left. By describing accurately the communist ideas Stein's book acquired the unintended function of an introduction into different communist theories. Radicals were enthusiastic. Marx's co-editor Moses Hess – himself a convinced communist – praised the book in the *Rheinische Zeitung* of March 16, 1843, calling it a "really German act" (*wahrhaft deutsche Tat*).

Von Stein was influenced by Von Mohl, but he puts the latter's ideas into a Hegelian framework. Like Von Mohl Von Stein considers the proletariat as dangerous and revolutionary. The proletariat, wrote Von Stein, "is that new element that, placed in the middle of French society, can be called a dangerous [element]; dangerous because of its number and its often displayed courage, dangerous because of the consciousness of its unity, dangerous finally because of its feeling that it can only realize its plans through a revolution."[28] Von Mohl had characterized the proletariat as dangerous and

revolutionary, but Von Stein adds a new characteristic: the proletariat's consciousness of its *unity.* This means that the proletariat changes from being an amorphous mass into a *unitary conscious subject.*[29] Marx will adopt Von Stein's view.

Von Stein takes from Von Mohl the idea of the *impeded social mobility*. "It is clear," writes Von Stein, "that someone, who, from the outset, does not possess anything other than his labor force, precisely because of this is not capable of acquiring property, this absolute condition for independence and concrete equality."[30] It is in particular this impossibility for the individual worker to escape from his situation which makes the working class receptive to communist ideas. This communism is, according to Von Stein, characterized by the absence of any positive alternative for existing society. It is purely destructive, a "pure negation of all that exists" (*eine reine Verneinung des Bestehenden überhaupt*). How is it possible, he asks, that "such a completely hollow and internally poor movement can really exist in a section of the population? … Can a people, a class, even just one individual, accept this?"[31] It is only possible, he answers, because the actor of this movement, the proletariat, "is exactly that class of the people that is not capable of elevating its own feeling to a clear, assertive idea. … The conclusion is, therefore … communism is only possible amongst the proletariat."[32] Von Stein gives two reasons for the proletariat's receptiveness to communist ideas: on the one hand it is its impeded social mobility, on the other hand it is its lack of intellectual education – its *Unbildung.* This means that the solution to the social question has to be sought in a restoration of social mobility on the one hand, and a better intellectual education of the proletariat on the other. "The really educated [person]," writes Von Stein, "has never acknowledged communism as a principle, because he *can't.* And here appears clearly the only remedy to stop … this spreading evil."[33] Von Stein shows himself to be a good student of Hegel. Hegel solved conflicts in society by transforming them to logical contradictions, which he finally resolved (*aufhob*) in the consciousness. Von Stein also resolves the most important social conflict of his time, the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, *in the consciousness:* i.e. the consciousness of the proletariat which, through a better education, has to be made immune to the dangerous communist ideas.

What exactly are the indications for Lorenz von Stein's influence on Marx? This influence is visible in the way in which Marx in his "Introduction" conceives the proletariat and the revolutionary praxis he attributes to it. In the first place he follows Von Stein in his application of Hegel's concept of *negation* on the proletariat, as a consequence of which the proletariat appears as the *dynamic, moving principle* of historical change. In the second place Von Stein's influence is visible in the *non-deontological* concept of revolutionary praxis: the revolutionary praxis is not the result of altruistic motives, but of the proletariat's *self-interest.* Other similarities between Marx and Von Stein are also noticeable, such as the fact that Von Stein calls the proletariat "the suffering class" and

distinguishes a social revolution from a (more restricted) political revolution. There is also the fact that Von Stein – like Marx – conceives of the proletariat as a unitary subject rather than an amorphous mass. These are many indications that suggest Von Stein's influence on Marx.

THE PROLETARIAT AS THE HEGELIAN 'NEGATION OF THE NEGATION'

Von Stein considers the proletariat as a power of *negation.* "From a poor, working, [and] suffering class," he writes, "emerges a strong, all-negating unity, the proletariat."[34] "And in this way," he continues, "appears before us the Idea of the negation itself; the absolute negation appears as movement …"[35] Von Stein describes the action of the proletariat in terms of Hegel's dialectic. For Hegel this dialectic was the principle of the development of the Absolute Spirit, which developed itself via contradictions (negations) and subsequent syntheses to ever higher levels – and finally to Absolute Knowledge (*das absolute Wissen*). The negation had for Hegel, as a rule, a positive function, because it was also, in its turn, negated, producing the dynamic of an upward spiral. Von Stein uses for the revolutionary praxis of the proletariat also the term 'negation', but – unlike Hegel – he cannot find any positive historic dynamic in it. It is for him a "resultless negation" (*resultatlose Negation*), "a pure negation of all that exists" (*eine reine Verneinung des Bestehenden überhaupt*). It is purely destructive and even if one puts it into a broader historical perspective one cannot attribute any positive meaning to it.[36]

Marx adopts Von Stein's basic idea, but gives it a different twist. For Marx the process of negation starts earlier. It does not start, as Von Stein suggests, with the revolutionary action of the proletariat. It starts with the mere presence of the proletariat, its emergence in the modern world. For Marx the proletariat as such (this means: *before* one can speak of revolutionary praxis) embodies a negation. This poor, property-less class is the negation of civil society. We saw earlier how Marx's described this: "When the proletariat demands the negation of private property, it only elevates to the principle of society what society has elevated to its [the proletariat's] principle, what already without its collaboration is embodied in it as a negative result of society."[37] Because the proletariat is itself the negation, "the negative result of society", the revolutionary praxis of the proletariat is for Marx no purely destructive act – as Von Stein argues – but a *negation of the (original) negation.* It abolishes the original negative situation and through its action – in the Hegelian sense – brings it to a higher, and *positive,* result. This positive result is for Marx the establishment of a society in which private property is abolished. In his *Introduction* Marx attributes to the proletariat the role of motor of history – a role modeled after the role, played by Hegel's *Idea* in history.[38] The *way in which* the proletariat intervenes in history - via the negation of the negation - as well as

the universal objective which it realizes – the emancipation of mankind *as a whole* – are purely Hegelian.[39]

THE REVOLUTION: A HUMANISTIC IDEAL OR A HISTORICAL NECESSITY?

The influence of Lorenz von Stein on Marx in the Introduction also becomes clear from the way in which he defines the revolutionary praxis of the proletariat. Von Stein considered this revolutionary praxis exclusively as a reaction against the miserable conditions of life of the proletariat. The revolutionary activity was not the result of high humanistic ideals, but it was born out of the *existential and material misery* of this class. In an article, titled "Socialism and Communism", published in 1843 in Georg Herwegh's magazine *Einundzwanzig Bogen aus der Schweiz,* Moses Hess attacked Von Stein's ideas. Hess considered communism as a humanistic ideal that appealed to the altruistic feelings in man. Therefore he thinks Von Stein's idea that communism would be linked to the material needs of one class to be mistaken. "The great mistake," wrote Hess, "which Von Stein makes by his inaccurate interpretation of the French spirit, is that he discerns in the efforts to realize equality only the purely external, material tendency, which is focused on *consumption.* Excusing the so-called materialism of our epoch … he discovers in communism only the effort of the proletariat to acquire consumption which is equal to that of the proprietors."[40]

Moses Hess formulates his criticism even more sharply one year later in his article, titled "On socialist movements in Germany," in which he writes: "It is wrong – and this error is a product of the egoistical shortsightedness that cannot elevate itself to the humane essence – it is an error, actively spread by the reaction, [and] by Von Stein in particular: that socialism only emerges from the proletariat and thus only from the needs of the belly."[41] Hess insists that the large following which communist ideas found amongst the French proletariat, far from being the result of their egoism, is a result of the greater sensitivity in this class to the ideals of humanitarianism: "Anyway, it is now in France only the proletarians who participate in the movement, however, not because egoism, but because humanism is more prominent in them than in the haggling, dehumanized, corrupted grocers' world. In any case could the practical French come to the socialist principle only through human *suffering*; but is not their *own* suffering which made the French proletarian enthusiastic for socialism and gave it an oratory talent that surprises educated people, who feel respect: it is the suffering of his brothers, his fellow men."[42]

For Hess communism is a practical ethics which is elevated above all classes. Marx, on the contrary, agrees fully with Von Stein's idea that – at least the German - proletariat is not attracted to communist ideas because of ethical, humanitarian ideals, but

because of the miserable situation and the acute destitution in which it finds itself. The (German) proletariat will not *voluntarily* come into action because of its supposed moral superiority, but it will come into action purely *out of necessity* because of an unbearable situation. Marx considers that revolutions are fed not only by ideas. "Revolutions," he writes, "need a *passive* element, a *material* basis. The theory will be realized in a people only as far as it is the realization of its needs."[43] This would be true pre-eminently in Germany, "where the practical life is as spiritless, as the spiritual life is unpractical." In this country "no class of civil society has the need, nor is it capable of a general emancipation, if it is not forced by its *direct situation,* by the material necessity, by its *chains.*"[44]

Marx, therefore, agrees with Von Stein that the revolutionary praxis of the proletariat is the result of the miserable situation in which this class finds itself. For Von Stein this means that the revolutionary praxis of the proletariat only serves the *particular* interest of this group. The proletariat can realize its particular interest only by abolishing private property. This means that existing civil society loses its basis. Von Stein, who identifies the existing order with the general interest, comes to the conclusion that the particular interest of the proletariat is the opposite of the general interest. Everything should, therefore, be done to avoid a revolution taking place. Here lies the great difference with Marx. For him also the abolition of private property marks the end of the existing social order, but it is the end of a *bourgeois* order, characterized by particularistic interests and political alienation. The *meaning* attributed by both to the motivation of the proletariat is, therefore, completely opposite. The fact that the revolutionary praxis of the proletariat is caused by its misery, means for Von Stein that its praxis does not transcend its own self-interest. For Marx, however, this praxis *does* transcend the proletariat's self-interest. By abolishing private property the proletariat realizes, together with its own emancipation, the emancipation of mankind as a whole. Unlike Moses Hess he considers this universal emancipation not the result of a moral imperative, but as the *unintended result* of the self-emancipation of this class. Not on the basis of its supposed moral superiority, but on the basis of its objective historical situation is the proletariat the chosen actor to realize universal human emancipation. Marx transforms the proletariat into a *universal class* whose particular interest directly coincides with the general interest of mankind.

THE CONTROVERSY OVER LORENZ VON STEIN'S INFLUENCE ON MARX

The question of whether Marx's theory of the proletariat was influenced by Lorenz von Stein has been the subject of a controversy among marxologists. One author who highlights this influence is Robert Tucker, who wrote that "the book that particularly influenced his

[Marx's] thinking in regard to the proletariat was a German book published in Leipzig in 1842, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs.* Its author was Lorenz von Stein, a conservative Hegelian and staunch monarchist."[45] According to Tucker, "the circumstantial evidence for the view that he actually 'discovered' the proletariat in Lorenz von Stein's book is compelling. His concept of the proletariat, as developed in the 'Introduction' endows this class with the attributes Stein has seen in it."[46]

Although Tucker's thesis, that Marx has been strongly influenced by Von Stein, is right, he has a tendency to exaggerate this fact and consequently to underestimate the influences that, eventually, other thinkers had on his theory of the proletariat. For instance, in his book Tucker quotes the motto, used by Marx in the *Introduction*, "I am nothing, but I have to be everything", but he forgets to indicate that this motto comes from the pamphlet *Qu'est-ce que le tiers état?* (What is the third estate?), written by Emmanuel Sieyès, an important theoretician of the French Revolution. This pamphlet also had a great influence on Marx's theory of the revolution. It has, in particular, enabled him to distance himself from Von Stein's ideas about the desirability of social mobility.

We have seen that Von Stein did not ascribe the social tensions in society to the class character of society, but rather to the impossibility for the *individual* citizen to emancipate himself from his class. Only when the working class has become a hereditary *estate,* in which one – having been born into it – is doomed to remain forever, will it, according to Von Stein, lead to social tensions. Not a social revolution, but social mobility was therefore the solution, which Von Stein proposed for the social problems of his time.

The ideas about social emancipation, propagated by Sieyès, are directly the opposite. In his pamphlet "What is the third estate?" which was published in the year of the revolution 1789, he addressed the question of the political emancipation of the bourgeoisie. This emancipation, he wrote, must not be realized by the social mobility of the *individual.* This is because it is not a question of emancipating some members of the bourgeoisie, but of emancipating the *whole* class. Sieyès, therefore, criticizes proposals to promote some persons to the rank of peer to thus create for the bourgeoisie their own representation in parliament to which no members of the bourgeoisie were admitted. "One can create as many new peer titles as one wants," wrote Sieyès, "what is certain is that a citizen no longer belongs to the community when he receives privileges which oppose the rights of the community [which he represents]. His new interest opposes the general interest: he is incapable of voting in the name of the people."[47] An *individual* emancipation of some members of the bourgeoisie does not emancipate the third estate, he concludes, on the contrary, it will deprive this estate of its most enlightened, courageous, and prominent members. Sieyès asks himself: "When an army has the bad luck to see his best troops desert, should it still entrust them with the defense of its camp?"[48]

Marx adopts Sieyès' demand for a *complete class emancipation.* Sieyès formulated this demand for the 'third estate', the bourgeoisie. Marx will formulate it for the 'fourth estate', the property-less proletariat. The emergence of this demand was already anticipated in an article in the *Rheinische Zeitung* of October 16, 1842, when Marx wrote: "All feudal authors acknowledge with melancholic concern … that Sieyès' prophecy has come true and that the *tiers état* [third estate] has become everything and wants to be everything. That the estate which today owns nothing wants to participate in the wealth of the middle classes, is a fact that … visibly strikes one everywhere, in Manchester, Paris and Lyons."[49] Even more clearly Marx will formulate the demand for the emancipation *as a class* one week later in his article on the Law on the Theft of Wood. "The wise lawgiver," he writes there, "will not limit himself to abolishing for members of a class the impossibility of belonging to a higher sphere, something which they rightfully claim, but he will elevate their own class to a real possibility of right …"[50] What stands out in these articles, is the fact that Marx does not yet entrust the emancipation of the oppressed classes to *themselves,* but to external actors, such as 'the wise lawgiver'. However, one important central idea, which we find back in the "Introduction", is already present: a class should emancipate itself *as a class.* Emancipation cannot take place by a process of social mobility, because this only emancipates some individuals, but does not change the global situation of the class. Tucker, who rightly assessed Von Stein's influence on Marx's theory of the proletariat, did not notice the influence of Sieyès.[51] This is, unfortunately, an important omission, because Sieyès' theory of class emancipation had a significant impact on Marx's theory of the proletariat.

Another author, who has mentioned Von Stein's influence on Marx is Shlomo Avineri. He speaks about the "possible – and even quite probable – influence of Stein on Marx,"[52] referring to the same article in the *Rheinische Zeitung,* which we cited earlier when we wrote about Sieyès:

> "… Marx refers for the first time to a 'propertyless class' whose problems 'cry out to heaven in Manchester, Paris and Lyons' in an article in the *Rheinische Zeitung* in autumn 1842, a short time after the publication of Stein's book. Though this article ostensibly deals with one of Wilhelm Weitling's books, Marx mentions here writings by Leroux, Considérant, Proudhon and Fourier. They are not mentioned by Weitling at all and Marx could not have read them in the original at that time. He probably got the information about them from Stein's book."[53]

However, Von Stein's eventual influence on Marx is, on the other hand, greatly underestimated by Sidney Hook, who completely ignores the important parallels in

the works of the two authors. Their diverging ideas on the emergence of a proletariat in Germany is for him a reason to claim that Von Stein's influence on Marx has been minimal: "As far as the mooted question of Stein's influence on Marx is concerned, it is sufficient to point out that Stein prophesied that the existing proletariat would not develop in Germany."[54]

THE CAUSES OF MARX'S DELAYED RECEPTION OF VON STEIN'S IDEAS

More important is the critique of David McLellan, who similarly denied the influence of Von Stein on Marx's theory of the proletariat:

> "It is surprising, then, that some have argued that Lorenz von Stein's book *Socialism and Communism in Contemporary France* was instrumental in his conversion. (The book had first appeared eighteen months previously when Marx was not responsive to socialist ideas; though it had wide influence on the German radical circles in which he moved, it had apparently made no impact on him at that time.) Indeed, far from being elaborations of bookish material studied at second or third hand, Marx's sudden espousal of the proletarian cause can be directly attributed to his first-hand contacts with socialist intellectuals in France. Instead of editing a paper for the Rhenish bourgeoisie or sitting in his study in Kreuznach, he was now at the heart of socialist thought and action."[55]

Neither Avineri, nor Tucker, who both insist on Von Stein having an influence on Marx, provides an answer to McLellan's – legitimate – question of why Marx begins to present the proletariat as the revolutionary class only during his stay in Paris – one and a half years *after* the publication of Von Stein's book. If his theory had been conceived under the influence of Lorenz von Stein one would have expected that Marx would have developed this theory already in the autumn of 1842. If one wants to insist on Von Stein's influence on Marx's theory of the proletariat, one should at least provide an explanation for this 'postponed reception'.

In my opinion one has to seek this explanation in particular in the *stages of the theoretical development* of Marx himself. When Marx reads Von Stein in the autumn of 1842 he is still a radical democrat. He is in favor of further democratization of society, but society does not need a revolution to become 'rational' (*vernünftig*). The banning of his paper, the *Rheinische Zeitung,* radicalizes his position. It brings the weakness of a purely intellectual enlightenment praxis to the surface. Marx's world view is fundamentally shaken. This becomes clear when, shortly afterwards, he writes his critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. He comes to the conclusion that private property is the ultimate

cause of political alienation. However, the abolition of private property cannot be realized by the critical 'enlightenment praxis' of the free press. It necessitates another subject. In the summer of 1843 Marx has not yet discovered this subject. The proletariat was for him, as such, excluded, because his image of the proletariat in this period was certainly not yet an image of a revolutionary subject. As a journalist he had come several times into contact with poor, miserable people, but in these cases they were the helpless victims of the machinations of third persons. Marx still had no experience of an assertive industrial proletariat. He must have thought Von Stein's ideas about a revolutionary self-emancipation of the proletariat – certainly of the German proletariat – as rather unlikely. As a journalist he still hoped for *external* help: the mediation by the 'free press' and the support of a 'wise lawgiver'.

This changes when, in the autumn of 1843, he arrives in Paris. Here for the first time he comes into direct contact with a militant industrial proletariat which already knows the principles of socialism. It is these *practical* experiences which make him receptive to the ideas of self-emancipation of the proletariat. The fact that Marx is able to develop his new ideas so quickly is not surprising: he knew these ideas already from reading Lorenz von Stein. His critique of Hegel has led him to the conclusion that private property should be abolished. From reading Lorenz von Stein he already knew that the proletariat was the natural adversary of private property. But only during his stay in Paris did Marx become convinced of the truth of Von Stein's vision, that the proletariat was *powerful* enough to abolish private property. This is the moment that he adopts Von Stein's ideas – although the conclusions he draws from them are different. It was Sieyès who made it possible for Marx to adopt Von Stein's ideas, but not his conclusions as regards the desirability of a restoration of social mobility. By abolishing private property the proletariat would, according to Marx, not only liberate a few members of its class, but the whole class.

NOTES

[1] Karl Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung," *MEW*, Vol. 1, 378.

[2] In his early writings Marx still speaks about 'private property' in general. Later he will differentiate this and explain that he means exclusively the private property of the means of production. (Cf. Karl Marx, "Theorien über den Mehrwert," 3, *MEW*, Vol. 26.3 (Berlin/DDR: Dietz Verlag, 1972), 414: "Therefore the necessity for the separation … the opposition of labor and property (to be understood as the property of the conditions of production.").

[3] Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung," 391.

[4] Cf. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, Paragraph 245, Zusatz, 208: "Poverty does not yet make everyone into plebs (Pöbel): this is caused only by the mentality that goes with poverty, by the internal indignation against the rich, against society, the government, etc."

[5] Letter from Karl Marx to Ludwig Feuerbach, August 11, 1844, MEW, Vol. 27, 426.

[6] Cf. Georges Gurvitch, "Proudhon et Marx: Une confrontation," Les cours de Sorbonne (cours public 1963-1964), (Paris: Centre de documentation universitaire, 1964), 8. However, Marx would soon distance himself from Proudhon, attacking him in Das Elend der Philosophie (The Misery of Philosophy), published in 1847, for being a bad economist and bad philosopher.

[7] Cf. Maximilien Rubel, "La conception du prolétariat chez Marx," in Transactions of the Fifth World Congress of Sociology, Vol. IV, International Sociological Association, 1964, 77.

[8] Maximilien Rubel, *Karl Marx – Essai de biographie intellectuelle*, (Paris: Éditions Marcel Rivière et Cie, 1971), 85-86.

[9] The complete title is "Über das dermalige Missverhältnis der Vermögenslosen oder Proletairs zu den Vermögen besitzenden Klassen der Sozietät in Betreff ihres Auskommens sowohl in materieller als intellektueller Hinsicht aus dem Standpunkte des Rechts betrachtet." In Johannes Sauter (ed.), *Franz von Baaders Schriften zur Gesellschaftsphilosophie*, (Jena: G. Fischer, 1925), 319-338.

[10] Von Baader, "Über das dermalige Missverhältnis der Vermögenslosen," 321-322.

[11] Von Baader, "Über das dermalige Missverhältnis der Vermögenslosen," 324-325.

[12] Von Baader, "Über das dermalige Missverhältnis der Vermögenslosen," 325.

[13] Von Baader, "Über das dermalige Missverhältnis der Vermögenslosen," 329. Later Marx will modify this theory in his political-economic publications, specifying that the worker does not sell his labor, but his labor force. According to him the surplus value is not caused because this labor force is sold at below its 'natural price', but because it produces more value than it costs the entrepreneur.

[14] Von Baader, "Über das dermalige Missverhältnis der Vermögenslosen," 329.

[15] Ernst Benz, "Franz von Baaders Gedanken über den 'Proletair' – Zur Geschichte des vor-marxistischen Sozialismus," in *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, 1(2), 1948, 101.

[16] Robert von Mohl, "Über die Nachteile, welche sowohl den Arbeitern selbst, als dem Wohlstande und der Sicherheit der gesammten bürgerlichen Gesellschaft von dem fabrikmässigen Betriebe der Industrie zugehen, und über die Nothwendigkeit gründlicher Vorbeugungsmittel," in Norbert Preusser, *Armut und Sozialstaat*, Band 2, Herkunft und Entwicklung des Systems der sozialen Sicherung bis 1870, (Munich: AG Spak, 1982), 99-127.

[17] Von Mohl, "Über die Nachteile," 100.

[18] Von Mohl, "Über die Nachteile," 102.

[19] Von Mohl, "Über die Nachteile," 110.

[20] Von Mohl, "Über die Nachteile," 106.

[21] Von Mohl, "Über die Nachteile," 109.

[22] Von Mohl, "Über die Nachteile," 109.

[23] Von Mohl, "Über die Nachteile," 108-109.

[24] Von Mohl, "Über die Nachteile," 101.

[25] It is interesting that Von Mohl's ideas about the opening of the entrepreneur's books show a great similarity with ideas which emerged in the 1970s in radical British trade unions. The claim to 'open the books' was central in the movement for 'workers' control'. This movement was more radical than Von Mohl, because it did not only demand to see

the books for a more just partition of the profits, but also because of a droit de regard of the workers concerning investments.

[26] Heinz Nitzschke, *Die Geschichtsphilosophie Lorenz von Steins* – Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, (Munich: Verlag R. Oldenbourg, 1932), 134.

[27] Lorenz von Stein, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs* – Ein Beitrag zur Zeitgeschichte, (Leipzig: Wigand, 1842).

[28] Von Stein, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs*, 9.

[29] Von Stein, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs*, 9: "… und so wird allmählig aus dem Chaos dieser eigenthums- und bildungslosen Masse ein Ganzes …" (… and so emerges from the chaos of this property-less and uneducated mass a whole …).

[30] Von Stein, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs*, 83-84.

[31] Von Stein, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs*, 354.

[32] Von Stein, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs*, 355.

[33] Von Stein, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs*, 356.

[34] Von Stein, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs*, 28.

[35] Von Stein, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs*, 352.

[36] Von Stein's description of the revolutionary proletariat resembles Hegel's description of the Terror period during the French Revolution under Robespierre. In the Phenomenology of Spirit Hegel characterizes this period as follows: "the general freedom [i.e. the Terror] can therefore produce no positive work or deed; there remains for her only the negative action [das negative Tun]; she is only the Fury of the disappearance." (435-436) "Its negation is the meaningless death, the pure horror of the negative, which possesses nothing positive, nothing successful." 439) (Cf. Hegel, "Phänomenologie des Geistes," *Werke*, Vol. 3, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970).

[37] Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung," 391.

[38] Cf. Jean Hyppolite, *Studies on Marx and Hegel*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 124: "Thus it is by means of the proletariat that the Idea becomes an actuality. Marx, therefore, has not altogether abandoned Hegelian philosophy. He tries to provide a more secure foundation for the Idea and Reality in the human subject. In place of Hegel's transcendent Idea, Marx substitutes the revolutionary dialectic of the proletariat."

[39] Cf. Norberto Bobbio, "La dialettica in Marx," in Norberto Bobbio, *Da Hobbes a Marx*, (Naples: Morano Editore, 1971), 258: "Come filosofo della storia [Marx] fu colpito nel pensiero di Hegel, dalla 'dialettica della negatività come principio motore e generatore' … il negative non vien considerato come un'aberrazione né come un male, ma come un momento necessario dello sviluppo storico."

[40] Moses Hess, "Socialismus und Communismus," in Moses Hess, *Philosophische und sozialistische Schriften 1837-1850*, op. cit., 204

[41] Moses Hess, "Über die sozialistische Bewegung in Deutschland," in Moses Hess, *Philosophische und sozialistische Schriften 1837-1850*, op. cit., 303.

[42] Hess, "Über die sozialistische Bewegung in Deutschland," 303.

[43] Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung," 386.

[44] Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung," 390.

[45] Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 114.

[46] Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, 116.

[47] Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, *"Qu'est-ce que le tiers état?"* (Paris: Éditions Boucher, 2002), 10: "Qu'on fasse de nouveaux nobles tout ce qu'on voudra; il est sûr que dès l'instant qu'un citoyen acquiert des privilèges contraires au droit commun, il n'est plus de l'ordre commun. Son nouvel intérêt est opposé à l'intérêt général; il est inhabile à voter pour le peuple." Unlike Sieyès, Montesquieu still considered the possibility of members of the French bourgeoisie being knighted a positive development: "La pratique de ce pays est très sage: les négociants n'y sont pas nobles, mais ils peuvent le devenir. Ils ont l'espérance d'obtenir la noblesse, sans en avoir l'inconvénient actuel. Ils n'ont pas de moyen plus sûr de sortir de leur profession que de la bien faire, ou de la faire avec honneur … " (Montesquieu, "De l'esprit des lois," Livre 22, in Montesquieu, *Œuvres Complètes* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1964), 655.

[48] Sieyès, *"Qu'est-ce que le tiers état?"* 10: "Parce qu'une armée a eu le malheur de voir déserter ses meilleures troupes, faut-il encore qu'elle leur confie son camp à défendre?"

[49] Karl Marx, "Der Kommunismus und die Augsburger 'Allgemeine Zeitung'," *MEW*, Vol. 1, 106.

[50] Karl Marx, "Debatten über das Holzdiebstahlsgesetz," *MEW*, Vol. 1, 120.

[51] The influence of Sieyès on Marx in this period becomes clear from Marx's admiration for the French revolutionary thinker. In "The Holy Family", for instance, one can read: "Proudhon's pamphlet Qu'est-ce que la propriété has the same importance for the modern economy as Sieyès' pamphlet Qu'est-ce que le tiers état? for modern politics." (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Die Heilige Familie, *MEW*, Vol. 2, 33).

[52] Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 54.

[53] Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, 54.

[54] Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx* – Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx, (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1971), 199.

[55] David McLellan, *Marx before Marxism*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 203.

Part III

The Polarization Thesis

Was Marx Right or Was He Wrong?

Chapter Twelve

Revolution and Emancipation: A Critical Assessment of Marx's Suppositions

THE THREE SUPPOSITIONS OF MARX'S THEORY OF REVOLUTION

The role of universal liberator and emancipator of mankind which Marx attributes to the proletariat is founded on a number of implicit and explicit suppositions. It is time to have a critical look at these. There are, at least, *three* suppositions, which are: first, the thesis of a growing *polarization* between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; second, the thesis of a *'theoretical ability'* of the proletariat; and, third, the supposition that the revolutionary praxis of the proletariat would have a *universal* emancipatory character which would benefit not only the proletariat itself, but mankind as a whole.

- Supposition 1: The Growing Polarization between Bourgeoisie and Proletariat

The relationship between bourgeoisie and proletariat is for Marx characterized by an increasing polarization. This polarization takes place on two levels: a *sociological* level and a *socio-psychological* level. On the sociological level an objective process takes place involving a growing division of society between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This division is caused by the groups and classes *in between* gradually disappearing and becoming integrated within one of these two classes. The great majority of the population would finally end up in the proletariat. With this sociological polarization thesis there is a corresponding *socio-psychological* polarization thesis, by which the proletariat becomes increasingly *conscious* of the antagonistic character of the relationship between the two classes. This leads to a situation in which the relationship between the two classes becomes more and more characterized by a *class struggle.* At a certain point, when

the sociological and socio-psychological polarization has become more extreme, this will necessarily lead to a *social revolution* in which the proletariat will abolish private property (for the young Marx: private property as such, for the mature Marx: the private ownership of the means of production).

- Supposition 2: The Theoretical Ability of the Proletariat

However, for this social revolution to take place, apart from the polarization two other conditions need to be fulfilled:

1. The proletariat should have the 'right' revolutionary theory.
2. The proletariat should have a 'theoretical ability', which means that it should have the intellectual capability of understanding and appropriating this 'right' revolutionary theory.

- Supposition 3: The Proletariat's Revolutionary Praxis has a Universal Emancipatory Character

Marx's third supposition is that the proletariat by its revolutionary praxis will not only liberate and emancipate itself, but mankind as a whole. The revolutionary praxis has, therefore, a *universal* character. The question is to what extent these three suppositions can stand up to scrutiny. I will analyze below their plausibility in more detail.

IS THERE AN INCREASING POLARIZATION BETWEEN BOURGEOISIE AND PROLETARIAT?

Marx's polarization thesis consisted of two parts: a sociological and a socio-psychological component. Let us first have a look at the sociological component. The sociological polarization thesis affirms that in society there exists a crystallization process which leads increasingly to the formation of *two classes*: bourgeoisie and proletariat. This would imply that the middle class of shopkeepers, liberal professions, civil servants, etc. would diminish and eventually disappear. Only a small part of these would join the bourgeoisie, the greater part, however, would join the proletariat. The bourgeoisie, a minority, would be facing the proletariat, consisting of the great majority of the population. This is expressed

in the *Communist Manifesto* in the following words: "Until now all movements were movements of minorities in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the independent movement of the huge majority in the interest of the huge majority."[1] The sociological polarization thesis is deducted from the assumption that in the capitalist economy the middle classes will disappear and will be integrated into one of the other two classes. But is this assumption right?

A DISAPPEARING MIDDLE CLASS?

Marx has taken this supposition directly from Friedrich Engels, who in his *Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* (1844) wrote: "… the middle classes have to disappear more and more, until the world is divided between millionaires and paupers …"[2] In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels repeat this statement: "Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, is characterized by the fact that it has simplified the class cleavages. The whole of society is divided more and more into two big, hostile camps, in two classes that directly oppose each other: bourgeoisie and proletariat."[3] This thesis, however, was criticized from an early stage. The statement that the proletariat would be the 'huge majority' did not correspond with the facts. In the beginning of the twentieth century the German sociologist Werner Sombart wrote that not more than "one third of the total population" belonged to the proletariat: "When in 1847 Marx was already thinking: 'The proletarian movement is the independent movement of the huge majority in the interest of the huge majority,' then, at that time, even for the West European countries, that was a 'huge' exaggeration, at least, if one defines the proletariat in a narrower sense, as Marx certainly did."[4]

Why did the sociological component of Marx's polarization thesis not materialize? Because – against his expectations – there developed a *new middle class,* which consisted of highly educated employees, civil servants, and the liberal professions. This phenomenon was, for instance, observed by Eduard Bernstein, the German social-democratic leader and 'father of reformism'. In his book *Der Sozialismus einst und jetzt* (Socialism Then and Now)[5], published in 1922, he analyzed the growth of the different social classes in the period 1892-1916, using Prussian income data and wealth tax files. What happened during this period, which was, according to Bernstein, 'the epoch of the great increase in capitalist production'? He wrote: "The proletariat has increased, but also the middle class and the upper class. The wealth of society has increased enormously, not only of the superrich, but all layers of the property-owning class have participated."[6]

This process has since then continued with the growth of the service sector and the construction of the welfare state which led to an increase of 'welfare professionals'.

The question, therefore, is: was Marx wrong? He was *not* wrong in the sense that the polarization process, which he described, could be observed in his time. In the 1840s society seemed to be moving toward a complete polarization into two classes. The Dutch historian Izaak Brugmans, for instance, observed for this period a similar polarization in the Netherlands. In his opinion it could be said, "that in the Netherlands before the middle of the century there existed two classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, or, in the terminology of that time: the upper class and the poor."[7] The same observation is made by Frey and Osborne, who wrote "that over the first half of the nineteenth century, the real wage stagnated while output per worker expanded. After the mid nineteenth century, however, real wages began to grow in line with productivity. While this implies that capital owners were the greatest beneficiaries of the Industrial Revolution, there is at the same time consensus that average living standards largely improved."[8] It is not surprising that Marx – confronted with the increasing proletarianization of the middle class in the first half of the century – extrapolated this trend and concluded that in the future only two classes would remain. However, the extrapolation of this contemporary trend, was later not confirmed by the facts. His first supposition, therefore, seemed to be wrong.

DID MARX FORESEE THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW MIDDLE CLASS?

In an interesting study[9] Martin Nicolaus has tried to prove that Marx in his later political-economic analyses has *implicitly* indicated the necessity of the emergence of a new middle class, although this was never explicitly elaborated by him. Nicolaus formulated a 'law of the surplus class' which - although never formulated as such by Marx - could be distilled from his political-economic work. This law suggests that the surplus, produced by the capitalist system, has to be spent on unproductive labor for two reasons. The first is that with the growth of productivity there is a parallel growth of unproductive workers (service sector, semi-government). The second reason is that the capitalist system would collapse if there were no class which absorbs the surplus – which means that it produces less than it consumes. According to Nicolaus Marx's *surplus-value theory* was the key to this discovery. According to this theory only *labor* was capable of producing surplus value. To maximize the surplus value the capitalist entrepreneurs continuously introduced more efficient machines. This led, indeed, to more surplus value, but at the same time it led to a redundancy of labor. "What happens to this swelling surplus? It

enables the capitalist class to create a class of people who are not productive workers, but who perform services either for individual capitalists or, more important, for the capitalist class as a whole … This class of unproductive workers, or servants for short, is the middle class."[10]

However, there are indications that the mature Marx even foresaw *explicitly* the emergence of this new middle class. For instance, in the *Grundrisse,* his theoretical toolbox for writing *Capital,* he wrote: "One may be reminded that alongside the creation of surplus labor on the one hand there corresponds the creation of minus-labor, relative 'idleness' (or in the best case *non-productive* labor). For the capital [capitalist class] this is evident, also subsequently for the classes with which it shares the surplus … There is a real difference between this *serving* and the *working* class."[11] Another indication of evolution in the mature Marx's thinking can be found in a polemic with Malthus in the *Theorien über den Mehrwert* (Theories of Surplus Value). Marx here explicitly concedes that Malthus' hope for an increase in the middle class is confirmed by the 'development of bourgeois society'. "His greatest hope," wrote Marx, "which he himself indicates to be more or less utopian – is that the middle class will grow and the working proletariat will become proportionally an ever smaller part of the total population (even if it increases in an absolute sense). This is indeed the *development* of bourgeois society."[12]

The mature Marx even blames Ricardo for *not* having predicted the emergence of the middle class: "What he forgets to emphasize is the continuous growth of the middle classes, who stand in the middle between the workers on the one side and the capitalist and the landed property owner on the other side, who, ever more, on the whole nourished directly by the revenue, squeeze the working basis and [who] increase the social security and the power of the *upper ten percent."*[13] It is to Marx's credit that his intellectual integrity does not let him ignore unwelcome facts. However, for him it is not a reason to change the basic assumptions of his theory. He denies that the new emerging middle class has interests of its own and differs from both the proletariat and the superrich. He considers them simply as a *serving class,* paid and fed by the bourgeoisie, and, therefore, acting as the mouthpiece of the bourgeoisie.[14] This vision, however, will prove to be too monolithic and does not take into account the intellectual independence of this mostly well-educated class. Another problem this new middle class poses for Marx's theory is that it also undermines his assumption that the proletariat would represent 'the huge majority' of the population. This is no longer true, once the bourgeoisie is reinforced with this new 'serving' middle class.

Marx will later – in the first volume of *Capital* – develop a new, more 'scientific' variant of the sociological polarization thesis. This is his theory of *Verelendung,* the

"immiseration or pauperization thesis." In chapter 24 on the accumulation process of capital he describes how, through a process of centralization, capital will end up in increasingly fewer hands. "With the ever diminishing number of the capital magnates … ," he wrote, "there increases the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, denaturalization, exploitation, however, and also the indignation of the continuously growing … working class."[15] Marx's prediction – a product of *wishful thinking* in order to support his theory of revolution? – did not materialize. "Marx's predictions about the behaviour of wages have not been borne out by the facts, at any rate in the more advanced capitalist countries. It is in this respect that the discrepancy between the theory and the facts … is most apparent and significant."[16] Marx's prophecy became in part a self-denying prophecy due to the activities and mobilization of the trade unions and the reformist social-democratic parties, which, instead of a Marx's revolution, preferred a strategy of piecemeal reform.[17]

THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL POLARIZATION THESIS

The second component of Marx's polarization thesis is his assumption that bourgeoisie and proletariat will develop into *hostile,* opposing classes. We find here also the influence of Friedrich Engels, who, in his *Umrisse* spoke about "the separation of humanity into capitalists and workers, a separation that each day becomes sharper and sharper and that, as we will see, *must* always increase."[18] This idea of an increasing class hostility between bourgeoisie and proletariat was not confined to Marx, Engels, and other communist theoreticians. Robert von Mohl had referred to the 'deathly hostile opposition' of both classes which could end in a class struggle. Also Lorenz von Stein had sought recognition of the 'opposition of the worker and the capitalist' and for classes which 'stand hostile face to face'.[19]

The difference between Marx (and Engels) and these 'bourgeois' thinkers lay not in an analysis of the hostile character of class relations, but in their proposed *solutions.* Von Mohl considered a government-sponsored promotion of social mobility an adequate measure to avoid a class struggle. Lorenz von Stein pleaded for better education for workers, which would teach them that communism was not a solution to their problems. The economist Malthus considered the formation of a middle class, which would alleviate the tensions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, as the solution.

Marx, on the contrary, does not want to alleviate the tensions, but, on the

contrary, he wants to polarize them. He considers this polarization a healthy and necessary process. The question is, however, to what extent Marx with his socio-psychological polarization thesis has tried to force reality into the straitjacket of dialectical logic – not Hegel's dialectical logic, in which contradictions are 'mediated' with each other in a rather soft way, but in a dialectical logic in which the contradictions have ripened to such 'extremes' that the only solution is a complete dialectical reversal which leads to fundamental change. In his Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the State Marx had opposed Hegel's dialectical 'mediations' (*Vermittlungen*). "Real extremes," wrote Marx, "cannot be 'mediated' with each other, because they are real extremes. They do not even need 'mediation' because they have an opposite essence. They don't share anything …"[20] It is not difficult to read here for 'extremes' the words 'bourgeoisie and proletariat'.

Voegelin recognized in this unbridgeable antithesis of bourgeoisie and proletariat in Marx "the attractive model of manichaeistic simplicity … there are only two forces, good and evil …"[21] Voegelin, however, erroneously argued that Marx considered class opposition as an *absolute* opposition. This is not the case. In *Das Elend der Philosophie* (The Misery of Philosophy) he criticized Proudhon for exactly the reason that Proudhon's political economy had a manichaeistic character. "For Mister Proudhon every economic category has two sides, a good one and a bad one … The problem to be solved [is]: how to keep the good side and throw away the bad…"[22] However, continued Marx, "The essence of the dialectical movement is the coexistence of both opposite sides, their struggle and their elevation into a new category. If one poses only the problem of destroying the bad side, one cuts the dialectical movement in two."[23] One does not need a vivid imagination to see that Marx transposes the struggle of *logical* categories onto the *real* struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat. A compromise between the two, a 'mediation', cannot bring a solution, nor can the abolition of one of them (for instance by making the proletariat socially mobile – although this will never lead to a total abolition), but only their *struggle* can lead to a new situation in which the opposition is abolished (*aufgehoben*) and society elevated to a higher level (synthesis). It is clearly the influence of Hegel's logic - Hegel's transformation of real existing *oppositions* in society into logical *contradictions,* which, via a *conflict* of thesis and antithesis are brought to a higher level - which has inspired Marx's ideas of the necessity of a class struggle and, consequently, his socio-psychological polarization thesis. It was a theoretical straitjacket which prevented him from wondering whether the conflict of interests between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat could be resolved in any way other than in a revolutionary class struggle.

THE 'RIGHT' REVOLUTIONARY THEORY AND THE 'THEORETICAL ABILITY' OF THE PROLETARIAT

The second basic assumption of Marx's theory of the proletariat was that a social revolution could take place if – apart from a polarization – two other conditions were fulfilled:

1. the proletariat should have the 'right' theory
2. the proletariat should be 'theoretically able': it should be intellectually capable of appropriating this theory and of acting accordingly.[24]

In the *Introduction* Marx speaks about the historical role of the *German* proletariat. This is the case, apparently, because he is referring here to the possibility of a revolution in *Germany*. However, this is not the whole explanation. According to Marx, the proletariat – if it wants to come to a successful revolutionary praxis – has to possess adequate insight into the social causes of its misery. Only when the proletariat has the right theory can it realize universal human emancipation. In this respect he considers the German proletariat superior. "One must admit," wrote Marx, "that the German proletariat is the *theoretician* of the European proletariat …"[25] The German proletariat is the vanguard and guide of the European proletariat because it is able to formulate the theoretical principles for the social revolution. Marx often praises the intellectual abilities of the German proletariat.[26] However, it is not very plausible that he considered it the task of the German proletariat to formulate the 'right' theory. Marx – via a process of identification – rather is talking about himself, Friedrich Engels, and the small group of communist theoreticians who considered themselves to be the natural leaders of the German proletariat. Moreover, the communist movement in the still mostly agrarian Germany of this period was scarcely 'proletarian'. Friedrich Engels had already observed this fact in the article titled "Germany and Switzerland", published in *The New Moral World* of November 18, 1843. "In Germany," wrote Engels, "the perspective of the foundation of a communist party among the educated classes of society is greater than elsewhere … We can enlarge our group only from the classes who have had a really good education, that means from the universities and the trading classes …"[27]

The problem of finding the 'right' revolutionary theory posed no big problem for Marx. For him it was the task of the German communist intelligentsia to find this

'right theory' and he had no doubts that they would find it. Marx's belief in the universal revolutionary mission of the German philosophers suggests the influence of Heinrich Heine. In his book *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* (1835) (On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany) Heine had written: "German philosophy is an important affair, that concerns all humanity and only the last remaining great grandchildren will be in a position to judge whether we should be blamed for having first elaborated our philosophy and only later made our revolution."[28] "Don't smile about the Romantic who expects in the realm of phenomena the same revolution which has taken place in the realm of the mind." And he continued: "The thought precedes the deed, like the lightning the thunder."[29] Even the image of the thought that strikes like lightning, used by Marx in the *Introduction,* is apparently suggested by Heine. In Paris Heine is one of Marx's intimate friends. In his *Briefe über Deutschland* (Letters on Germany) – written in the mid-1840s – Heine emphasized the leading role of communist philosophers: "Communism is spreading all over Germany. It is an equally natural phenomenon that the proletarians, in their struggle with the existing [order], have the most progressive minds, the philosophers of the great school as their leaders; these pass from the doctrine to the deed …"[30] Marx agrees wholeheartedly, writing in the *Introduction*: " … [and] so it is now the *philosopher* in whose head the revolution starts."[31]

Marx is confident that the German communist intelligentsia - that is: he himself and his close circle – will be able to provide the proletariat with the 'right' theory.[32] However, will the proletariat be able to understand this philosophically elaborated theory and make it its own? It is a question of the *Theoriefähigkeit,* its intellectual capability. It is a matter of concern for Marx, because the assumption that the proletariat would possess adequate intellectual capacity to embrace the new philosophical principles did not seem to be backed up by the facts. Rather the contrary was the case. The nineteenth century factory proletariat, often wholly or half illiterate, seemed not to have the necessary intellectual faculties to understand a philosophical analysis of society.

The general picture of the proletariat at that time was one of a class lacking in education, a class, which was not only characterized by physical, but also by intellectual poverty. Franz von Baader spoke in his article about "the intellectual poverty or ignorance of this popular class, [this is] why it is easily misled."[33] Von Mohl spoke about the proletariat as 'the lowest, worst educated class', an 'ignorant mass'.[34] For Lorenz von Stein also the proletariat was an 'uneducated class', a 'mass lacking education' (*Bildungslose Masse*), the "popular class which is not capable of raising its feeling to a clear, assertive thought …"[35]

It was in particular this *lack* of intellectual education which, according to

these three authors, characterized the working class and made it receptive to communist ideas. Which brings Von Stein to the conclusion: "Communism is only possible in the proletariat."[36] For these authors communism is a false theory which a normally educated person would reject. In the words of Von Stein: "The really educated [person] has never recognized communism as a principle, because he *can't*."[37] Marx, however, will reverse this argumentation: the proletariat is susceptible to the reception of communist ideas, not because of a supposed *lack* of intellectual education, but because it disposes of a fully adequate intellectual development. Marx's positive assessment of the proletariat's intellectual faculties is a logical consequence of his high idea of communism, considered by him the most progressive philosophical development of his time.

BRUNO BAUER AND MAX STIRNER VERSUS THE 'PHILOSOPHICAL PROLETARIAT'

The idea that the proletariat was intellectually underdeveloped could be found not only in conservative writers, but also in the circle of the progressive Young Hegelians. In 1844, for instance, Bruno Bauer published two articles in which he criticized the worshipping of the masses.[38] The masses, wrote Bauer, are 'a misled crowd', 'the natural adversary of theory'. He makes fun of the 'discovery' of the proletariat by his former friends: "When the German enlightenment philosophers were suddenly disappointed in their expectations for the year 1842 and in their embarrassment did not know what to do, they heard at the right moment about the new French systems. They could now speak of the elevation of the lowest popular classes …"[39] "To achieve something great they have recently put the masses on the throne … They are being used as a means against the spirit; they are being made into the object of a cult … The masses, they say, have no prejudices – their prejudices, however, are the vaguest …"[40] The proletariat, continues Bauer, "has great difficulty in gaining access to a general idea." Therefore, he is strongly against transforming the proletariat into an emancipatory class. "The slave of purely manual work does not even have an idea of the spiritual slavery of general competition, he feels in only a basic way its pressure without being able to interpret and understand it – what he cannot know, [something] what he cannot become conscious of, he will not be able to fight."[41] It is clear that Bauer – without mentioning his name – is attacking Marx in particular here. The proletariat, according to Bauer, is intellectually underdeveloped, and that is why it cannot transform society in a positive way.

Also Max Stirner, in his book *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (The Ego and

its Own),[42] which is published in 1844, describes the factory proletariat as intellectually deficient. "For this worker, who is in the service of another" wrote Stirner, "there exists no pleasure of an educated mind, at most trivial pleasures: because he has no access to education."[43] However, he continued, this should not cause problems for the communist movement, because "the reflections and conclusions of communism appear very simple."[44] Stirner, at first sight, shares Von Stein's and Bauer's opinion that communism is a simple theory for simple minds. However, on reflection, this is only half the truth. Unlike Von Stein, Stirner's negative assessment of communism is not caused by his conservatism, but by his individualistic anarchism. He rejects communist ideas in particular for their authoritarian censoriousness, their tendency to restrict the freedom of individuals.[45] Therefore Stirner is also critical of the education courses which the communists organize for the workers. "Only a few are so stupid that one cannot teach them ideas. This is why one usually thinks all people capable of religion. To a certain degree they can also be trained in other ideas … even some philosophy … the communists, for instance, want to make everything accessible to all with their 'popular school' … Training becomes more and more general and total."[46]

Although Stirner has no great sympathy for communism, he is not against a revolt of the proletariat against oppression. On the contrary. "The poor will only be free and become owners when they revolt, stand up, rise up."[47] However, this revolt should take place "without thinking about the institutions which will be its result."[48] For Stirner the revolution should have a *spontaneous* character and not a revolution based on a previously elaborated plan. In the latter case, he warned, this will lead only to new oppressive structures.

DID MARX'S 'PHILOSOPHICAL PROLETARIAT' COME FROM THE MIDDLE CLASS?

Marx totally disagreed with Stirner's plea for a spontaneous revolt. Only by a revolution, based on high philosophical principles, would the proletariat be able to emancipate itself and mankind as a whole. There remained, however, the problem that Marx needed a proletariat that had enough education to grasp the philosophical principles and put them into practice. Where could he find this proletariat? The accounts given by his contemporaries were not encouraging. Almost unanimously they depicted the proletariat as underdeveloped, uncultivated, and illiterate. It is interesting to see how Marx tried to solve the dilemma.

Marx wrote in the *Introduction* that the proletariat which "is emerging in Germany because of the sudden commencement of industrialization ... [is] a popular mass which is coming out of the dissolution of the middle class especially …"[49] According to Marx the great majority of the proletariat were former members of the middle class: they would have been former independent craftsmen and small entrepreneurs, who had been forced by the fierce and deadly competition of the big industries to give up their profession.[50]

This thesis of a *degraded middle class* corresponds with the sociological polarization thesis, mentioned above, which had already referred to the fact that a proletarianization of the middle class was taking place. This downward social mobility of the middle class was indeed taking place everywhere in Western Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century. Von Mohl in 1835 had mentioned that "governing has in many respects become much more difficult through the diminution of the well-to-do middle class and the increase of property-less proletarians."[51] And Brugmans wrote on the same period in the Netherlands: "… [I]t is certain that the gap between poor and rich became broader, and that the middle groups, the 'burgher' class, were proletarianized."[52] Marx's statement is, therefore, certainly based on fact. Marx had probably also received his information from Friedrich Engels, who, in his *Umrisse,* had written that each subsequent trade crisis "must impoverish a greater number of small capitalists and proportionally augment the numbers of those who live only from their labor …"[53]

By defining the proletariat as a class which for the greater part consisted of members of the *degraded middle class,* Marx was able to defend his postulate of an intellectually competent proletariat. This is because it was evident that this proletariat was (still) educated enough to understand and accept the philosophical principles of communism.[54] In the *Communist Manifesto* the proposition of class degradation is, therefore, explicitly coupled with the affirmation of the intellectual level of the proletariat. "By the progress of industry," Marx and Engels wrote, "great parts of the ruling class are thrown into the proletariat or at least have their means of existence threatened. They also bring to the proletariat a mass of educational elements."[55] In his book *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England* (The Condition of the Working Class in England) Engels wrote enthusiastically on the educational level of the (British) proletariat.

> "I have sometimes seen workers, whose coat was worn out, speak more knowledgeably about geological, astronomical and other subjects than many educated bourgeois in Germany. And the extent to which the English proletariat has succeeded in getting an autonomous education, becomes clear in particular by the fact that the recent works of philosophical and political literature

> and poetry that are prominent in our time, are read almost exclusively by workers."[56] In this context," continued Engels, "the socialists especially have done a lot for the education of the proletariat, they have translated the French materialists, Helvétius, Holbach, Diderot and others and distributed [these texts] in cheap editions together with the best English works. Strauss' 'Leben Jesu' and Proudhon's 'Property' are also circulating only among proletarians. Shelley, the genial prophetic Shelley, and Byron … have most of their readers among workers …"[57]

However, other statements on the English proletariat, made by Engels in the same work, seem to contradict these texts. He wrote, for instance, that this proletariat

> "with the fiercest passion can protest against the tyranny of the proprietors, thanks to his education or, rather, his lack of education and to the abundance of hot Irish blood that is infused in the English working class … The English worker is no longer an Englishman, no calculating money-grabber like his neighbor, who is a proprietor; he has more fully developed feelings … The worker lacks the intellectual development, which so greatly promotes the selfish predisposition of the English bourgeois, who has made selfishness his overreaching passion and has concentrated all emotional force on one point: the greed for money. Instead of this his [the worker's] passions are strong and mighty as those of a foreigner."[58]

In a way that reminds one of *Schiller,* Engels praises here the 'more fully developed feelings' of the English proletariat, while, at the same time, *morally* discrediting the intellectual education of the English bourgeoisie, because this would only be focused on egoism and greed. What stands out in this passage, however, is that Engels here explicitly admits that the (English) workers lack an intellectual education. The question is how can this tally with the other passages in Engels' book. Is the proletariat educated: yes or no? The answer to this question is that Engels in these statements was not speaking about the *same* workers. The educated workers who read Helvétius and Holbach constituted only a select group of politically conscious and active workers – often these were craftsmen. This group was not representative of the great majority of the English proletariat most of whom lived in poverty and moral and spiritual misery.

However, if only a small, select group of workers is able to understand and appropriate the philosophical principles of communism, is a social revolution, as propagated by Marx, still possible as a praxis à la hauteur des principes? Because, however philosophically educated this small group will be, it cannot succeed without the active support of the masses. Influenced by Engels' observations in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* Marx will change his revolution theory. If, as a matter of fact, the great mass of the proletariat is not educated enough, then there will not be much chance that the theory 'takes possession of the masses', as Marx had written in the *Introduction.* Although after 1845 the proposition of the 'degraded middle class' will not be completely given up (it returns, for instance in the *Communist Manifesto*), Marx has to admit that his rosy image of an educated proletariat matches the facts less and less. Thus Marx and Engels were writing in the *German Ideology* (1845) that most proletarians are born as proletarians. The proletarian, therefore, is "already from a young age sacrificed …"[59] His condition, from a young age, is one of moral and physical misery. The recognition of this fact leads to a *receding praxis motive* in Marx's theory of revolution. The proletariat is less and less presented by him as a subject of history that consciously realizes the principles of communist theory in history. In the *German Ideology* the revolution is no longer being presented as the *result* of the acquisition of a communist consciousness by the proletariat, but, on the contrary, as a *means* to acquire this – still lacking – consciousness:

> "For the emergence of a communist consciousness on a massive scale, as well as for the success of the undertaking itself, a massive transformation of the people is necessary, a transformation which can only take place in a practical movement, in a revolution; the revolution is, therefore, necessary, not only because the ruling classes cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class that overthrows them only in a revolution will be capable of freeing itself of the total mess that went before, and can be capable of putting society on a new foundation."[60]

For the proletariat, Marx thinks it is no longer necessary to have enough education as a precondition for a revolutionary praxis à la hauteur des principes. The only qualities required of the majority of them before the revolution is *passion* and *indignation*, because these are deemed necessary qualities to bring them in action. The analogy with Hegel's 'World Spirit' *(Weltgeist)* imposes itself here. Like the World Spirit, only afterwards able

to reflect on its own development in history, the proletariat becomes conscious of the historical meaning and scope of its act only *after* the revolution.

HOW PHILOSOPHY BECAME AN EXPRESSION OF THE 'HISTORICAL MOVEMENT'

However, in Marx's theory not only the proletariat is gradually losing its character of practical subject - becoming an instrument of 'history'. This seems to be true also for the communist *philosopher.* Marx wrote, for instance, in 1847:

> "Just as history proceeds and with it the struggle of the proletariat takes shape more clearly, they [the theoreticians of the proletarian class] no longer need to seek the science in their own heads; they only have to explain what is happening before their eyes and make themselves instrumental of it. As long as they seek science and only make systems, as long as they are at the beginning of the struggle, they see in misery only misery without seeing within it its revolutionary subversive side, which will change the old society fundamentally. From that moment on science becomes the conscious product of the historical movement and it has ceased being doctrinal, and become revolutionary."[61]

In the same vein Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* deny that the theoretical principles of the communists are based on principles "which are invented or discovered by some do-gooder. They are only the general expressions of a factual situation of an existing class struggle, of a historical movement which is taking place before our eyes."[62]

By using terms, such as 'factual', 'existing', 'which is taking place before our eyes', etcetera, Marx tries to give communist theory an appearance of *objective truth* in which subjective value judgments no longer play a role. Here again, the role of the communist thinker takes on Hegelian traits. He is no longer someone, who criticizes society from a *values* standpoint, but he *records* what is happening in practice. For Hegel also the philosopher comes *post festum,* he arrives and interprets what happened *after* the event.[63] The difference, however, with Hegel is that in Hegel's system the philosopher reflects on a process that has been *completed,* while for Marx this process is still *happening.* Unlike Hegel, for whom the philosopher should maintain a safe distance from the present, Marx places the philosopher in the middle of the turmoil of his time: the philosopher is the 'organ', the 'tool', the 'instrument' of historical events.

Marx's theory becomes thereby less and less practical. The philosopher no longer seems to be someone who makes choices, based on values. He is rather the scientific coach of a historical process. Because Marx considers the advent of communism increasingly as a *historical necessity,* the choices of the philosopher become less relevant. His theory becomes less a *prescription* of a morally desirable situation, changing rather into a *description* of 'objective' historical tendencies which realize themselves with an iron necessity. Marx's theory, as such, takes a *historicist turn.* However, if the advent of communism becomes some kind of historical 'law' that realizes itself *nolens volens*, independent of man's endeavors, then the necessity of an *educated* proletariat also becomes less stringent. If it is true that revolution is a sociological phenomenon which one may predict on the basis of certain structural characteristics of a given society, then a theory of revolution, in which the proletariat is the practical subject of change, becomes less important. The 'right' theory consists in that case in predicting in a reliable and 'scientific' manner the course of history. The intellectual appropriation of this theory by the proletariat no longer seems to be a necessary condition to realize the theory.

THE PROLETARIAT AS THE SAVIOR OF MANKIND:

A SIMILARITY WITH THE FIGURE OF CHRIST?

The third supposition of Marx' theory of the proletariat is that the proletariat by its social revolution emancipates not only itself, but also mankind *as a whole.* The proletariat is supposed to play a *universal role* in history. Marx, therefore, describes the proletariat in universal terms. The proletariat, wrote Marx, "is a sphere that has a *universal* character on the basis of its *universal suffering,* which does *not* demand a *particular* right, because it has *not* suffered a *particular* injustice, but *injustice as such* ..." The proletariat is a sphere "that cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all spheres of society and thereby emancipating *all* other spheres of society, which is, in one word, the *complete loss* of man and [which] can therefore win itself back only by the *complete restoration* of man."[64] 'Universal suffering', 'injustice as such', 'the complete loss of man': it comes as no surprise that some authors have observed a parallel between Marx's description of the proletariat and the figure of Christ. In both cases redemption is brought about by a subject that carries all the suffering of the world on his shoulders.[65]

However, a big difference between Christian and proletarian messianism lies in its *ethical* character. The suffering of Christ is *self-chosen,* proletarian suffering, on

the contrary, is not: it is imposed. Proletarian suffering lacks therefore the ethical quality of its Christian counterpart. For this reason one cannot accept the suggestion made by Thomas Meyer, that Marx's theory of the proletariat, via Feuerbach and Moses Hess, would have been inspired by a Fichtean ethos of sacrifice.[66] In his book *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* (The Characteristics of the Present Age) (1806) Fichte strongly emphasizes the ethical choice of the sacrifice. A rational (*vernünftiges*) life, according to Fichte, requires "that a person merges into the species [Gattung] and sacrifices itself for it … there is, therefore, only one virtue, namely to forget oneself as a person, and only one vice, namely to think of oneself …"[67] Free choice is in this case essential, wrote Fichte, because there is "a difference whether one lets oneself be led … as an animal to the slaughter, or freely and noble-minded wants to sacrifice one's life on the altar of eternal life."[68]

Marx's proletariat does not make such a conscious choice to sacrifice itself for the well-being of mankind. Because this class, wrote Marx, comes into action only "when it is forced by its direct situation, by the material necessity, by its chains."[69] For this reason also another thesis of Thomas Meyer is invalid, namely the thesis that for Marx the proletariat should satisfy high moral criteria, or, at least, show "a preparedness for a trans-egoistic change of mentality."[70] For Marx the proletariat does *not* need to have high moral standards, nor even show a preparedness for a 'trans-egoistic change of mentality', because universal human emancipation is, according to Marx, the self-evident consequence of the *self-emancipation* of the proletariat – even if this is based on *pure self-interest.*

It is interesting that Marx, as concerns this self-interested praxis of the proletariat, not only agrees with Lorenz von Stein, but also with Max Stirner, who equally stated that the proletariat should emancipate itself for its *own* interest.[71] Stirner, however, strongly criticized contemporaries, who tried to designate the proletariat (or any other group) as the emancipator of mankind as a whole: "I say, liberate yourself as far as you can, then you have done your part … What is a hindrance for some is not a hindrance to everyone. Don't worry, therefore, about the hindrances of others; it is enough that you get rid of your own. Who has ever succeeded in removing *one* hindrance *for all men*?"[72] Are Stirner's words directed to Marx? That cannot be discounted. In any case Stirner's words – rightly – warn us to remain skeptical about any attempt to ascribe universal qualities to one group or one individual. Indeed, how sound are Marx's arguments for elevating the proletariat to the position of 'emancipator of mankind'? The proletariat was a universal class, he said, because of its 'universal suffering', because it had not suffered a particular injustice, but 'injustice as such', and further because it was 'the total loss

of humanity'. 'Universal', 'as such', 'total' – indeed: it could not be more universal. However, is no greater suffering possible, no greater injustice? Is the proletariat indeed the incarnation of human suffering? This does not seem plausible. And even if this is the case, what could one conclude in terms of the universal emancipation of mankind? Nothing. Marx's statement that the proletariat is the 'complete loss of man' and can *therefore* only win itself back by the 'complete restoration of man' is logical nonsense. It is, in fact, not very plausible that proletarian suffering will transform itself into universal human emancipation. Rather one might expect a slow diminution of this suffering by the introduction of social laws. For Marx's *maximalism*, however, this is not enough. He does not want partial emancipation, but *total* emancipation. The question is why Marx, who was a sharp, logical thinker, used such an implausible and debatable argument. Have emotion and *wishful thinking* prevailed over scientific analysis? This certainly cannot be ruled out. But it is not the only explanation. Marx, again, apparently has become a victim of Hegel's *dialectical logic.* In this logic the dialectical transformation of logically opposed concepts has an important place. Logically opposed concepts, such as the concepts 'complete loss' and 'total restoration', used by Marx, can be deducted directly from each other. The use of this dialectical logic was under Young Hegelians *bon ton.*[73] For Marx, therefore, the temptation to use this method and apply it to the reality of his time, was great. It is clear, however, that reality does not let itself be constrained by the Procrustes bed of dialectical logic and that a 'complete loss of man' (whatever that may be) does not need to lead to a' complete restoration of man'. The universal pretense, ascribed by Marx to the proletariat, seems to be founded on nothing substantial.

CONCLUSION

In his *Introduction* of 1843 Marx introduced the proletariat in his theory as a class that - like Moses did with the Jews - would lead humanity to the promised land of a non-alienated existence. However, the assumptions on which Marx's theory was based, were biased. The predicted sociological polarization of society in bourgeoisie and proletariat did not take place because of the emergence of a new middle class. Although Marx in his later work would predict the emergence of this new middle class, for him this would not be a reason to give up his polarization theory. He simply denies this new middle class any independent status (and opinion) in society, considering it as the mere mouthpiece and helper of the capitalist class which buys its services. Also the *socio-psychological* polarization did not take place in the countries where he had predicted it would take

place (Tsarist Russia was not on his list). Instead of making a revolution, the working class gradually integrated in these societies through a long struggle for emancipation. At the end of his life Marx seemed to be less dogmatic about the necessity of a social revolution. In the preface to the English translation of the first book of *Capital* Friedrich Engels wrote that this study had Marx brought to the conclusion that of the countries of Europe England would possibly be the only country in which the social revolution would take place with peaceful and legal means.[74]

In an earlier stage Marx had already revised his supposition that the proletariat was sufficiently educated to understand the philosophical principles of communist theory and to put them into practice. This had negative implications for the practical perspective of Marx's theory. The revolutionary praxis of the proletariat becomes less a conscious intervention in the historical process and more some kind of an accompanying phenomenon to the necessary historical dialectic between the productive forces and the conditions of production. Although Marx is here not unequivocal: in his later political writings he strongly emphasizes sometimes the creative role of the revolutionary action of the proletariat.

The weakest link in Marx's theory, however, is the supposed *universal* character of the proletarian action. Marx supposes that the proletariat will realize by its revolutionary praxis, together with its own interest, the general interest of mankind. This is based on the inadmissible dialectical *Gedankensprung* (mental leap) that an all-time low of human alienation can be negated only in a climax of human creativity and happiness, something which brings Jürgen Habermas to the – correct – observation: "The completion of the self-consciousness of humanity in the heads of the most humiliated, starved individuals, with the most deficient consciousness, is doubtful…"[75] Marx based the supposed universal mission of the proletariat on the expectation that the proletariat would abolish private property. For Marx this would take away the foundation of his despised civil society and end the separation of state and civil society. Marx expects from the abolition of private property no more and no less than the transformation of the egoistic *bourgeois* into an ethical *citoyen*. In fact, Marx remains an eighteenth century thinker, who – in the tradition of Rousseau, Helvétius, and Condorcet[76] completely reduces social-ethical problems to *social* and *societal* causes. Man is originally good, is his adage, he is only perverted ('alienated') by society. And private property was for him – as it was for Rousseau (but also for Proudhon) - the main stumbling block.

NOTES

[1] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei," *MEW*, Vol. 4, 472.

[2] Friedrich Engels, "Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie," *MEW*, Vol. 1, 522.

[3] Marx and Engels, "Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei," 463.

[4] Werner Sombart, *Sozialismus und soziale Bewegung,* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1908), 7.

[5] Eduard Bernstein, *Der Sozialismus einst und jetzt – Streitfragen des Sozialismus in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart,* (Stuttgart and Berlin: J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger,1922).

[6] Bernstein, *Der Sozialismus einst und jetzt,* 49.

[7] Izaak Brugmans, *Paardenkracht en mensenmacht – Sociaal-economische geschiedenis van Nederland 1795-1940,* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1969), 198.

[8] Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A. Osborne, "The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation?" September 17, 2013, 7. Available at http://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/The_Future_of_Employment.pdf

[9] Martin Nicolaus, "Proletariat and Middle Class in Marx: Hegelian Choreography and the Capitalist Dialectic," in *Studies on the Left,* Vol. 7, No. 1, 1967.

[10] Nicolaus, "Proletariat and Middle Class in Marx," 45-46.

[11] Karl Marx, "Grundrisse," 304-305.

[12] Karl Marx, "Theorien über den Mehrwert," 3. Teil, *MEW*, Vol. 26.3, (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1972), 57.

[13] Karl Marx, "Theorien über den Mehrwert," 2. Teil, *MEW*, Vol. 26.2, (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1972), 576.

[14] In Marx's negative assessment of the new middle class as a 'serving class' we see in fact a continuation of his *contempt* for the old middle class, which represents for him the typical *Spießbürger,* the philistine. According to Georg Adler, "Also already then [in 1845] Marx had a feeling of contempt for the middle class. Some parts of it, like the independent craftsmen, are ruined by the free competition and sink into the proletariat; other parts muddle through. Marx describes their psychology, opposing it to that of the proletariat, as follows: 'Anxiety is the depressed and fearful mood, which is the necessary companion of the shabby activity of their poor earnings. Anxiety thrives in its purest form in the good German citizen, where it is chronic and always the same, miserable and despicable – while the hardship of the proletariat takes on an acute, intense form, pushes it to a life and death struggle, makes it revolutionary and produces, therefore, no anxiety, but passion!" (Georg Adler, "Die Anfänge der Marxschen Sozialtheorie und ihre Beeinflussung durch Hegel, Feuerbach, Stein und Proudhon," in *Festgaben für Adolph Wagner zur siebenzigsten Wiederkehr seines Geburtstages,* (Leipzig: C.F. Winter'sche Verlagshandlung, 1905), 10). Marx's contempt for the middle class had, according to Georg Lukács, its origin in his experience as a journalist with 'the cowardice of the bourgeoisie': "Already the behavior of the shareholders of the 'Rheinische Zeitung', their preparedness to please the authorities by an opportunistic change of course, imposing on Marx to accept, must have been considered by him as a symptom." (Georg Lukács, *Der junge Marx – Seine philosophische Entwicklung von 1840-1844,* (Pfullingen: Verlag Günther Neske, 1965), 36).

[15] Karl Marx, "Das Kapital," 1. Band, *MEW,* Vol. 23, (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1969), 790. Note that Marx here also speaks about the *indignation* of the working class, which refers to the socio-psychological polarization thesis.

[16] Ronald L. Meek, "Marx's 'Doctrine of Increasing Misery'," in Ronald L. Meek, *Economics and Ideology and Other Essays – Studies in the Development of Economic Thought,* (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1967), 122. Meek quotes a certain Mr J.R. Campbell, who gave "the most effective answer I have ever heard to those who deny these facts." Campbell said: "I live in a typical London working-class suburb … and my neighbours are typical London working-class people. If these neighbours of mine are the end-product of a long historical process of 'impoverishment', then all I can say is that their grandfathers and great-grandfathers must have been bloody rich men." (123).

[17] An early example of this reformist, 'step by step' strategy can be found in an article, published in *Die Neue Zeit,* the magazine of the German social-democratic party, in November 1917 - the very month in which in Russia the Bolshevik October Revolution took place. The author wrote: "The 'realization of the philosophy' by the proletariat is an objective process. Who fought with success for a wage increase will look at me with astonishment when I praise him for 'having realized a piece of philosophy'." (Hans Marckwald, "Philosophie und Proletariat," in *Die Neue Zeit,* 36(6), November 9, 1917, 133.

[18] Friedrich Engels, "Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie," 512.

[19] Von Stein, *Der Socialismus and Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs,* respectively 77 and 70.

[20] Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 292.

[21] Eric Voegelin, "The Formation of the Marxian Revolutionary Idea," in *Review of Politics,* Vol. XII, 1950, 296.

[22] Marx, "Das Elend der Philosophie," 131.

[23] Marx, "Das Elend der Philosophie," 133.

[24] In this paragraph I am following the interpretation of Thomas Meyer *Der Zwiespalt in der Marx'schen Emanzipationstheorie – Studie zur Rolle des proletarischen Subjekts,* (Kronberg Ts.: Scriptor Verlag, 1973).

[25] Karl Marx, "Kritische Randglossen zu dem Artikel eines Preussen," *MEW*, Vol. 1, 405.

[26] In the same "Kritische Randglossen" (404-405) Marx wrote, for instance: "What concerns the level of education or the capacity to be educated of the German worker in general, I recall *Weitling's* genial writings [Weitling was a self-taught worker, MHVH], that in their theory were often superior even to *Proudhon's*, although they were inferior in the presentation."

[27] Friedrich Engels, "Fortschritte der Sozialreform auf dem Kontinent," 2. Teil, "Deutschland und die Schweiz," *MEW*, Vol. 1, 495. On December 13, 1844 Engels confirms this once more: "To be brief, socialism has become an actual question in Germany and in the course of a year a strong socialist party has grown … Until now our bulwark has been the bourgeoisie, a fact which will surprise the English reader …" (Friedrich Engels, "Rascher Fortschritt des Kommunismus in Deutschland," 1. Teil, *MEW*, Vol. 2, 510).

[28] Heinrich Heine, "Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland," in Heinrich Heine *Beiträge zur deutschen Ideologie,* with an introduction by Hans Mayer, (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1971), 107.

[29] Heine, "Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland," 109.

[30] Quoted in Leo Kreutzer, *Heine und der Kommunismus,* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 33.

[31] Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung," 385.

[32] On this self-appointed role of the intelligentsia in the labor movement, Joseph Schumpeter wrote: "Labor never craved intellectual leadership but intellectuals invaded labor politics. They had an important contribution to make: they verbalized the movement, supplied theories and slogans for it – class war is an excellent example – made it conscious of itself and in doing so changed its meaning. In solving this task from their own standpoint, they naturally radicalized it, eventually imparting a revolutionary bias to the most bourgeois trade-union practices, a bias most of the non-intellectual leaders at first resented." (Joseph E. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy,* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1947), 153-54).

[33] Von Baader, "Über das dermalige Missverhältnis der Vermögenslosen," 335.

[34] Von Mohl, "Über die Nachteile," 110.

[35] Von Stein, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs,* 355.

[36] Von Stein, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs,* 355.

[37] Von Stein, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen Frankreichs,* 356.

[38] These articles are "Was ist jetzt Gegenstand der Kritik?" and "Die Gattung und die Masse." Both articles are published in Bruno Bauer, *Feldzüge der reinen Kritik,* with an introduction by Hans Martin Sass, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1968).

[39] Bruno Bauer, "Was ist jetzt Gegenstand der Kritik?" in Bruno Bauer, *Feldzüge der reinen Kritik,* op. cit., 212.

[40] Bruno Bauer, "Die Gattung und die Masse," in Bruno Bauer, *Feldzüge der reinen Kritik,* op. cit., 213.

[41] Bauer, "Die Gattung und die Masse," 214. (My emphasis, MHVH).

[42] Max Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum,* Ahlrich Meyer (ed.), (Stuttgart, Philipp Reclam, 1972).

[43] Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum,* 131.

[44] Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum,* 129.

[45] Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum.* Cf. 285-286, where Stirner makes the following remark on socialism and communism: "Everyone will be taken care of and given enough means of subsistence, [and] it will not matter whether one – in a socialist system – will find these in personal property, or – in a communist system – obtains them from a community of goods. The mentality of individuals remains the same, it remains a mentality of dependence. The distributing *justice agency* lets me have only what its sense of justice, its *lovely* care for everyone, prescribes… Whether the property belongs to the community, which gives me a part of it, or to individual owners, is for me the same coercion, because in both cases I cannot decide. On the contrary, communism, by its abolition of all personal property, pushes me even further back into dependence on someone else, namely on the community or the public authority …"

[46] Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum,* 365.

[47] Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum,* 288.

[48] Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum,* 354.

[49] Karl Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung," 390-391.

[50] Paul Vogel attributed this degradation thesis already to Von Stein, in whose theory, "The opposition of both big classes lead to a violent explosion in a social struggle, which, at the same time, leads to a destruction of the middle class. The struggling masses consist of the slow, dumb plebs (*Pöbel*), which is full of hate [and] which starts the struggle with its negative tendency, and the lower middle class, the proletariat, the better element of the mass, which still possesses the feeling of dignity, [and] which decides [on the outcome of] the struggle with its positive tendency, building the basis of a new order." (Paul Vogel, *Hegels Gesellschaftsbegriff und seine geschichtliche Fortbildung durch Lorenz von Stein, Marx, Engels und Lasalle,* (Berlin: Pan-Verlag Rolf Heise, 1925), 149-150). Note that the proletarianization of the middle class is here supposed to be caused by the class struggle, rather than directly by economic causes, something what does not seem plausible.

[51] Von Mohl, Über die Nachteile*,* 109.

[52] Brugmans, *Paardenkracht en mensenmacht,* 61.

[53] Engels, "Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie," 515. In his book *The Condition of the Working Class in England* Engels will repeat this one year later with great emphasis: "Because new industry became important only by transforming the tools into machines, the workshops into factories – and thereby the working middle class into a working proletariat …" (*MEW*, Vol. 2, 250).

[54] Cf. Meyer, *Der Zwiespalt in der Marx'schen Emanzipationstheorie.* In particular 77 ff.

[55] Marx and Engels, "Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei," 471. In 1888 Engels will change the word 'elements of education' (*Bildungselemente*) by 'elements of enlightenment and progress' (*Aufklärungs- und Fortschrittselemente*).

[56] Engels, "Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England," 454.

[57] Engels, "Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England," 454-55.

[58] Engels, "Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England," 430-31.

[59] Marx and Engels, "Die deutsche Ideologie," 77. Cf. also Karl Marx, "Das Kapital," Vol. 1, *MEW*, Vol. 23, 487, where Marx speaks about a "worker exhausted since childhood."

[60] Marx and Engels, "Die deutsche Ideologie," 70.

[61] Marx, "Das Elend der Philosophie," 143.

[62] Marx and Engels, "Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei," 474-475.

[63] Cf. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Vorrede, 14: "To say still a word on *instructing,* how the world should be, therefore philosophy, anyway, always comes too late. As the *thought* of the world it appears at a point after the reality has completed its formation process and has readied itself."

[64] Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung," 390. (My emphasis, MHVH).

[65] Cf. Theodor Steinbüchel, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Geistesgeschichte, I. Sozialismus,* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1950), 119: "Marx transformed Christian original sin into the overall guilt of society in the era of capitalism. He changed the theory of the vicarious suffering of the Lord into the suffering of the proletariat for *all;* he reinterpreted the Christian idea of salvation as the theory of the proletariat as the liberator of the whole human society …" Karl Löwith even saw in the messianism of the proletariat a *double* biblical analogy: on the one hand an analogy with the figure of Christ, on the other hand with the chosen Jewish people: "It is, therefore, no coincidence, that the last

antagonism between the two hostile camps, bourgeoisie and proletariat, resembles the end struggle between Christ and the Antichrist in the last epoch of history, and that the task of the proletariat is analogous to the world historical mission of the chosen people. The universal salvation function of the oppressed class resembles the dialectic of the Cross and the Resurrection …" (Karl Löwith, *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen – die theologischen Voraussetzungen der Geschichtsphilosophie,* op. cit., 48).

[66] Meyer, *Der Zwiespalt in der Marx'schen Emanzipationstheorie,* 34.

[67] J.G. Fichte, *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters,* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1956), 38.

[68] Fichte, *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters,* 66.

[69] Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung," 390.

[70] Meyer, *Der Zwiespalt in der Marx'schen Emanzipationstheorie,* 43.

[71] Cf. Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum,* 287: "All attempts to make the rabble happy … which are inspired by the principle of love, must fail. The rabble can only be helped by egoism, and it must provide this help itself – and it will provide it."

[72] Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum,* 287

[73] Compare, for instance, how Bruno Bauer juggles with the concepts 'humanity' and 'inhumanness': "Christianity … had to … bring enlightenment, because it is the top of *inhumanness* and the religious representation of pure, unlimited, all-encompassing *humanity*." (Bruno Bauer, "Die Fähigkeit der heutigen Juden und Christen, frei zu werden," in Bruno Bauer, *Feldzüge der reinen Kritik,* op. cit., 183-184. (My emphasis, MHVH).

[74] Marx, "Das Kapital," Vol. 1, 40.

[75] Jürgen Habermas, "Zur philosophischen Diskussion um Marx and den Marxismus," in Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie und Praxis – Sozialphilosophische Studien,* (Neuwied and Berlin: Luchterhand, 1969), 333.

[76] Cf. Condorcet, *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain,* (1793), (Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1971), 274: "Quelle est l'habitude vicieuse, l'usage contraire à la bonne foi, quel est même le crime dont on ne puisse montrer l'origine, la cause première, dans la législation, dans les institutions, dans les préjugés du pays où l'on observe cet usage, cette habitude, où ce crime s'est commis?"

Chapter Thirteen

The State: A Moral Beacon?

How can an egoistic *bourgeois* be transformed into an ethical *citoyen*? This was the fundamental question, asked by Marx and some of his predecessors. The answers they gave were diverse. Rousseau considered a social contract the solution, Hegel a metaphysical state, and Schiller the creation of a 'third character' via the play impulse. Marx sought the solution in a merger of state and civil society, which was to take place in communism. Despite these differences there exist also clear similarities between these writers. Rousseau and Hegel, as well as Marx, attributed to *the collectivity* an important role in the moral improvement of the population. For Rousseau the *volonté générale,* the general will, could, eventually, *force* the citizens to behave morally. For Hegel the state was the incarnation of a moral Idea. Marx expected a moral improvement of the citizens from the abolition of private property under communism. In his later works he will emphasize that, after the revolution, the capitalist bourgeoisie will try to recapture its lost possessions, and that, therefore, the proletariat should install a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' to safeguard its revolution. This dictatorship has to be taken literally: in the government of the new communist state there is no place for the bourgeoisie. For Marx this dictatorship, which he regards as temporary, is a necessary step toward the creation of the *new man,* who is no longer alienated. For Rousseau, Hegel, as well as Marx, the state plays an important role in the moral improvement of the population. One might find such a role acceptable if it was restricted to the creation of the *conditions* for moral behavior. However, there exists a clear tendency to let the state also prescribe the *positive norms* of such moral behavior. I will criticize this position in the following paragraphs, pleading instead for an *indirect* responsibility of the state for the moral perfection of the population. The best way to organize this indirect responsibility is a strict respect for *human and political rights* by the government and state agencies.

To bridge the dualism between *bourgeois* and *citoyen* Rousseau sought a solution in a social contract which would lead to the creation of a moral 'general will'. This theory, however, had two deficiencies. In the first place Rousseau assumed that a section of the population would *spontaneously* be focused on the general interest – a supposition for which there was no proof. In the second place 'non-ethical' individuals would be *forced* by the general will to change their behavior and act according to the general will. They would in this way become 'free'. This part of Rousseau's theory in particular has often been criticized. He has even been accused of being a trailblazer and pioneer of totalitarian systems. Isaiah Berlin points to the fact that Rousseau used a *positive* concept of freedom: what is at stake for Rousseau is not the creation of a zone of individual freedom in which the individual is protected against government interference (Berlin calls this 'negative freedom'), but the realization of the rational, moral 'true self' of the individual.[1] Because the general will is the incarnation of this 'true self', it can force individuals to listen to their 'true self' and become 'free'. It is clear that one finds oneself on a slippery, and dangerous slope, when the state – even if it is a democratic state – can prescribe for individuals what is their 'true' freedom. By identifying the individual's morality with the 'general will' there remains little space for the individual's own interpretation. It is, therefore, no surprise that during the French Revolution Rousseau's theory – although against his original intentions – could be misused to legitimate the state terror of the 'moral' revolutionary state.

Schiller sought the solution to the separation of *bourgeois* and *citoyen* in a completely different direction. He did not plead for transforming the bourgeois into a citoyen by signing a social contract, because, in his opinion, the citoyen, called by him a 'barbarian', would be forced too much into suppressing his feelings. Schiller proposed overcoming the dualism of bourgeois and citoyen through the 'third character' (*dritte Charakter*). The prototype of this 'third character' was for him the artist, who harmoniously combined his 'sense impulse' and 'form impulse' in the 'play impulse'. Schiller expected that this aestheticization would lead also to a moralization. However, aesthetics and morals are two different dimensions of human existence and an aesthetic lifestyle does not necessarily lead to a moral lifestyle. Later Schiller will give up this theory under the influence of Kant. His 'Realm of the Beautiful Appearance' (*Reich des schönen Scheins*) was, apparently, not appropriate for bridging the dualism between bourgeois and citoyen.

The solution promoted by Hegel for bridging this dualism, seemed, at first sight, more realistic, because he attributed to the sphere to which the bourgeois belongs – civil society – its own place in his political philosophy. For him civil society was not something purely negative, because he considered it as the cradle of *individual freedom.* However, Hegel will embed civil society in an all-compassing metaphysical theory of the state. Civil society loses thereby its relative independence and is reduced to a stage (*Begriffsmoment*) in the logical development of the ethical state. This has consequences for the meaning of individual freedom. Like Rousseau, Hegel uses a *positive* concept of freedom. Freedom is not an individual sphere of freedom, protected from interference by the state, but it is essentially a substantial ethical freedom which finds its concrete realization only in the state.[2] While Rousseau proposed the objective moral character of the *volonté générale,* Hegel proposed the immanent moral character of the state. Hegel mediates the opposition between bourgeois and citoyen by elevating (*aufheben*) the bourgeois in the citoyen. It is clear that this relationship between ethics and politics leads to the same problem as in Rousseau. By situating the moral goal of individuals in the state there is a great danger that the state – claiming to be the sphere of realized morality (*Sittlichkeit*) and, therefore, the sphere of the 'true freedom' of the citizens – tries to impose itself in an authoritarian way.

One could object that this interpretation of Hegel does not totally do justice, because Hegel also left space for the individual conscience and he even formulates the condition that the individual conscience should agree with the normativity of the state.[3] However, the problem is that Hegel does not provide criteria for resolving a situation in which the individual conscience comes into conflict with the norms imposed by the state. Taking into account his low opinion of anything that is 'subjective', the individual conscience will quickly lose out against the incarnation of normative objectivity: the state. Shlomo Avineri spoke out against a "prevalent built-in preconception holding that Hegel advocated an authoritarian, if not outright totalitarian, form of government."[4] According to him, "it has to be pointed out that on no account can Hegel's theory be so construed as to refer to any existing state; it is the *idea* of the state with which Hegel is dealing and any existing state cannot be anything but a mere approximation to the idea."[5] In my opinion, Avineri's argument misses the point, because the question is not so much what Hegel *advocates*, but to what *results* his vision of the relationship between ethics and politics leads (and Hegel himself would possibly agree with this, because his own ethical theory confirms that it is not the intentions, but the results that have to

be considered). It is certainly true that Hegel refers to the Idea of the state. But in his Philosophy of Right this Idea is concretized in a particular way: one can easily recognize the basic structure of the Prussian state of his time, complemented by some Anglo-Saxon constitutional elements.[6] Hegel, therefore, runs the risk that his theory might be used as a legitimation theory for a state, which pretends to be a moral beacon for its citizens. It is, therefore, no surprise that Hegel's ideas about the state were enthusiastically acclaimed in the former German Democratic Republic – a modern-day heir to the Prussian state.[7]

COMMUNISM AS 'TRUE FREEDOM'

Marx's solution to end the opposition between bourgeois and citoyen is quite different from the solutions offered by Rousseau, Schiller, and Hegel. He does not seek a solution in a social contract, nor in the aestheticization of politics or in an elevation (*Aufhebung*) of civil society in the state. He pleads for a *fusion* of state and civil society. By reducing the separated spheres of state and civil society to *one* sphere it would no longer be necessary, nor possible, for individuals to lead double lives as bourgeois and citoyen. In his opinion this fusion of state and civil society would be effectuated after the abolition of private property under communism. Marx's utopian vision of the future is based on an optimistic anthropology which assumes man's natural sociability. Private ownership (for the mature Marx: private ownership of the means of production) would stand in the way of the spontaneous development of this sociability. The duality of bourgeois and citoyen is, therefore, for Marx a *temporary* problem – linked with the historical phase of capitalism. In a communist society self-interest and morals, particular interest and general interest, would coincide, because the people would deploy their talents in service to the community. Marx's vision, in itself, has no negative consequences for the freedom of individuals. In Marx's communist society of the future there is no need to have a state as a 'moral beacon', because individuals will *spontaneously* develop their 'true moral self'. Unlike Rousseau and Hegel Marx defends an *anarchistic* point of view: in communism the state will 'wither away'.

The problems concern, therefore, less Marx's ideal for the future, than the *road* which will lead to it. "Between capitalist and communist society," wrote Marx, "lies the period of revolutionary change from the one to the other. With it there is a corresponding period of political transformation during which the state cannot be other than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."[8] It is clear that this 'dictatorship of the proletariat' will have negative consequences for the bourgeoisie which will lose

many of its former rights and freedoms. This oppression is legitimated by the ideal of the communist future that is supposed to bring 'true freedom' to *all* citizens, the bourgeoisie included. The fate of the bourgeoisie during the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' resembles greatly that of the 'not ethical' individuals in Rousseau's contract state: they are *forced* to be 'free'. However, what Marx did not foresee was that the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' could turn against those for whom and in the name of whom it was established: the proletariat itself. This is exactly what has happened in those countries where the communists seized power. The long line of oppression, which begins with the bloody repression of the revolt in Kronstadt (1921) - via the Gulag, the Great Purge, the Holodomor, Budapest '56 and Prague '68 – to, finally, the repression of the independence movement in Lithuania (1990) is not coincidental. It is structural for a state which claims to understand what is the people's 'true moral freedom'.

NO ETHICALLY NEUTRAL STATE: BACK TO KANT

I have criticized the way in which Marx and his predecessors have tried to end the duality of bourgeois and citoyen. My criticism concerned especially the role they assign in this process to the state. This does not mean that I would like to plead for an ethically neutral or a-moral state. I do not oppose the relationship between ethics and politics. On the contrary, I think that politics is an eminently ethical activity. Where I diverge from these authors is the *way in which* they relate ethics and politics. I think it unacceptable that a state interferes directly and positively to promote the moral perfection of its citizens. The state has, at best, a function as a *facilitator,* creating the optimal conditions for the development of humaneness, but it should not sanction or prescribe a particular ethics.

Kant especially has defended a similar position. According to Kant the essence of politics is not the promotion of happiness or the morality of the people, but guaranteeing their liberty. "No-one can force me," wrote Kant, "to be happy … but everyone may seek his happiness in the way he thinks appropriate, so long as he does not hinder the freedom of others … to strive toward a similar goal."[9] A paternalistic state that prescribes for its citizens a certain ('virtuous') way of life treats its citizens as under age children and tramples, therefore, on the basic principle of politics: individual freedom. Kant is often reproached for having developed a theory of an ethically neutral Night Watchman State. Galston, however, rightly argued that Kant, in effect, attributed to the state responsibility for the moral perfection of citizens, but that this responsibility always remained *indirect,* because he did not want to prejudice the principle of individual

autonomy.[10] Kant's rejection of state paternalism did not prevent him from pleading for state responsibility for the moral education of citizens.

The ethical responsibility of the state has grown intensely through the modern welfare state. Instead of the *fusion* of state and civil society, wished for by Marx, we can observe since the end of the nineteenth century – and in particular after World War II – a process in which state and civil society have increasingly become *interlocked.* This interlocking and mutual influencing have reached, for the time being, a climax in the modern welfare state. Spheres that until recently were completely regulated by the market mechanism have thereby entered the sphere of politics. However, equal access to welfare services is not the only important issue: there is also the question of the redistribution of income and wealth. The state cannot pretend to behave as an ethically neutral agency, but is increasingly forced to make political choices which have to be legitimated by principles of justice, such as, for instance, are proposed by John Rawls.[11] The relationship between ethics and politics in the modern welfare state is beyond dispute. The German sociologist Max Weber already wrote in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Economy and Society), (1923) that the – then recent - introduction of universal suffrage in Weimar Germany had increased the pressure on the state to assume an ethical character. According to him "the property-less masses are not served with formal equality … before the law. For them the law and government should serve an equalization of economic and social opportunities vis-à-vis property owners, and they can only fulfil this function when they assume a far-reaching informal, 'ethical' character with respect to content …"[12]

HUMAN RIGHTS AS A CONDITION FOR PERSONAL HUMANITY

Should we deplore this increased linkage of politics and ethics in modern society? No, on condition that the ethos embodied in politics restricts itself to the creation of conditions and does not prescribe for citizens specific sets of moral action. In practice this means that the state takes care to create suitable conditions for the free development of personal humanity. In this context the defense of *human rights* takes a prominent place. These rights do not guarantee an ethical attitude in citizens, nor do they prescribe this. However, by guaranteeing and defending human rights one creates optimal conditions for this and it is left to the individual to choose whether he or she uses the opportunity provided to improve him or herself morally and in which way.[13] Human rights should be understood here in the broadest sense. Not only are the *classical* fundamental rights (freedom of conscience, religion, and expression, press freedom, and freedom of association and

assembly) of importance, but also the rights of political participation and – last but not least – the basic social rights, as are realized in the modern welfare state. Because these last ones go beyond merely guaranteeing the material satisfaction of needs. They also have non-material implications, because they uphold as well as they can individual freedom and autonomy also in times of economic decline.[14] By taking human rights as the moral standard for its political action the state promotes in an indirect, and not in a direct, way the personal humanity of citizens. Politics becomes morally relevant, because it has to take care of the creation of optimal material and non-material conditions for the physical and moral well-being of citizens. At the same time this indirect connection between ethics and politics leaves the citizen the individual moral freedom to decide him- or herself how to live a 'good life'.

NOTES

[1] Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 118-172.

[2] Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts,* Paragraph 258, 215: "The state is … [the] absolute and unmoved end in itself, in which freedom comes to its highest development, [and] this ultimate end has the highest right in relation to individuals, whose *highest duty* it is to be members of the state." Cf. also Paragraph 150, 147: "*What* man has to do, [and] *what* are the duties which he should fulfil to be virtuous, is easy to say in an ethical (*sittliches*) community – he should do nothing other than what in his situation is sketched out [and] clearly expressed, and [therefore] known to him."

[3] This argument is used, for instance, by Joachim Ritter. He points to the fact that for Hegel the state is only based on freedom when it leaves the citizen the possibility of moral autonomy: "For Hegel the reception of Kant's Morality (*Moralität*) in his Philosophy of Right has a fundamental and constitutive meaning for the concept of law and the state: they are based on freedom only in the case that the individual as 'I' in his subjectivity can remain himself in the self-determination of morality and conscience …" (Joachim Ritter, "Moralität und Sittlichkeit – Zu Hegels Auseinandersetzung mit der Kantischen Ethik," in Joachim Ritter, *Metaphysik und Politik – Studien zu Aristoteles und Hegel,* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969), 284.

[4] Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 176.

[5] Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State,* 177.

[6] There is a never-ending debate among Hegel scholars on the question of whether Hegel in his Philosophy of Right defended the reactionary Prussian state. Although accusations, that his theories prefigured the totalitarian Nazi state, seem to be too far-fetched, it is clear that his personal behavior, as well as his theories supported the Prussian status-quo.

According to Herbert Marcuse, "Hegel's denunciation of J.F. Fries, one of the leaders of the insurgent German youth movement, his defense of the *Karlsbader Beschlüsse* (1819), with their wholesale persecutions of every liberal act or utterance (arbitrarily labeled with the then current term of abuse, 'demagogic'), his apologia for strong censorship, for the suppression of academic freedom, and for restricting all trends towards some form of truly representative government have all been quoted in confirmation of the charge." (Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution – Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory,* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 178-179). For the debate between Hegel's critics and his defenders see Walter Kaufmann (ed.), *Hegel's Political Philosophy,* (New York: Atherton Press, 1970).

[7] For instance, Heinz Krumpel, a Hegel specialist in the former communist German Democratic Republic, said he agreed with "Hegel's basic position, according to which the state as the incarnation of the general will does not suppress the individual will, but the individual will, that is man with his subjective intentions, conditions, takes up the general will, the societal content and realizes it in his actions, with the result that the 'moral' (*das Moralische*) finds its true destination in the ethical (*Sittlichen*). This opinion," continued Krumpel, "is also of importance under socialist conditions." (Heinz Krumpel, *Zur Moralphilosophie Hegels,* (Berlin/DDR: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1972), 95). In another East German book on the relationship between ethics and politics one can find the same Hegelian conception of a 'state ethics'. "For the socialist citizen of the GDR," wrote the author, "there exists no contradiction between the socialist moral norms that he has accepted and that determine his actions, and the demands of the socialist state. The detrimental separation of society, state, and citizen, which is detrimental for the workers [and is] typical of capitalism, is abolished in socialism." (Eberhard Fromm, *Politik und Moral – Zur Kritik der imperialistischen politischen Ethik,* (Berlin/DDR: Dietz Verlag, 1970), 23).

[8] Karl Marx, "Kritik des Gothaer Programms," *MEW*, Vol. 19, 28.

[9] Immanuel Kant, "Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie wahr sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis," in Immanuel Kant, *Kleinere Schriften zur Geschichtsphilosophie, Ethik und Politik,* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1973), 87-88.

[10] William Galston, "Defending Liberalism," in *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 76, September 1982, 621-629.

[11] An important contribution to the modern discussion has been made by John Rawls, who in his *Theory of Justice* (London and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), tried to develop a theory of justice for the modern welfare state.

[12] Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft,* 2. Halbband, (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1964), 721.

[13] Cf. Otfried Höffe, "Die Menschenrechte als Prinzipien politischer Humanität," in Otfried Höffe, *Sittlich-politische Diskurse,* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), 98-110.

[14] The Dutch philosopher Trudy van Asperen turned this argument upside down. According to her the welfare state would be motivated by a utilitarian maximalization of happiness and would therefore undermine the autonomy of citizens. For a critique of this argument see Marcel H. Van Herpen "Het utilisme en de verzorgingsstaat – een kritiek op Van Asperen," (Utilitarianism and the Welfare State – A Critique of Van Asperen), in *Filosofie & Praktijk,* 3, No. 1, March 1982, 38-46.

Chapter Fourteen

Marx's Critique of the Market: Was Marx Right after All?

MARX'S CRITIQUE OF THE MARKET

Marx can be criticized because of his too optimistic anthropological assumptions, his utopian vision of the future, his optimism about man's supposed inborn altruism, and his ideas about the 'withering away' of the state under socialism. There is, however, yet another point which has to be mentioned here and that is his identification of capitalism with the market economy. Because of this identification the abolition of capitalism was for him synonymous with the abolition of the market. This policy has been put into practice with disastrous results in the former Soviet Union and the countries of the former communist bloc, where a centrally planned state economy was installed. It is interesting that the young Marx had already criticized the market economy and that this critique of the market *preceded* his criticism of capitalism. The market was for him identical to civil society, which he so vehemently attacked in his critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right and in *On the Jewish Question*. This criticism is very *moralistic* in tone and has little to do with his later political-economic analyses of capitalism.

In *On the Jewish Question,* for instance, he described the morally detracting influence which the market economy would have on the people, calling them 'depraved', 'uncultivated', and 'unsocial'. The market economy, he wrote, had the consequence that man "considers other people as a tool, degrades himself to a tool, at the mercy of external powers."[1] Such a negative view of the market economy was in that period *bon ton* among socialist critics of society. The first part of the nineteenth century was the heyday of *laissez-faire* liberalism and the principle of free competition had attained the status of unshakeable dogma. Marx and kindred spirits attacked the unbridled competition, which

characterized the market, because of the social excesses to which it led. We can observe the same critical stance in the works of Moses Hess and Friedrich Engels, published in the same period. In his article Über das Geldwesen (On the Moneysystem) Moses Hess called his contemporaries "social predators, who in free competition sanction … the war of all against all."[2] And in his *Umrisse* Friedrich Engels spoke about the "honorless war of competition,"[3] and, some pages later, about "competition or the shrewd right of the strongest."[4] Neither capitalism, nor even private property, but *competition* – the foundation of the free market – was therefore the main target of socialist writers before 1848.[5] It is, therefore, no surprise that Friedrich Engels in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* proclaimed the end of competition: "Necessity forces them [the workers] to abolish not only one element of competition, but competition itself – and they will do this."[6]

ROMANTIC CRITICISM OF THE 'COLDNESS' OF THE COMPETITION SOCIETY

This criticism of competition had clearly *romantic* roots. There existed in early nineteenth century Germany a tendency to regard the 'competition society' as a society in which 'coldness' (*Gefühlskälte*) dominated. Spontaneous, warm feelings – so dear to the Romantic soul - would be suppressed for unilateral cultivation of rationality, which was focused entirely on the making of profit. Engels, for instance, spoke about "rationality which is, in particular, promoted by the selfish mentality of the English bourgeois, who has made selfishness into his dominant passion and has concentrated all his emotional power on the single point of greed …"[7] In this critique we can detect a nostalgia for the ideal world which would have existed before the emergence of competitive society, when economic relations were – supposedly - not yet based on individualism and egoism, but on a spontaneous, warm, and altruistic sense of community. Individualism, competition, and private property – the very foundations of the market economy – were considered as the ugly outcomes of a universal egoism. For instance, Adam Müller (1779-1829), a well-known German political economist, rejected Roman law, because it would defend "absolute exclusive private ownership."[8] And Novalis (1772-1801), a German Romantic poet, wrote: "The perfect citizen lives entirely in the state – he has no property outside the state … Every citizen is a servant of the state, only as such does he have an income."[9] Vilification of the market, considered to be the sphere of selfish interests, and idealization and glorification of the state, considered to be the sphere of solidarity and altruism, went hand in hand.

Despite its romantic undertones, this early critique of the market economy, which unduly glorified the past, was not wholly without truth. In his magnum opus *Philosophie des Geldes* (The Philosophy of Money) the German sociologist Georg Simmel argued, for instance, that in a market economy feelings are progressively repressed in favor of an increasing rationality. He ascribed this phenomenon to the fact that the satisfaction of needs – to which feelings are connected – becomes an ever longer process through the use of money and the functioning of the market. In the market many goals take on the character of *means* for more distant goals and thereby diminish feelings, while rationality increases.[10] Another sociologist, Norbert Elias, described this same process in terms of the greater *interdependence* which would emerge in a market economy, leading to the necessity for greater *self-control* and *affect control.*[11] Although for Marx the romantic criticism of the market economy played a less important role than for Moses Hess and Friedrich Engels, it is present even at an early stage. His criticism is in particular a *moral* criticism of the competition mechanism of the market. It is, therefore, no surprise that Marx's later criticism of capitalism seems to be a logical sequel to this early criticism of the market. Criticism of the market transforms itself smoothly into a criticism of capitalism.

THE MARKET AND THE EMERGENCE OF CIVIL FREEDOMS

However, the question is whether capitalism and the market economy are the Siamese twins Marx would have us believe them to be. This question is pertinent because the experience of the defunct Soviet Union has proved that a market economy is superior to a centrally planned economy. The inefficiency of a centrally planned economy after the phase of initial industrialization, when the aim is to satisfy consumer needs, is a well-known fact. The abolition of the market in a centrally planned economy leads to low productivity and a defective allocation of goods and services - a fact which was finally admitted also in the Soviet Union during Gorbachev's perestroika.[12] However, the market brings not only efficiency, it has other consequences also. Hegel already referred to the fact that civil society with its free competition led to the development of individual freedom. Modern authors have also emphasized the fact that a market economy leads not only to economic, but also to political freedom. A market economy seems to be a precondition for the development of a pluralistic political system in which individual freedom can flourish and human rights can also be guaranteed.

One of the authors who emphasized this political function of the market, is

Milton Friedman of the famous Chicago School of Economics. He not only considered "the market as a direct component of freedom,"[13] but also assumed an "indirect relation between the market arrangements and political freedom."[14] Ideas like these are aired not only by conservatives or liberals. On the left also one can find writers, who consider the market the basis of individual and political freedom. Lucien Goldmann, for instance, a French Marxist philosopher, emphasized that all central values of the Enlightenment have their origin in the market. "In the socialist society of the future," wrote Goldmann, "Marx saw the heritage and continuation of bourgeois humanism. It has now become clear, however, that with the suppression of the market economy, which provides the basis of bourgeois society, the principal values of its humanism are endangered too."[15] Goldmann referred explicitly to the situation in the countries of 'really existing socialism'. "It remains true," he wrote, "that the experience of forty years of socialist society proves that the abolition of exchange and market production in a society with an economy entirely planned by the central authority poses a most serious threat to freedom, equality, toleration – all the great values of the Enlightenment."[16]

UNLIMITED COMMODIFICATION?

However, the market is not only the cradle of liberty, tolerance, and formal equality. Inherent in the market system is also a tendency of commodification: on the market things are exchanged against money, they become commodities, sellable products. As long as these commodities are just 'things': products of one's labor, there is no problem. However, Marx observed that in capitalist society this process of commodification had a tendency to increase - with devastating effects on the quality of human life. His major example was the worker, who, forced to sell his labor force as a commodity, did alienating work in noisy, polluted factories. The slave trade, buying and selling human beings as commodities, was, of course, a much more extreme example. The slave trade no longer not exists, and in Europe and America the old noisy and polluting factories have also disappeared. But if one would think that in modern, 'civilized' capitalism this process of creeping commodification has disappeared also, one is mistaken. The American philosopher Michael Sandel has shown that Marx's critique is still extremely relevant. According to him, "The reach of markets, and market-oriented thinking, into aspects of life traditionally governed by nonmarket norms is one of the most significant developments of our time."[17] Sandel gives many examples of how markets crowd out morals. "Are there some things that money should not be able to buy?" he asks. Of

course, is his answer. And he gives some examples, such as friendship, the Nobel Prize, or an Oscar. Friendship that is bought degrades genuine friendship.[18] The same would be true if one could buy a Nobel Prize or an Oscar. The act of buying would degrade it, because scientific or artistic prestige is something one cannot buy. However, there are many other things left in which this degradation is less obvious and where market norms have begun to penetrate spheres that previously were protected from such an intrusion. He gives the example of blood donation. In the U.K., as in other European countries, blood for transfusion is given by unpaid volunteers, motivated by civic altruism. In the U.S. blood donors are paid. Blood becomes a commodity. The effect is that altruist donors no longer volunteer and that it is the poor, in particular, who become the sellers on the 'blood market'. The effect is not only a redistribution of blood from the poor to the rich, which offends one's sense of fairness, but also a diminution of the civic spirit of altruism in society at large. Another example is that U.S. companies began to take out life insurance policies on their employees, which had the perverse effect that firms were able to profit from the death of their workers. Sandel commented: "allowing companies a financial stake in the demise of their employees is hardly conducive to workplace safety. To the contrary, a cash-strapped company with millions of dollars due upon the death of its workers has a perverse incentive to skimp on health and safety measures."[19] Sandel concludes his book with the words, "and so, in the end, the question of markets is really a question about how we want to live together. Do we want a society where everything is up for sale? Or are there certain moral and civic goods that markets do not honor and money cannot buy?"[20] Who does not hear in this an echo of Marx's criticism of the 'depraved' and 'unsocial' market', which tends to crowd out humane feelings of altruism?

UNBRIDLED MARKET FORCES: A DANGER?

In the Preface to the first volume of *Capital,* published in 1867, Marx wrote that it had become a habit to treat Hegel as a 'dead dog' (*ein toter Hund*). At that time, indeed, Hegel's fame had faded. Most philosophers, of course, run the risk of such a fate, because the course of time often makes their ideas obsolete. After the demise of the Soviet Union, considered to be the 'heir' of Marxist ideas, it had become *bon ton* to treat Marx himself as a 'dead dog'. However, does he really deserve to be treated as such? The era of state socialism has, of course, passed. It is definitively over. But does this mean that a capitalist market economy, as it exists, is the only remaining alternative? This is not so definite. The Great Depression, ushered in by the stock market crash of 1929, had already given us

a warning that unbridled market forces could be extremely destructive. After the Second World War a combination of Keynesian politics, the thirty years' post-war economic boom, and the building of the welfare state, created the illusion that these risks were definitively under control. The two energy crises of the 1970s were the first signal that this was not the case. But we had to wait for the year 2008, when a housing bubble in the United States first led to a banking crisis and then to a systemic crisis and a debt crisis, to receive a wake-up call. The crisis almost ended in catastrophe. If the demise of the Soviet Union was due to an over-reliance on the state, the 2008 systemic crisis was due to the contrary: an over-reliance on the markets as self-regulating systems. It all started in the 1980s, when Western economies became increasingly deregulated. The pioneers of this deregulation were Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom. It was copied elsewhere – even by left-leaning governments.

The Great Recession, which began in 2008, has led to a renewed interest in Marx. In 2011, for instance, Terry Eagleton published a book, titled *Why Marx Was Right.* In this book Eagleton asked the rhetorical question: "What if it were not Marxism that is outdated but capitalism itself?"[21] In 2013, Wolfgang Streeck, a professor of sociology at the University of Cologne, published a book, titled *Gekaufte Zeit – Die vertagte Krise des demokratischen Kapitalismus* (Bought Time – The Postponed Crisis of Democratic Capitalism),[22] which immediately became a bestseller and the subject of a vigorous debate in Germany. In his book Streeck also praised Marx. "In any case," he wrote, "I am convinced that one cannot understand the actual development of today's modern societies without using certain key concepts derived from Marx – and that this will be increasingly the case, as the driving role, played by the progressively developing capitalist market economy in the emerging global society, will become clearer."[23] Streeck went on to plead for a "democracy without capitalism, at least without the capitalism we know."[24] And he added, "Today, democratization would mean building institutions through which markets can be brought again under social control: labor markets which leave a place for social life, markets for goods which do not destroy nature, credit markets which do not seduce the massive production of unrealistic promises."[25] Twenty years after the end of communism in Europe Marx was making a victorious comeback. This renewed interest in Marx was also observed by Walter Laqueur, who wrote:

> "We are told these days that Karl Marx – one of the most influential thinkers of the nineteenth century, if not the single most important one – is enjoying a kind of renaissance. This is attributed by some to the great economic crisis that began in 2008 and destroyed considerable wealth around the world. Given that this crisis is seen widely as a crisis of capitalism, it is natural that many people

would think of Marx, who was of course the greatest critic of capitalism in history."[26]

The Great Recession of 2008 has taught us, indeed, that modern, global capitalism is not the meek animal - tamed by governments, Keynesian economics, and international institutions - as it was presented by leading economists in the post-World War II period. In his book *The Great Degeneration – How Institutions Decay and Economies Die,* the British historian Niall Ferguson quoted John Mack, former CEO of the investment bank Morgan Stanley, who, in 2009 - one year after the beginning of the crisis – exclaimed, almost desperately: "We cannot control ourselves. You have to step in and control [Wall] Street."[27] It was a recognition by an insider that the bankers' self-regulation of financial markets had failed and that capitalism needed control and regulation from outside. John Mack, of course, was not asking for a Soviet style government control, but, ironically, his demand in a way echoed the young Marx's complaint that man, in a market economy, "considers other people as a tool, degrades himself to a tool, at the mercy of external powers." Certainly, the solutions proposed by Marx and later Marxists are no longer viable. However, it is clear that the *problem,* signaled by Marx, is still on the political agenda: a market economy – if it is not politically controlled – may become a threatening, external power.

IMMISERATION DID NOT TAKE PLACE - OR DID IT?

Another point that deserves a closer view here is Marx's immiseration or pauperization theory (*Verelendungstheorie*). We have seen that this theory is the corollary of Marx's polarization thesis, which states that the immanent dynamic of market forces will lead progressively to the development of two classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat, while the intermediary middle classes will gradually disappear. This polarization would be accompanied by an increase in inequality: the rich becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer. During the last century it has become a received opinion that Marx's immiseration theory was fundamentally biased. And indeed, the facts seemed to contradict Marx's predictions. From the end of the nineteenth century the situation of the working classes gradually started to improve: instead of suffering an ever worsening fate, they received decent wages, got better houses, were paid old-age pensions, and got access to health care and education. This improvement was partly due to a mobilization of the working classes, who began to organize themselves in trade unions and political parties. It was also partly the consequence of the *fear,* which this mobilization instilled

in conservative circles. German chancellor Bismarck, for instance, who had previously banned the Social Democratic Party, was the first to introduce social laws in Europe. Whatever the reasons, no one could deny that the fate of the working class, instead of deteriorating, was improving over time. The apotheosis of this development was the modern welfare state, built after the Second World War.

This led to theories, such as those developed by Simon Kuznets in the 1950s, that an increase in economic inequality was only a temporary accompaniment of economic development. In the long run, according to him, inequality would decrease. It seemed, therefore, as though one was living in the best of all possible worlds. Technological change and market opportunities could temporarily increase the divide between the rich and the poor, but, in the long run, inequalities in income had a tendency to decrease.[28] This vision led to new political legitimation theories, such as those developed by John Rawls in *A Theory of Justice*, in which Rawls formulated the 'maximin criterion', which stated that advantages of the more fortunate were legitimate if these promoted the well-being of the least fortunate.[29] The question, of course, was whether it could be proved that actions of the more fortunate benefitted the least fortunate. The rich, of course, were eager to point to the supposed 'trickle-down' effect of their wealth. Although, in 1987, Allan Bloom wrote on the U.S. that "the country is largely middle class now,"[30] new developments, starting after the two energy crises in the 1970s, began to challenge this optimistic vision.

One of the first to give a wake-up call was Lester Thurow, who, in his book *The Zero-Sum Society* (1980), predicted with great clairvoyance the advent of greater inequality in the United States. He claimed two factors to be responsible for this: first, the decline of the welfare state's transfer payments to the poor, and second, the fact that educated, middle class women began to enter the labor market.

> "Labor force participation rates are now rising most rapidly for women who are married to men with higher incomes," wrote Thurow. "Although income transfer payments have stopped the economic gap between the rich and the poor from rising since World War II, they cannot continue to rise as fast as they have over the past two decades. With income transfer payments slowing down and working wives contributing to inequality, the distribution of family income will start moving toward inequality in the 1980s and 1990s."[31]

Thurow wrote his book before the advent of Reaganomics in America and Thatcherism in England. However, he was already warning: "If the current demands for tax cuts on capital income to accelerating economic growth were to be met, this situation would

become much worse."[32] Thurow's predictions came true: the welfare state became less generous for the poor, while educated women - increasingly inclined to 'assortative mating', marrying high achievers - entered the labor market: two trends which enhanced economic inequality.[33] However, Thurow was not a prophet: he could not envisage other, even more revolutionary changes, which would radically transform Western, and even global society in the next three decades. These changes were threefold. In the first place, the unfettered liberalization of the financial markets, ushered in by Reagan and Thatcher, a liberalization which was accompanied by high frequency trading on the stock markets – opening up new possibilities for manipulation. In the second place, the high-tech revolution, leading to the computerization and automation of labor processes and the development of the Internet economy. In the third place, the process of globalization, which made it possible to move not only whole industries, but providers of sophisticated services also to low-wage countries. These three revolutions, taken together, had a huge impact. They led to a radical change in the power relationship between capital and labor in the U.S. and Europe with enduring negative effects on economic equality. The liberalization of the financial markets made it possible to move capital flows around the world without much constraint. The new freedom became a tool in the hands of the capital owners, pushing and sometimes blackmailing workers to accept lower wages if they wanted to avoid their production sites from being moved abroad. The technological revolution amplified this process: through computerization not only many low qualified jobs disappeared, but increasingly middle class white collar jobs also.[34] On top of this came the Great Recession of 2008 which led governments to bail out banks that were 'too big to fail' – leading to an unprecedented debt crisis that hit in particular the lower and middle classes, who had to pay the bill through higher taxes and reduced welfare benefits. Resulting high unemployment led to a further weakening of the positions of both blue collar and white collar workers. Factory workers in particular were trapped. In 2007 for instance - one year before the Great Recession - the base wage of an American autoworker was around $28 an hour. In 2014 new hires could expect only $15.[35] This means that in a short, 7-year period the wage was roughly halved.

The winners in this zero-sum game were the top 1 percent. In the United States "the income share of the top 1 percent of households rose from 9 percent in 1970 to 24 percent in 2007."[36] The income share of the top 1 percent thus almost *tripled.* This process was not even interrupted during the crisis years 2009-2010, when "for 99 percent of Americans, incomes increased by a mere 0.2 percent. Meanwhile, the incomes of the top 1 percent jumped by 11.6 percent."[37] The cumulative result of this development was, indeed, devastating. It was the *finance industry* in particular which created new opportunities for itself. The role of the finance industry is to make contracts which are

used to pool funds, transfer resources, share risks, and provide information. It is paid for these services. A new fact is that the cost of these services have literally exploded in recent years. In a study Thomas Philippon of New York University indicated that "the cost of intermediation grows from 2% [of GDP] to 6% from 1870 to 1930. It shrinks to less than 4% in 1950, grows slowly to 5% in 1980, and then increases rapidly to almost 9% in 2010."[38] Philippon asked: "So why is the non-financial sector transferring so much income to the financial sector?" His answer is that this is caused by an explosion of high-frequency trading. In the U.S. the derivatives market has grown exponentially. In fact the customer is paying for this increased complexity, while the quality of the service – which is 'to beat the market' – has not increased. "Would you pay for the pleasure to have a complex and interconnected computer," asked Philippon, "or would you only care about its speed, design and battery life?" In fact, the non-financial sector (private persons, firms, the government) is paying for services that are not "significantly more efficient than the finance industry of John Pierpont Morgan" in the early 1900s. This development is a consequence of the IT revolution which made possible high-frequency trading in which traders make money by buying or selling a millisecond faster than competitors. According to Paul Krugman "we're giving huge sums to the financial industry while receiving little or nothing – maybe less than nothing – in return."[39] Krugman, therefore, observed "a clear correlation between the rise of modern finance and America's return to Gilded Age levels of inequality."[40]

BACK TO NINETEENTH CENTURY LEVELS OF INEQUALITY?

However, not only incomes were characterized by a growing inequality – so was *property ownership*. This newly emerging inequality evoked reminiscences of the nineteenth century, an era thought to have been definitively left behind. "The richest 1 percent of American households," wrote Gar Alperovitz, "are now estimated to own half of all outstanding stock, financial securities, trust equity, and business equity."[41] Brink Lindsey complained: "Despite the heaping riches that our economic system continues to pile up, millions remain trapped in a nightmare world of poverty, social exclusion, and despair."[42] And Thomas Piketty, a French economist, asked the provocative question whether "the twenty-first century will be even more inegalitarian than the nineteenth century."[43] In his book *Le capital au XXIe siècle* (Capital in the Twenty-First Century) Piketty made a detailed analysis of property relations in the last two centuries. He came to the conclusion that economic inequality - after having peaked before the First World War - was greatly

reduced in the subsequent years. Three factors played a role here: in the first place the First World War, which worked as an 'equalizer', because many property owners lost their property or saw it starkly reduced; secondly, redistribution by the emerging welfare state; and, thirdly, a change in tax policies which led to higher taxes for the rich. However, this period of 'compressed inequality', in which "the modern welfare state in the middle of the twentieth century … finally enabled capitalism and democracy to coexist in relative harmony,"[44] ended in the 1980s.

One of the main reasons was new, ultra-liberal tax policies that benefitted the rich – in particular the *super*-rich. Under Reagan's presidency taxes at the top were sharply cut: "Reagan slashed the highest marginal tax rate from 70 percent to 28 percent and reduced the maximum capital gains tax to 20 percent – reined in trade unions, cut social welfare spending, and deregulated the economy."[45] This new 'Washington Consensus' was exported abroad and followed worldwide, not only in Western Europe, but, after 1989, also in the former communist bloc and in China. The result was an immense concentration of wealth at the top which, in the U.S., had only been seen during the 'Gilded Age' - the years between 1870 and 1900. The Gilded Age was known for its rich tycoons, such as the Morgans, Vanderbilts, Rockefellers, Carnegies, Harrimans, and Goulds. These so-called 'robber barons' "were held to be uneducated and uncultivated, irresponsible, rootless and corrupt, devoid of refinement or of any sense of noblesse."[46] They were envied and despised, because "…the new plutocracy had set standards of such extravagance and such notoriety that everyone else felt humbled by comparison."[47]

The 'robber barons' of the twenty-first century are the 'plutocrats' and 'oligarchs': a new, international class which lives in its own universe - with yachts, private jets, castles, private golf links, and a lifestyle of which normal citizens – simple millionaires included – can only dream. This class of Ultra High Net Worth Individuals,[48] each good for at least $50 million, but often a multiple of this, has 84,700 members in the world, of which 37,500 in North America, 23,700 in Europe, and 1,970 in Russia.[49]

Through this growing inequality our age takes on a frightening resemblance to the historical period in which Marx lived. Reading Joseph Stiglitz's assessment of what is happening today, who will not be reminded of Marx's polarization thesis, which predicted an increasing immiseration and pauperization of the working and middle classes? Stiglitz wrote:

> "Among the winners from globalization in the United States and some European countries, as it's been managed, are the people at the top. Among the losers are those at the bottom, and increasingly even those in the middle."[50] "The polarization of our labor market has been hollowing out the middle class …"[51]

Marx's polarization thesis, which had been thought to have become obsolete, is, apparently, making a glorious (or rather inglorious) come-back. One reason for this development is globalization, which created opportunities for property owners to escape the taxes and circumvent the regulations of their home countries. Another cause was the voluntary retreat of politics from the economy, leaving it to the economy and to the markets to regulate themselves. "A self-regulating market demands nothing less than the institutional separation of society into an economic and a political sphere," wrote Karl Polanyi.[52] Through this separation the economic sphere was able to emancipate itself from political restrictions and obligations. However, in a democratic society the political sphere is the sphere in which each citizen – rich or poor – has equal voting rights. The principle of 'one man, one vote' means that the majority has the possibility to redress and correct inequalities which are experienced as unfair and unjust through the tax system and through the transfer payments of the welfare state. Wolfgang Streeck warned of the danger that one "seeks more or less forcibly to replace states and their politics by markets and their self-regulating automatisms."[53] Joseph Stiglitz went further, writing that "a so-called self-regulating market-economy may evolve into Mafia capitalism – and a Mafia political system – a concern that has unfortunately become all too real in some parts of the world."[54] This tendency of increasingly becoming a playing field for criminal practices, inherent in unregulated capitalism, has been highlighted by Jean-François Gayraud in his book *Le nouveau capitalisme criminel* (The New Criminal Capitalism).[55]

The problem is, indeed, that the super-rich tend to consider the political constraints of liberal democracy as a threat to their interests. Streeck spoke in this context of a "disaffection of 'capital' with democracy."[56] This tension between the class of the super-rich and political democracy can lead to two reactions. The first consists of attempts by the super-rich to roll back democracy and support more authoritarian forms of government which enable them to better protect their interests. The second reaction consists of an active involvement of the property owning class in politics through lobbying, media influence, and party funding, to achieve the desired results. Their huge wealth gives them an unequaled influence. In 2010 American politics became even less of a level playing field by a ruling of the Supreme Court which made unlimited corporate campaign spending possible on the basis of 'free speech'.[57] The results of this change were immediately visible. "Just 158 families, along with companies they own or control, contributed $176 million in the first phase of the [2016 presidential] campaign," wrote the *New York Times,* adding, "not since before Watergate have so few people and businesses provided so much early money in a campaign, most of it through channels legalized by the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision five years ago*."*[58] According to the *New York Times,* "the families investing the most in presidential politics overwhelmingly lean

right, contributing tens of millions of dollars to support Republican candidates who have pledged to pare regulations; cut taxes on income, capital gains and inheritances; and shrink entitlement programs."[59] Through investments in the media the super-rich also have the opportunity to influence public opinion. Rupert Murdoch's influence on British politics is proverbial. In the United States we have the examples of William Randolph Hearst, Steve Forbes, and Michael Bloomberg, while Silvio Berlusconi, not satisfied with his media influence in Italy, became himself a politician in order to take care of his financial interests. On the influence of the super-rich on the media Jean-François Gayraud wrote: "the majority of the important print and audiovisual media [in France] are the property of the great industrial and financial groups. Does this really have no impact on editorial policy? Can you bite the hand that is feeding you?"[60] In 2004, before the Great Recession, even Alan Greenspan, the ultra-liberal Chairman of the Federal Reserve, told the Senate Banking Committee that he was concerned about the negative impact of the growing inequality on democracy. "I think that the effective increase in the concentration of incomes … is not desirable in a democratic society?" he said.[61] We saw earlier that a market economy, by promoting individual freedom and (formal) equality, is a basis for modern democracy. However, markets have a Janus face. While, at the outset, they have a democracy promoting quality, this changes when a mature political democracy is in place. The market economy then tends to impair democracy. This contradictory, double-edged dynamic of a market economy is summarized by Robert A. Dahl as follows:

> "When authoritarian governments in less modernized countries undertake to develop a dynamic market economy, then, they are likely to sew the seeds of their own ultimate destruction. But once society and politics are transformed by market-capitalism and democratic institutions are in place, the outlook fundamentally changes. Now the inequalities in resources that market-capitalism churns out produce serious political inequalities among citizens."[62] He added that "the relation between a country's democratic political system and its nondemocratic economic system has presented a formidable and persistent challenge to democratic goals and practices throughout the twentieth century. That challenge will surely continue in the twenty-first century."[63]

WAS MARX RIGHT?

Marx predicted that we were moving toward an increasingly polarized society. Was he right after all? And is, therefore, the only possible outcome a revolution leading

to some kind of state socialism? I don't think so. While the increasing polarization, which is taking place, cannot be denied, the experience of the communist countries has definitively proved that state socialism is not the solution. Not even for Marxists. David Harvey, who stands in the Marxist tradition, asked, for instance, if "another communism is possible?"[64] He answered:

> "Communism is, unfortunately, such a loaded term as to be hard to re-introduce, as some want to do, into political discourse."[65] However, he continued, "while traditional institutionalized communism is as good as dead and buried, there are … millions of *de facto* communists active among us, willing to act upon their understandings, ready to pursue anti-capitalist imperatives."[66] "Perhaps we should just define the movement, our movement, as anti-capitalist or call ourselves the Party of Indignation, ready to fight the Party of Wall Street and its acolytes and apologists everywhere, and leave it at that."[67] "So where shall we start our revolutionary anti-capitalist movement? We can start anywhere and everywhere as long as we do not stay where we start from! The revolution has to be a *movement* in every sense of that word."[68]

Harvey is clearly inspired by the same Romanticism which inspired Marx. However, proclaiming the existence of 'millions of *de facto* communists', organized in a 'Party of Indignation', who 'can start anywhere and everywhere as long as we do not stay where we start from', because 'the revolution has to be a *movement',* smacks of an exalted glorification of 'action for action's sake' and is lacking a real strategy to tackle the problems of contemporary society. The problem remains that any kind of communism, suffering from 'too much state', is an enemy of democracy. The same is true, however, of the 'self-regulating markets' which dominated during the last three decades. They suffer from the opposite: 'not enough state' and are equally an enemy of democracy. Marx was certainly not an expert on the subtleties of liberal democracy. He considered the state simply as an oppressive apparatus in the hands of the capitalist class. It is not clear, therefore, what solutions he has to offer for the problems of the twenty-first century. Walter Laqueur – rightly – emphasized, that in the present situation,

> "It is likely that the regulatory state will play a greater role than in the past. A great deal of ill will has welled up against the financial system in part because of the greed displayed by some of its leading movers and shakers but also because of their devastating incompetence. Still, no one so far – neither individuals nor political parties – has suggested the wholesale nationalization of key branches of the economy, the means of production or the banks. That's what a Marxist approach would look like."[69] Laqueur concluded: "And so it

> appears we shall have to wait a bit longer for some kind of lodestar to emerge. In the meantime, it is clear that the perceived renaissance of Marxism, such as it is (which isn't much), doesn't offer anything of value in this search. No doubt it will continue to stir fascination in the breasts of activists in various fields of cultural studies, weary of the status quo and hungry for a revolutionary new ethos. But it has nothing to offer the economists of our day – or the rest of mankind, for that matter."[70]

Marx's disregard for liberal democracy with its separation of powers, its emphasis on deliberation and consensus seeking, resulted from his adoption of Hegel's dialectical logic. In this logic everything develops via a process of negation, which means that one situation is negated by its *opposite:* black is negated by white, white is negated by black. This brought Marx to the idea that capitalist society could only be negated by a society which was completely its opposite: a socialist society in which the private ownership of the means of production was abolished. Moreover, he presented this negation not as a long, protracted process, but as a kind of 'big bang', brought about by a socialist revolution. Marx was the victim of the Romanticist vision which held that 'hell' could only be transformed into 'heaven'.[71] However, where such a revolutionary 'big bang' happened, it did not lead to an emancipation of the working classes, but rather to their oppression. Under the inspiration of Eduard Bernstein German Social Democrats gave up this Marxist view. They no longer considered the emancipation of the working classes to be the result of a revolutionary 'big bang', nor did they expect an immediate and complete liberation. On the contrary, they proposed a patient and sustained effort to reform the system from within. This method proved successful. Contemporary efforts to transform the capitalist system should, therefore, take their inspiration from the policies of European social democracy, rather than from nineteenth century revolutionary Marxism.

Lane Kenworthy proposed a similar approach for the United States. In an article in *Foreign Affairs* he argued that maintaining a public safety net is no longer enough and he recommends measures, similar to those put in place by the Scandinavian countries: "[T]he Nordic countries have supplemented their generous social programs with services aimed at boosting employment and enhancing productivity: publicly funded child care and preschool, job-training and job-placement programs, significant infrastructure projects, and government support for private-sector research and development."[72] Kenworthy calculated that implementing such a system would cost the U.S. an additional 10 percent of GDP, which would mean that government expenditures would rise from 37 percent of GDP (in 2007) to around 47 percent. Something, he wrote, which "would place the United States only a few percentage points above the current norm among the world's

rich nations."[73] To finance this project he proposed a (moderate) increase of the effective federal tax rate for the 1 percent super-rich to about 37 percent. Together with other tax reforms this should yield 5 percent of GDP. However, realizing that 10 percent of GDP cannot be squeezed "solely from those at the top," he proposed the introduction of a 12 percent VAT, which would raise another 5 percent of GDP. Kenworthy showed himself rather optimistic about the prospects for this project and displayed an almost 'Marxist' belief in the necessary evolution in the proposed direction, saying that "opponents are fighting a losing battle and can only slow down and distort the final outcome rather than stop it. Thanks to a combination of popular demand, technocratic supply, and gradually increasing national wealth, social democracy is the future of the United States."[74]

However, just repeating the mantra that "opponents are fighting a losing battle" will not be enough to bring these reforms about. As Marx already knew: you need a *subject* to realize these reforms. The problem is that the traditional subjects of social-democratic reform projects: the social-democratic parties and the trade unions, are almost everywhere on the defensive. While, for instance, in the early 1950s in the U.S. around one-third of the total labor force was unionized, this has gone down today to about 10 percent.[75] However, Kenworthy puts his hope not only in the Democratic Party, the traditional standard bearer of welfare programs in the U.S., but on the Republican Party also. "In the long run," he wrote, "the center of gravity in the Republican Party will shift, and the GOP will come to resemble center-right parties in Western Europe, most of which accept a generous welfare state and relatively high taxes."[76] He attributed this expected change of position to the fact that the white working class, which left the Democratic Party, votes increasingly for the Republicans. "(What is] favoring Republican moderation is the growing importance to the party of working-class whites," he wrote.[77] Maybe. It is clear, however, that solutions should also include an increased regulation by governments of the financial markets, combined with more distributive tax policies.

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, in their book *The Spirit Level – Why Equality is Better for Everyone,* come up with a series of concrete measures. "One approach to tackling runaway pay rates at the top," they write, "might be to plug loopholes in the tax system, limit 'business expenses', increase top tax rates, and even legislate to limit maximum pay in a company to some multiple of the average or lowest paid."[78] The authors are conscious of the fact that these solutions "are very vulnerable to changes in government."[79] The property owning class will, indeed, try to defend its privileges and right-wing, conservative governments, sympathetic to the interests of the rich, could easily undo these reforms. Therefore, more structural measures are necessary,

which give the majority of the population a real stake in the economy. Wilkinson and Pickett therefore propose democratic employee share-ownership schemes:

> "In the UK, share-ownership schemes now cover almost a quarter of all employees and some 15 or 20 per cent of all UK companies. In the US, the 2001 Tax Law increased the tax advantages of Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs), and they now cover 8 million employees in 10,000 firms with an average employee-ownership of 15-20 per cent."[80] "However," they added, "many share-ownership schemes amount to little more than incentive schemes, intended to make employees more compliant with management and sometimes to provide a nest-egg for retirement."[81]

To avoid these schemes remaining mere "tokenism" the authors recommend more participative forms of management. Which brings us back to Marx. Marx wanted to socialize the means of production in order to bring these under the control of the working class. The way this socialization was realized in the former Soviet Union has disqualified this idea, because it did not enhance the autonomy of the working class, but merely gave it new and more repressive masters: the communist managers of nationalized industry. However, this does not mean that Marx's idea was fundamentally wrong. In Germany workers and employees have the right to appoint representatives to the board of their companies. This is certainly not enough to give them a direct influence over the conditions of their daily work. But a higher educated workforce will ask for more autonomy and more influence, including over the appointments of managers and on investment decisions. Such an enhanced participation in the decision-making process of the company will enhance the satisfaction and feelings of self-esteem of the workers. The introduction of a participatory democracy at the level of companies will have also a positive influence on the functioning of political democracy, an aspect, which is emphasized by Carole Pateman, who wrote:

> "The existence of representative institutions at national level is not sufficient for democracy; for maximum participation by all the people at that level socialisation, or 'social training', for democracy must take place in other spheres in order that the necessary individual attitudes and psychological qualities can be developed. This development takes place through the process of participation itself."[82]

In the same vein Harry Eckstein wrote that "a government will tend to be stable if its authority pattern is congruent with the other authority patterns of the society of which it is a part."[83] Maybe here Marx can still be a source of inspiration.

NOTES

[1] Marx, "Zur Judenfrage," *MEW*, Vol. 1, 354-355.

[2] Moses Hess, "Über das Geldwesen," 345.

[3] Engels, "Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie," 504.

[4] Engels, "Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie," 512.

[5] Cf. Pedro Schwartz, *The New Political Economy of J.S. Mill,* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), 156. According to Schwartz the socialists before 1848 were characterized by "their enmity to the system of competition. It would be wrong to believe that they fastened their criticism exclusively onto private property. Some of them did not even want to abolish it. Competition was for them the real cause of the waste and poverty prevalent in society. It was competition which fostered the 'anarchy' of existing society, and competition again which occasioned the conflicts between classes and countries."

[6] Engels, "Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England," *MEW*, Vol. 2, 437.

[7] Engels, "Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England," 431.

[8] Quoted in Paul Kluckhohn, *Das Ideengut der deutschen Romantik,* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1966), 86.

[9] Kluckhohn, *Das Ideengut der deutschen Romantik,* 86.

[10] Cf. Georg Simmel, *Philosophie des Geldes,* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1900), 457: "Intellectuality, therefore, … will develop itself in proportion to the number and length of the intermediary means which form the content of our activity … There is certainly a correlation between impulsiveness and emotional intensity, so often reported as existing among primitive peoples, and the shortness of their teleological series."

[11] Norbert Elias equally observed that modern society "increasingly [requires] a certain long-term perspective and [therefore] leads to a … control of all inclinations which promise an instant or short-term satisfaction at the cost of more distant ones." (Cf. Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*, Vol. 2, *Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen,* (Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977), 339). However, Elias considered this development not only to be a result of the market, but also of modern court life.

[12] In a brochure, published in the Soviet Union 1989, the author wrote, for instance: "Practice all over the world has irrefutably showed: the market is a flexible instrument for coordinating production and consumption, which stimulates efficiency [and] can be built into the most different social-economic systems and serve these successfully." (V.A. Medvedev, *Leninizm i perestroika: za realism i tvorchestvo,* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1989), 13). The author still had the illusion that the market could be incorporated in a centrally planned, socialist economy.

[13] Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom,* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), 12.

[14] Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom,* 12.

[15] Lucien Goldmann, *The Philosophy of Enlightenment,* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 94.

[16] Goldmann, *The Philosophy of Enlightenment,* 94.

[17] Michael Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy – The Moral Limits of Markets,* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), 7.

[18] Adam Seligman made the interesting observation that the intrinsic value attributed to friendship in the 18th century was not only meant to oppose it to the commercial self-interest which characterized the market, "more specifically, it emerged in contrast and explicit rejection of those types of behavior identified with aristocratic court society, where the calculation of every word and gesture was necessary to achieve success." (Adam B. Seligman, *The Problem of Trust,* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 32).

[19] Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy – Moral Limits of Markets,* 134.

[20] Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy – Moral Limits of Markets,* 203.

[21] Terry Eagleton, *Why Marx Was Right,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 9.

[22] Wolfgang Streeck, *Gekaufte Zeit – Die vertagte Krise des demokratischen Kapitalismus,* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2013).

[23] Streeck, *Gekaufte Zeit,* 17-18.

[24] Streeck, *Gekaufte Zeit,* 235.

[25] Streeck, *Gekaufte Zeit,* 237.

[26] Walter Laqueur, "The Many Faces of Neo-Marxism," in *The National Interest,* No. 125, May/June 2013, 88.

[27] Niall Ferguson, *The Great Degeneration – How Institutions Decay and Economies Die,* (London: Penguin, 2014), 59.

[28] Kuznets's theory seemed, at that time, to be confirmed by the facts. Robert A. Dahl spoke about "a decline in the concentration of wealth since 1929, when the top one-half of one percent of all persons in the U.S. owned one-third of the wealth … [while] in 1956 … the top one-half of one percent owned one quarter of the wealth of the country." (Robert A. Dahl, *After the Revolution – Authority in a Good Society,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 113).

[29] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 152 ff.

[30] Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind,* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 90.

[31] Lester C. Thurow, *The Zero-Sum Society – Distribution and the Possibilities for Economic Change,* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980), 156-57.

[32] Thurow, *The Zero-Sum Society,* 171.

[33] "If family income doubles at each step of the economic ladder," wrote Jerry Z. Muller, "then the total incomes of those families higher up the ladder are bound to increase faster than the total incomes of those further down." (Jerry Z. Muller, "Capitalism and Inequality – What the Right and the Left Get Wrong," *Foreign Affairs,* Volume 92, No. 2, March/April 2013, 39). Muller notes that this is, indeed, the case: "Between 1973 and 2001, average annual growth in real income was only 0.3 percent for people in the bottom fifth of the U.S. income distribution, compared with 0.8 percent for people in the middle fifth and 1.8 percent for those in the top fifth. Somewhat similar patterns also prevail in many other advanced economies." (Ibid., 40).

[34] Carl Frey and Michael Osborne spoke in this context about "the current trend toward labour market polarization, with growing employment in high-income cognitive jobs and low-income manual occupations, accompanied by a hollowing-out of middle-income routine jobs." (Cf. Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A. Osborne, "The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation?" September 17, 2013, 3. Available at http://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/The_Future_of_Employment.pdf

[35] Cf. Joseph E. Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality,* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 71-72.

[36] Niall Ferguson, *The Great Degeneration,* 4.

[37] Gar Alperovitz, *America Beyond Capitalism – Reclaiming Our Wealth, Our Liberty, and Our Democracy*, (Hoboken, N.J.,: John Wiley & Sons, 2005), 5.

[38] Thomas Philippon, "Finance vs. Wal-Mart: Why are Financial Services so Expensive?" in Alan Blinder, Andrew Lo, and Robert Solow (eds), *Rethinking the Financial Crisis,* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 2012). Available at http://www.russellsage.org/sites/all/files/Rethinking-Finance/Philippon_v3.pdf

[39] Paul Krugman, "Three expensive milliseconds," *International New York Times,* April 15, 2014.

[40] Krugman, "Three expensive milliseconds."

[41] Chrystia Freeland, *Plutocrats – The Rise of the New Global Super-Rich,* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), xiii. Andrea Louise Campbell described how Reagan's successors introduced marginal changes, which, however, had no real impact: "President George H.W. Bush brought the top rate back up to 35 percent, and President Bill Clinton further raised it to 39.6 percent, but each administration added a number of new tax breaks … The [George W.] tax cuts reduced taxes on capital gains and dividends and on estates and

cut the top tax rate yet again, to 35 percent. The largest tax reductions from these changes went to high-income households. In fact, the United States currently taxes top earners at some of the lowest effective rates in the country's history." (Andrea Louise Campbell, "America the Undertaxed – U.S. Fiscal Policy in Perspective," *Foreign Affairs,* Volume 91, No. 5, September/October 2012, 103).

[42] Brink Lindsey, *Human Capitalism – How Economic Growth Has Made Us Smarter – and More Unequal,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 2.

[43] Thomas Piketty, *Le capital au XXIe siècle,* (Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2013), 596.

[44] Muller, "Capitalism and Inequality – What the Right and the Left Get Wrong," 31.

[45] Freeland, *Plutocrats – The Rise of the New Global Super-Rich,* 17.

[46] Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform – From Bryan to F.D.R.,* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), 141.

[47] Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform – From Bryan to F.D.R.,* 147.

[48] A term coined by Credit Suisse (See Chrystia Freeland, op. cit., 35).

[49] Freeland, *Plutocrats – The Rise of the Global Super-Rich,* 35.

[50] Cf. Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality,* 80.

[51] Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality,* 167.

[52] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time,* with a new Introduction by Fred Bloch, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 74.

[53] Streeck, *Gekaufte Zeit,* 238.

[54] Joseph E. Stiglitz, Foreword in Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, xv.

[55] Jean-François Gayraud, *Le nouveau capitalisme criminel – Crises financières, narcobanques, trading de haute fréquence,* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2014).

[56] Streeck, *Gekaufte Zeit,* 47.

[57] According to Stiglitz, "The 2010 decision in the case of *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission,* in which the Supreme Court essentially approved unbridled corporate campaign spending, represented a milestone in the disempowerment of ordinary Americans. The decision allows corporations and unions to exercise "free speech" in supporting candidates and causes in elections to the same degree as individual human beings. Since corporations have many millions of times the resources of the vast majority of individual Americans, the decision has the potential to create a class of super-wealthy political campaigners with a one-dimensional political interest: enhancing their profits." (Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality,* 165). Already James Madison wrote in the "Federalist Papers" about the necessity "to break and control the violence of faction." (Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers,* with an introduction by Clinton Rossiter, (New York: New American Library, 1961), Letter No. 10, 77). "The most common and durable source of factions," he wrote, "has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society." (Ibid., 79) Interestingly, for Madison, the danger of faction emanated not so much from the rich, but rather from the poor classes of society, who, as the majority of the electorate, could enact laws that restricted the property rights of the rich. Madison did not foresee the opposite case that a rich oligarchy, helped by its financial means and its grip on the mass media, could manipulate the electorate to vote for a program that favored the rich.

[58] Nicholas Confessore, Sarah Cohen, Karen Yourish, "The Families Funding the 2016 Presidential Election," *The New York Times*, October 10, 2015.

[59] "The Families Funding the 2016 Presidential Election."

[60] Gayraud, *Le nouveau capitalisme criminel,* 285. This was a reason for Mikhail Gorbachev to doubt the reality of the West's much-touted freedom of the press. "There are no free media," he said, "either in Russia or the West. Everybody is dependent and works for the benefit of their own states. That is beyond doubt." (Ivan Nechepurenko, "Gorbachev on Russia and Ukraine: 'We Are One People'," *The Moscow Times,* November 21, 2014).

[61] Nell Henderson, "Greenspan Says Workers' Lack of Skills Lowers Wages," *The Washington Post,* July 22, 2004.

[62] Robert A. Dahl, *On Democracy,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 178.

[63] Dahl, *On Democracy,* 179.

[64] David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital: And the Crises of Capitalism,* (London: Profile Books, 2011), 259.

[65] Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital,* 259.

[66] Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital,* 259.

[67] Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital,* 260.

[68] Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital,* 138.

[69] Laqueur, "The Many Faces of Neo-Marxism," 96.

[70] Laqueur, "The Many Faces of Neo-Marxism," 96.

[71] Cf. Paul Kluckhohn, *Das Ideengut der deutschen Romantik,* 16: "Such an idea of life … as a movement which develops in polar oppositions … is central to Romanticist thinking."

[72] Lane Kenworthy, "America's Social Democratic Future – The Arc of Policy Is Long But Bends Toward Justice," *Foreign Affairs,* Volume 93, No. 1, January/February 2014, 89.

[73] Kenworthy, "America's Social Democratic Future," 97.

[74] Kenworthy, "America's Social Democratic Future," 88.

[75] Cf. Bruce Western and Jake Rosenfeld, "Workers of the World Divide – The Decline of Labor and the Future of the Middle Class," *Foreign Affairs,* Volume 91, No. 3, May/June 2012, 88. "Partly as a result," wrote the authors, "wages have stagnated and income inequality has increased." (Ibid.).

[76] Kenworthy, "America's Social Democratic Future," 99.

[77] Kenworthy, "America's Social Democratic Future," 99.

[78] Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level – Why Equality is Better for*

Everyone, (London: Penguin Books, 2010), 254.

[79] Wilkinson and Pickett, *The Spirit Level,* 254.

[80] Wilkinson and Pickett, *The Spirit Level,* 255.

[81] Wilkinson and Pickett, *The Spirit Level,* 255.

[82] Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 42.

[83] Harry Eckstein, "A Theory of Stable Democracy," Appendix B in Harry Eckstein, *Division and Cohesion in Democracy,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 234.

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