

CICERO FOUNDATION GREAT DEBATE PAPER

No. 12/07

September 2012

**MARX
AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

**ANALYSIS OF AN AMBIVALENT
RELATIONSHIP**

MARCEL H. VAN HERPEN

Director

The Cicero Foundation

ISBN/EAN 978-90-75759-12-9

Cicero Foundation Great Debate Paper No. 12/07

© Marcel H. Van Herpen, Paris/Maastricht, 2012

All rights reserved

The Cicero Foundation

Hondertmarck D 45

6211 MB MAASTRICHT

Tel. +31 43 32 60 828

Tel. +33 1 41 29 09 32

Fax +33 1 41 29 09 32

Email cicerofoundation@gmail.com

CONTENTS

<i>Abstract</i>	4
<i>“On the Jewish Question” and the Problem of Human Rights</i>	5
<i>Marx’s Criticism of Human Rights</i>	6
<i>Marx’s Anthropology</i>	8
<i>Civil Society Versus the State</i>	8
<i>The Influence of Moses Hess</i>	10
<i>Sense and Nonsense of Marx’s Critique</i>	10
<i>A New Concept of Essence</i>	12
<i>Marx’s Monism: A Hindrance to Understand the Necessity of Human Rights</i>	14

Abstract

It is generally recognized that the official heirs of Marx in the countries of “real existing socialism” took an ambivalent attitude regarding the theme of ‘human rights’. On the one hand human rights were being portrayed as a part of a Western ideological propaganda offensive. On the other hand it appeared that human rights were being taken seriously in the cases that the West was accused of riding roughshod over the social basic rights.(1) The question the author wishes to answer in this paper is whether this ambiguity towards human rights was not already present in Marx’s writings. He will first (in part I) analyze the role which Marx’s anthropology and his concept of civil society play in this point of view. He will thereafter examine (in part II) how far Marx’s point of view with reference to human rights in his later work – from 1845 – experiences a change. Marx’s criticism of human rights is, as a rule, often only analyzed in his early manuscripts – especially in “The Holy Family”. The author also tried to analyze the views developed by Marx in his later manuscripts (after 1845). Doing so he has found interesting results. As a matter of fact in his later manuscripts Marx does not change the contents of his criticism of human rights, but he fundamentally changes the theoretical foundations upon which this criticism is based. This does, however, not lead to a reassessment of his early views and Marx continues to deny that these rights play a fundamental role in defending the rights of the individual against infringements from the side of the state.

MARX AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Analysis of an Ambivalent Relationship

MARCEL H. VAN HERPEN

I.

“On the Jewish Question” and the Problem of Human Rights

The manuscript in which Marx has been most explicitly involved with the theme of human rights is “On the Jewish Question”(2) which appeared in 1844 in the “Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher”. In this article Marx turns polemically against the ideas of his old friend and master Bruno Bauer, who had shortly before, in two articles(3) turned against the struggle of the German Jews to gain full citizens’ rights – such as has been the case in France since Napoleon. Bauer’s criticism of the Jewish citizens’ rights campaign was based on the fact that as an emancipation movement it was not radical enough, in his opinion. According to Bauer “... the 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.”(4)

The Jewish question was according to Bauer with the granting of citizen’s rights to the Jewish community not resolved because the roots of this question were very deep, namely in the (Jewish) religion itself. The Jews would only be really able to emancipate themselves when they would give up their religion and become atheists. State and religion should also be separated from each other, because a political

emancipation of the Jews in a Christian state is per definition impossible, according to Bauer.

Marx is in principle in agreement with Bauer's criticism of religion. However, according to him 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."(5)

What are these 'secular restrictions' which, according to Marx, have to be abolished? It is the *division of state and civil society*, which are respectively the sphere of the general interest and the sphere of private interests. Due to this citizens lead a split life in two completely opposed worlds. On the one hand they are *citizens* in the state, and as such directed towards the *general interest*. On the other hand they are *bourgeois*, inhabitants of the 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."(6)

In the civil society of his time Marx sees the modern variant of the Hobbesian state of nature. Civil society is a *bellum omnium contra omnes* in which man is bent on maintaining himself at the cost 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?"(7) In any case Marx – just as 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*.

Marx's Criticism of Human Rights

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 estranged man's degrading situation in civil society. "Above all," thus 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."(8)

He successively inspects various specific 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."(9) And 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."(10) 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."(11) And security? "*Security* 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."(12) 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.”(13)

Marx's Anthropology

This destructive criticism of Marx on human rights can only be understood 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 just 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 from a biological need, but also morally and fundamentally, is focused on his fellow man, due to an inborn altruism. Marx has borrowed this Rousseau tinted anthropology directly from Ludwig Feuerbach. The concept of the ‘essence of man’ (*Gattungswesen*) also had a strong ethic 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 this essence.(14)

Civil Society Versus the State

Marx gave this anthropology a different twist than Feuerbach. In contrast to 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 does not look for the cause of the fact that people do not live in accordance with their deepest essence in their basic human condition, in their *condition humaine*, but in a *social* factor: in the breaking up of state and civil society into two opposed spheres. Thus far he is completely in keeping with the tradition of Rousseau and Helvétius, who also hold the 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 the 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."(15)

In his idea that in civil society the selfish private interest prevails Marx concurs with the ideas of Hegel.(16). The latter wrote in his *Philosophy of Right*: "In civil society everyone is his own end, everything else is nothing to him."(17) 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 simultaneously satisfy 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..."(18) 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 civil society was in spite of its egoistical character still a necessary 'moment' in the development of the moral state. Marx attacked Hegel's position shortly before 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, while 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 – gives evidence of an Anglo-Saxon sense of reality, Marx's idealistic 'purism' does not allow this room. 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 wants it – because it then keeps its asocial character. Civil society should really *melt* into the state, which implies that it changes character fundamentally. Marx is thus striving towards a *deontologization of civil society*.(19)

The Influence of Moses Hess

One can only adequately understand Marx's criticism of civil society and the consequent criticism of human rights from this anthropological viewpoint. Civil society is for Marx 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.(20) This negative estimation of human rights by Marx is in my opinion strongly influenced by the article *Über das Geldwesen* (On Money) by Moses Hess. 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 overrides 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 Hess' article. What does he 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 each other, when divorce and individualization were declared as the essence of life and freedom, and isolated persons were declared free, real, natural people (...)"(21) Thus Hess also sees – just as Marx – exclusively in human rights a proclamation of the rights of the egoistical *bourgeois*.

Sense and Nonsense of 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 equalization of individualism with egoism and their exalted ideas on the deontologization of civil society they ignore *the* great merit of human rights

declarations: to guarantee an inviolable domain of freedom against the overwhelming power of the state. The classical human rights catalogue formed a list of *defensive* rights which should protect the individual citizen against the arbitrariness and the oppression from the side 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 princely and 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 citizens.(22) Precisely this *individualism* of the human rights declarations formed the stumbling block for Marx from his anthropological presupposition that man was a “species being”. Therefore it can be ascertained that it was especially Marx’s anthropology – together with his negative view of civil society - which obstructed an adequate understanding of the classical 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 pretensions which took refuge behind the human rights declarations. It was clear that these declarations could not guarantee a universal brotherhood. Marx shows that also the two other – more “earthly” – aims of the French revolution: liberty and equality, were only incompletely guaranteed. He also justly stated that behind *legal* liberty and equality of citizens the greatest un-liberty and inequality can be hidden, namely in the socio-economic area. He strongly emphasized this aspect 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 the classical human rights has been the most fruitful. He clearly showed 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 social basic 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 is most outspokenly involved 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 in a “humanistic” and a “scientific” part rests in my opinion on an inadmissible narrowing of the concept of science which eliminates the normative elements in Marx’s later work. It is certainly an undisputable fact that large 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 of 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 the strong appearance that he has given up every absolute value standpoint. Thus he writes in the *Communist Manifesto* – also written together 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 not 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 finally 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 upon 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 this abundant production precisely 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 Understand the Necessity of Human Rights

If we now compare Marx’s ideas from 1845 with those previous 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 the *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 *otherwise founded* his criticism of innate human rights than before 1845. Because in *The Holy Family* (1844) he already wrote: “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.”(32)
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* receives – 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.”(33) 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 undergoes also a serious change because of the introduction of the *proletariat* in his theory. In *On the Jewish Question* his criticism of civil society had only a general humanistic-moralistic character. He sees human rights foremost as the expression of human egoism, human lust for competition and possession, which run riot in civil society. After 1845 he sees human rights above all as the ideological *veiling of the class character* of civil society. Human rights principally serve, according to him, the interests of the bourgeoisie, while they at the same time provide the latter with a general human aureole. We have already seen that it is namely on this point: the unmasking of ideological pretensions 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 removal of the division between state and civil society. And it is namely *this* idea that is the reason of Marx’s systematic underestimation of the importance of classical 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 and made it therefore necessary 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 insufficiently realized the importance of human rights. Marx considered human rights at most 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 above 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 an opposition between the individual interests and the general interest.(34) If Marxism wants to arrive at a correct appreciation of the importance of human rights (not only of social basic rights, but especially of the classical freedom rights and the rights of political participation), then it will have to give up Marx’s monism and recognize that individual interests can never be brought into complete harmony with the general interest (whatever that may be) and that, consequently, a fundamental protection of the individual against the omnipotence of the state is always desired and required.

NOTES

- 1) An example of this is the book *Menschenrechte – Eine Utopie* (Human Rights – A Utopia?), of Willi Büchner-Uhder, (Leipzig: Urania Verlag), 1981. The author, living in the German Democratic Republic, wrote about the socialist countries: “There is no unemployment and no emergency situation in education. Peace as a fundamental human right is the base 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.”
- 2) K. Marx, *On the Jewish Question*, in: K. Marx/F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, London, 1975, pp. 146-74.
- 3) 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.
- 4) B. Bauer, *Die Fähigkeit der heutigen Juden und Christen frei zu werden*, in: B. Bauer, *Feldzüge der reinen Kritik*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp), 1968, pp. 187-88.
- 5) K. Marx, op. cit., p. 151.
- 6) Ibid., p. 154.
- 7) I. Kant, “Mutmasslicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte”, in: I. Kant, *Kleinere Schriften zur Geschichtsphilosophie, Ethik und Politik*, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag), 1973, p. 55. See also I. Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten*, Part 2, “Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre”, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag), 1966, passim.
- 8) K. Marx, op. cit., p. 162
- 9) Ibid.

- 10) Ibid., p. 163
- 11) Ibid.
- 12) Ibid.
- 13) Ibid., p. 164.
- 14) 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), 1980, explained the emergence of this new anthropology in the late 18th century from the transition from a segmentary, layered society to a functionally differentiated society, through which many new problems of social integration had to be solved.
- 15) K. Marx, op. cit., p. 168.
- 16) 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 an equivalent of '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*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp), 1969, pp. 135-66, and Manfred Riedel, *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft und Staat bei Hegel*, (Neuwied and Berlin: Luchterhand), 1970, para 1.
- 17) G.W.F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag), 1968, para. 182, Zusatz, p. 169.
- 18) Ibid., para 199, p. 179.

- 19) See Mario Rossi, *Da Hegel a Marx III – La scuola hegeliana. Il giovane Marx*, (Milan: Feltrinelli), 1974, p. 419. Rossi speaks in this connection of a *deontologizzazione dell'interesse*, but he avoids any critical comment.
- 20) See K. Marx/F. Engels, "The Holy Family", in: K. Marx/F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, London, 1975, p. 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, MHVH).
- 21) Moses Hess, "Über das Geldwesen", in: Moses Hess, *Philosophische und sozialistische Schriften 1837-1850, Eine Auswahl*, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag), 1961, p. 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 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 L. Althusser, *Pour Marx*, (Paris: Maspero), 1966, p. 24.
- 24) L. 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, p. 130.
- 25) L. Althusser, *Pour Marx*, op. cit., p. 56.

- 26) K. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach", in: K. Marx/F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, London, 1975, p. 4.
- 27) K. Marx/F. Engels, "The German Ideology", in: K. Marx/F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, London, 1976, p. 54.
- 28) K. Marx/F. Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Part", in: K. Marx/F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, London, 1976, p. 504.
- 29) K. Marx/F. Engels, "The German Ideology", o.c., p. 49. See also "Communist Manifesto", p. 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) K. Löwith, *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen*, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer), 1967, p. 47.
- 31) K. Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844", in: K. Marx/F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, London, 1975, p. 296.
- 32) K. Marx/F. Engels, "The Holy Family", op. cit.
- 33) K. Marx, *Marx's Grundrisse*, (edited by David McLellan), (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan), 1971, p. 17.
- 34) In his book *Naturrecht und menschliche Würde*, (Natural Right and Human Dignity), (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp), 1961, the German Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch pleaded for guaranteeing human rights in the countries of the Soviet bloc. However, this sympathetic argument remained unworthy of belief as long as Bloch still based himself on Marx without having subjected his monism to a fundamental criticism.

YOU JUST READ (OR COPIED) ONE CHAPTER OF THE BOOK

***BECOMING MARX –
HOW THE YOUNG KARL MARX BECAME A
MARXIST***

By Marcel H. Van Herpen

Paperback: 295 pages

Publisher: Cicero Foundation Press

Year of Publication: 2016

Language: English

ISBN: 978-90-75759-14-3

Product Dimensions: 14.7 x 1.8 x 21.4 centimeters

Shipping Weight: 450 grams

Includes: Bibliography and Index

Price: Euro 32, 90

MARCEL H. VAN HERPEN is director of the Cicero Foundation, a think tank based in Maastricht and Paris. He specializes in political philosophy and defense and security developments in Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union. His books include *Putinism – The Slow Rise of a Radical Right Regime in Russia*; *Putin’s Wars – The Rise of Russia’s New Imperialism*; and *Putin’s Propaganda Machine – Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy*. Visit his author’s website at www.marcelhvanherpen.com or follow him on Twitter @MarcelHVanHerpe

WHY YOU SHOULD BUY THIS BOOK:

“AN IMPORTANT BOOK” – HANS ACHTERHUIS

BECOMING MARX

How the Young Karl Marx
Became a Marxist

MARCEL H. VAN HERPEN

“AN IMPORTANT BOOK”

- **HANS ACHTERHUIS**, Dutch philosopher and official ‘Thinker of the Fatherland’ (2011 - 2013) on the Dutch edition of this book.

In recent years the philosophy of Karl Marx has met with a new interest. The problems of the modern capitalist market economy have showed that Marx - far from being a ‘dead dog’ to be buried in the dustbin of history - has still a lot to tell to our contemporary world. This book proposes a critical assessment of his thinking. The young Karl Marx was a typical representative of German Romanticism, who, under the influence of his father, began to be interested in theories of **human alienation**. In this book we follow in detail his intellectual development. We are introduced in the theories of Schiller, Rousseau, Hegel, and Feuerbach, that shaped his thinking and see how, from the beginning, Marx’s objectives are deeply ethical. He wants to end man’s alienation and change the egoistic ‘bourgeois’ of civil society into an ethical citizen.

Paradoxically, this ethical stance led him to criticize **human rights**, which, he thought, only defended the rights of the selfish bourgeois – a position, which is a central flaw of his theory. Young Marx’s commitment to end human alienation brings him to search for a subject, capable of revolutionary change. He finds this subject in the proletariat and predicts an increasing **polarization between the haves and the have-nots**, leading to a revolution. Although this polarization theory seemed to be definitively refuted by the advent of the modern welfare state, it recently made a come-back with the debate around **Thomas Piketty’s** book “Capitalism in the 21st Century”, in which the author argued that **inequality in Western societies is increasing** and has reached levels similar to those existing at the end of the 19th century. Marx, therefore, is far from dead. He is there to stay with us. Although Marx’s solutions may not be appropriate for the contemporary world, his ideas on human alienation and his critique of economic inequality will remain an enduring source of inspiration.

This book describes and analyzes in a critical way, also accessible for non-philosophers:

- Rousseau’s and Schiller’s theories of alienation
- Hegel’s metaphysical thinking
- Feuerbach’s critique of Hegel
- The development of Marx’s different theories of alienation
- Marx’s ambivalent position vis-à-vis human rights
- The relation between politics and ethics in the young Marx

- Marx's theory of the proletariat
- Marx's polarization and immiseration theories: have they been refuted or not?
- Marx today: A critical assessment of Marx's theories and suppositions in the light of the debate inspired by Thomas Piketty's *Capitalism in the 21st Century*

Contents

Part I: Marx's Sources of Inspiration: Rousseau, Schiller, Hegel, Feuerbach

Chapter 1 - Rousseau's Search for the Moral Citizen

Chapter 2 - Friedrich Schiller's Theory of Alienation

Chapter 3 - Hegel: The Metaphysics of Alienation

Chapter 4 - Ludwig Feuerbach: Religion as Self-Projection

Part II: Marx's Theories of Alienation and Revolution: Influences of Schiller, Rousseau, Hegel, Feuerbach, and Ruge

Chapter 5 - Marx and Schiller: Marx's First, Unknown, Theory of Alienation

Chapter 6 - The 'True State': Marx's Earliest – Liberal – Political Ideal

Chapter 7 - From Critique of Religion to Critique of Society: The Influence of Arnold Ruge

Chapter 8 - Marx's Theory of Political Alienation

Chapter 9 - The Relationship between Ethics and Politics in Marx

Chapter 10 - Marx and Human Rights: An Ambivalent Relationship

Chapter 11 - From Alienation to Revolution: Marx's 'Discovery' of the Proletariat

Part III. The Polarization Thesis: Was Marx Right or Was He Wrong?

Chapter 12 - Revolution and Emancipation: A Critical Assessment of Marx's Suppositions

Chapter 13 - The State: A Moral Beacon?

Chapter 14 - Marx's Critique of the Market: Was Marx Right after All?

HOW TO BUY THE BOOK?

The book can only be ordered directly at the Cicero Foundation. To obtain the book:

1. Send an email to cicerofoundation@gmail.com in which you indicate the number of ordered copies and your name and address.
2. The book will be sent immediately after reception of your payment. Please pay per bank transfer to:

The Cicero Foundation, Maastricht, The Netherlands

Bank Account: IBAN: NL23 INGB 0006494144

BIC: INGBNL2A

IMPORTANT:

Buyers from the Netherlands: Add 5 euros for postage and handling. Total price for 1 copy: 37,90 euros.

Buyers from outside the Netherlands: Add 10 euros for postage and handling. Total price for 1 copy: 42,90 euros. (In case you want to order more copies, contact the Cicero Foundation for a reduced price).