KARL MARX’S THEORY OF REVOLUTION
by Hal Draper

I: STATE AND BUREAUCRACY
To
ANNE DRAPER
(1917–1973)
Trade union organizer,
champion of workingwomen's liberation,
and revolutionary Marxist

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FOREWORD

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

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

1. POLITICS

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

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

Marx's political ideas have not generally interested "marxology" (one of the most curious of industries) except as incidental appendages to the "grand theory." The exceptions are few if outstanding. To be
sure, a theory of the state usually has to be stated somewhere, and a reference to the “dictatorship of the proletariat” is dictated by custom. Beyond that, there are few treatments, even inadequate ones, of most of the questions in this area.

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

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

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

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

For Marx was before all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat, which he was the first to make conscious of its own position and its needs, conscious of the conditions of its emancipation. Fighting was his element. And he fought with a passion, a tenacity, and a success such as few could rival.
Writing to an old friend, Marx had had occasion to express his contempt for the philistines who "consider people like you and me immature fools who all this time have not been cured of their revolutionary fantasies." It is this Marx, the political man, that is our subject.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* In this connection, see the passage from Marx cited in Chapter 22, pp. 570-571.
Look at any given society through this lens, and two basic classes appear. One is the class of direct producers—this being Marx’s generic term for those who perform the actual productive labor, the working class of the particular society. The other is the class that controls the appropriation of the surplus product, the ruling class. It may accomplish this control through control of the means of production, but this latter relationship itself may need explaining in terms of the former. The two classes thus defined are the so-called polar classes of the society—“the extremes of a relation of production,” as Marx put it speaking of the capitalist/worker relation in bourgeois society. It is the polar-class antithesis that forms the skeleton around which a given mode of production is socially structured. Around this central relationship the rest of the class structure takes shape, including elements left over from obsolete social forms.

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

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

5. Therefore, any formal definition of class is, at bottom, only a restatement in other words of Marx’s basic method of sociohistorical analysis, not some special lexicographical formula. Many marxologists have reproached Marx for failing to give a dictionary definition of class which they can recognize as such, because they look for something which is alien to Marx’s method—a sort of litmus-paper test for class
which can be applied on the basis of formal descriptive elements *abstracted from the specific societal relationships*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. MARX

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

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

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

We know in advance that we will evoke general indignation from the sentimental bunco-artists and Democratic elocutionists. . . . This makes no difference at all to us. Our task is ruthless criticism, even more of alleged friends than of open foes; and in affirming our position on this, we gladly forgo cheap Democratic popularity.14
In any case, the subject of this work is not Marxism in some inclusive sense but the theory, conceptions, and views of Karl Marx. It goes without saying that everyone concerned must in some fashion consider how Marx's views apply to the contemporary world, and, extrapolating from Marx to the present, arrive at a modern adaptation, which then becomes a "Marxism." No doubt the marks of my own opinions on this score are visible. But the goal is nevertheless a faithful discovery of Marx's views—not as the end-all of a political inquiry but as a basis for it.

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

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

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

The situation began to change with the publication, between 1961 and 1968, of the German edition of the Marx-Engels Werke. But experience has shown—in the case of the Paris manuscripts of 1844, for
example, or the Grundrisse notebooks—that access to an important new source of knowledge seldom changes the entrenched myths until ten or twenty years have passed. The present work could not have been written before the publication of the Werke, practically speaking. There was a similar pattern when the great Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe was published in the 1920s, collecting the writings of the young Marx (later extended through 1848). Its eventual impact on the understanding of Marx's early development was revolutionizing—but limited, since it was not allowed to continue.

4. METHOD

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

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

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

* An example of the attention paid to "what Marx really said" is a book entitled What Marx REALLY Said, by H. B. Acton—a concise (141-page) compilation of vulgar marxology that refrains from mentioning that Marx had a theory of the state, let alone telling what it was. This tour de force is in great vogue in some circles.
introductory passage (when revolutionaries have died, "attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons . . .") Lenin makes a promise and an apology:

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

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

Lenin's insistence on long and full quotation of "Marx and Engels themselves" is pregnant with potentialities and problems, one no less than the other. It is the only real alternative to that quotation-mongering which leads to sterile results. Quotation-mongering is no recent phenomenon: it started while Engels was still around to comment on it. As it happens, the pace-setters came from the Russian émigré movements as early as the 1880s and 1890s. "If you have followed the Russian emigration literature of the last decade," wrote Engels to a Russian correspondent, "you will yourself know how, for instance, passages from Marx's writings and correspondence have been interpreted in the most contradictory ways, exactly as if they had been texts from the classics or from the New Testament, by various sections of Russian emigrants." 18 A Russian visitor later reminisced that "Engels wished that the Russians—and not only the Russians—would not pick quotations from Marx or from him, Engels, but would think as Marx
would have thought in their place, and that it was only in that sense that the word Marxist had any raison d'être. . . . "19

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

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

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

5. ENGELS

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

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

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

Up until September 1870, when Engels moved from Manchester to London, such consultations took place partly by mail, partly during
visits. In the former case, therefore, we sometimes have a record in writing, such as Engels' composition of the important propaganda pamphlet "The Prussian Military Question and the German Workers' Party." Here we can see Marx proposing general and specific changes. The more important consultations were often held over for visits (by Marx to Manchester, for example). After Engels moved to a residence near Marx in London, their correspondence naturally fell to an intermittent trickle, but the two talked over issues and affairs virtually every day. Such intimate, almost symbiotic, collaboration over decades does not, of course, guarantee identity on every question; but it cannot be blithely ignored as if we were dealing with two ordinary political comrades. Another element in this relationship would have been clear even if Engels had not publicly asserted it, as he did. While Engels never gave the impression of lacking confidence in his own capacities and opinions, this same sometimes bumptious man looked on Marx as his intellectual mentor and superior.

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

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

It is a nuisance for the fantasists that *Anti-Dübrin* came before Marx's death, and that their collaboration on the work is well documented, Marx even writing one chapter of the book. I am afraid that the mythologists are unaware that Marx wrote a blanket endorsement of the book for party publication. Even if this record did not exist, it would take an imaginative reconstruction of their relations to suppose that such a work, written under such circumstances, could have been published by Engels in the party press without Marx's detailed scrutiny.
By its nature the work was a polemical defense of Marx and the views associated with his name in the first place. It had to be a production of the "firm." It is a measure of the propensity to concoct nonsense that ambitious essays "proving" that Anti-Dübrin is basically anti-Marx can be written without even raising or mentioning (let alone discussing) the plain fact that all this anti-Marxism went by Marx’s anxious inspection without raising a murmur.23 Obviously, Marx did not understand Marxism either; only the mythologists do.

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

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

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

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

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

6. FORMAT

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

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

Much of Marx’s very early writing suffers from an overabundance of emphasized words and phrases, often for reasons unclear to our contemporary eyes. But it is a mistake to adopt the course, which has lately become frequent, of omitting this emphasis, and it has been retained here. It may seem less puzzling if two things are borne in mind. First, the original German system of using letter spacing instead of italics was rather less wearing on the optic nerves, and second,
the letter spacing was often intended not to indicate emphasis in the usual sense but to draw attention to the coordinateness of thoughts, names, word-plays, and such, more like a pointed finger than a raised voice.

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

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

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THE SCOPE OF FORTHCOMING VOLUMES

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

VOLUME 2. CLASSES AND REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS.
   Part I. The Proletariat and Proletarian Revolution.
   1. Patterns of revolution. 2. The special class. 3. Anatomy of the prole-
tariat. 4. Trade unions and class. 5. Trade unions and politics. 6. The principle of class self-emancipation.

Part II. Social Classes in Struggle.

Part III. Mixed-Class Elements and Movements.

VOLUME 3. THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM
Part I. Marx versus Other Socialisms.

Part II. The Road to Political Power.

Part III. Theory of the Workers State.

Part IV. The Societal Revolution.
I

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

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

The transition was not primarily a philosophical process, nor one made through philosophical lucubrations. This young Marx is often portrayed as having come to a revolutionary understanding of society through a critique of Hegel's texts on the state and society. The biographical fact, however, is that he came to the content of his critique of the Hegelian view of the state through a year and a half of rubbing his nose against the social and political facts of life, which he encountered as the crusading editor of the most extreme leftist democratic newspaper in pre-1848 Germany, as well as in reading contemporary political literature.
Chapter 1: STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN HEGELESE

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

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

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

The frame of reference, then, is not necessarily anything that actually exists, but rather what should exist.

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

If the state is the communal sphere of society, in contrast civil society (bürgerliche Gesellschaft) embraces the private world of individual strivings and interests. Hence it especially comprises the economic strivings of individuals. In modern times, bourgeois economic
activity, with its emphasis on privatized dog-eat-dog relations, is pre-
eminently in the realm of civil society.*

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

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

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

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

** Further on, Marx notes that Stirner was able to perpetrate confusions with
In full maturity, in one of his most important summary statements, Marx traced his developed theory of the state back to his first critique of Hegel’s conception of state and civil society:

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

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

The broad use of state in Hegelese presents translation problems. Marx’s early formulations, in the Hegelian spirit, often come close to counterposing the state concept (the ideal state) against what we would now understand by the term. What we would call the state he might label the political state or the Beamtenstaat—the bureaucracy’s state apparatus, or just the bureaucracy. Thus, in one article Marx wrote that the bureaucracy is still too powerful, that not so much the whole state as part of the state, the ‘government,’ carries on a real political life [Staatsleben].9

In the present chapter, Staat in one context is translated the “body politic,” in the hope of suggesting a wider sphere of public affairs than is presently connoted by state. In another context Staatgeist is translated “public spirit,” for today “state spirit” would suggest almost the very opposite of what Marx was trying to say in 1842.

2. THE WINDS OF FREEDOM

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

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

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

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

* Prominent among these was the same L. Camphausen who was going to be the head of the first bourgeois government in 1848 and the target of Marx's revolutionary opposition. 11 As editor of the *RZ*, Marx defended Camphausen's election as deputy to the provincial Diet against criticism from the right. 12
Even French socialist ideas had penetrated, especially in the form most appealing to a modernizing, industrializing new class: Saint-Simonism. These new notions were denounced from the pulpit by the archbishop in Trier, Marx's birthplace; Marx's future father-in-law talked them up at home; and his law professor did the same at the University of Berlin. The first German socialist propagandist, Ludwig Gall, had recently used Trier as his center of operation. Marx's mind, long before it turned to social issues, was formed on the front where French ideas met German cultural patterns.

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

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

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

3. THE "FREEDOM OF THE PRESS" ARTICLES

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

The *RZ* article first takes up the speakers who opposed freedom of the press, analyzing the arguments used by deputies of three of the
social estates (Stande)* represented in the Diet: the princes, the landed gentry, and the “cities” (the urban bourgeoisie). It then discusses the arguments used by supporters of freedom of the press, from the cities and from the fourth estate (the peasantry).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

. . . with the lack of freedom of the press, all other freedoms become illusory. Every form of freedom conditions the others, just as every bodily member affects every other. Every time one form of freedom is rejected, it is freedom that is rejected and deprived of any semblance of life; after that, pure chance will decide just what will be the butt of unfreedom's overweening power. Unfreedom then becomes the rule, and freedom an exception to chance and arbitrariness. Thus there is nothing more topsy-turvy than to believe, when it is a question of a special existence-form of freedom, that this is a special question. It is the general question within a special sphere. Freedom remains freedom, whether it expresses itself in printer's ink or land or con-
science or a political assembly. . . . Thus the Sixth Rhenish Diet condemned itself in uttering its condemnation of freedom of the press.26

5. MARX REJECTS THE LIBERAL OPPOSITION

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

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

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

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

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

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

. . . we must recognize the unconditional advantage he has over the rambling and shambling argumentation lacking any standpoint which is put forward by those German liberals who think
they are honoring freedom when they transport it into the starry heaven of the imagination instead of the solid ground of reality. It is to these theoreticians of the imagination, these sentimental enthusiasts, who shun any contact between their ideal and vulgar reality as a profanation, that we Germans partly owe the fact that freedom has up to now remained a thing of the imagination and sentimentalism.

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

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

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

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

* The better speeches noted by Marx were made by one liberal and some representatives of the peasant estate. Marx quotes general statements from these deputies which at least seem to oppose censorship as such.34 Later in 1842 he called his own viewpoint "real liberalism" as distinct from the self-styled liberalism of the existing liberal opposition, which (he says) could be considered liberal only as against the ideas of 1819. This "real liberalism . . . has to strive for a completely new, deeper, more thoroughly developed, and freer political form corresponding to the consciousness of the people."35
and malaise,” fluctuating “between the willful callousness of privilege and the natural impotence of a half-liberalism. . . .” 36

6. MARX REJECTS THE BOURGEOIS APPROACH TO DEMOCRACY

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

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

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

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

The speaker who represents the urban bourgeoisie (the cities) as a social estate gets the shortest shrift of all in Marx’s article. “We have before us the opposition of the bourgeois, not of the citoyen.” He is treated with contempt: “The speaker from the cities thinks he is linking himself with Sieyès when he makes this bourgeois remark: ‘Freedom of
the press is a fine thing as long as bad people don't meddle in it.’” Marx derides this, and cites some other philistine generalities by this bourgeois. One of them points ahead to the role of the bourgeoisie in the 1848 revolution. The following passage by Marx begins with his quotation from the speaker:

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

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

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

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

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

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

To put freedom of the press in a class under freedom of business is to defend it while killing it in the course of the defense; for do I not abolish the freedom of a character when I demand that it be free in the same way another character is? Your freedom is not my freedom, cries the press to business. I will obey the laws of my sphere as you do the laws of yours. To be free in your way is
to me identical with unfreedom, just as the cabinetmaker would hardly feel pleased if he demanded freedom to carry on his trade and was given freedom to philosophize as an equivalent.

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

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

7. AGAINST BUREAUCRATIC (STATE) CONTROL OF THE MIND

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

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

What a difference between a judge and a censor!
The censor has no law except his master. The judge has no

* Here is how Marx worked out this basic notion: "Since a legal development is not possible without the development of laws; since a development of laws is impossible without a criticism of laws; since every criticism of laws sets the citizens' heads, hence also hearts, at variance with the existing laws; since this variance is perceived as dissatisfaction: then a loyal participation by the press in the development of the state is impossible if it must not stir up dissatisfaction with the existing legal conditions."\(^{43}\) It is interesting that this line of argument proves not merely the permissibility but the necessity of opposition, its indispensability even from the point of view of good government.
master except the law. But the judge has the duty of interpreting the law in order to apply it to individual cases as he understands it after painstaking scrutiny; the censor has the duty of understanding the law as it is officially interpreted for him in the individual case. The independent judge belongs neither to me nor to the government. . . . If I am hailed before a court, I am charged with contravening an existing law, and for a law to be violated it must first exist. Where no press law exists, none can be violated. The censorship does not charge me with violating an existing law. It condemns my opinion because it is not the opinion of the censor and his master. My public act, which stands before the world and its judgment, before the state and its law, is judged by a hidden and merely negative power which cannot constitute itself as law, shuns the light of day, and is not linked to any general principle.

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

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

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

You marvel at the delightful diversity, the inexhaustible riches of nature. You do not ask the rose to smell like the violet; but the richest of all, the mind, is supposed to exist in only a single manner? I am humorous, but the law orders people to write seriously. I am bold, but the law commands my style to be restrained. Gray on gray is the sole color of freedom, the authorized one.
The last remark is a reference to the regulations' allowance only of "serious and restrained pursuit of truth." Marx objects to any limitation. The regulations also demand that writings be "well-intentioned in tendency." Marx replies:

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

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

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

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

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

You place so much trust in your state institutions that you think they will make a saint out of a weak mortal, the government official, and make it possible for him to do the impossible. But you distrust your state organism so much that you fear the isolated opinion of a private person.... The Instruction asks unlimited trust in the officialdom, but it flows from unlimited
distrust of all nonofficials. Why shouldn’t we pay back in the same coin? Why shouldn’t this very officialdom be suspect in our eyes? 53

Which leads to another sweeping conclusion:

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

This basic defect permeates all our institutions. 54

8. FREEDOM MEANS DEMOCRATIC CONTROL FROM BELOW

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

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

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

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

* Cf. Marx later in the RZ: the state is in a healthy condition only “if law is the conscious expression of the will of the people, and therefore is made with the will of the people and by it.” 55
the words of the deputies be transformed into the publicly heard voice of the country." This representation of the people

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* In another RZ article Marx similarly attacks a legislator who "replaces self-determination by determination from above..." 58
** The (pre-1789) "old French" parlement was a high court, made up of the administrative nobility; it increasingly became political in function, but it was not an assembly of representatives.
said (as quoted by Marx) that "Man ... is by nature imperfect and immature and needs education for the whole duration of his development, which ceases only with his death." (It is the old argument, still lively today, that this-or-that people is not "ready" for democracy.) Marx's demolition of this "principled stand" (as he calls it) has not been surpassed. To begin with:

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

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

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

Next: how does one mature?

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

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

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

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that this doctrine is meant to apply only to human beings in the maturity of their faculties. We are not speaking of children .... For the same reason we may leave out of consideration those backward states of society in which the race itself may
Later on in the article, Marx dramatizes this thought with a little charade, apropos of various proposals for limiting freedom of the press:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* The Third Thesis is discussed in Chapter 10.
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who believe in "progress by command." 72 The solution to the problem posed by the imperfection of the individual is not to be found in entrusting command to allegedly superior individuals; the answer lies elsewhere:

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

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

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

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

. . . it goes without saying we would have made objections no less earnestly against banning the Elberfelder Zeitung, the Hamburger Correspondent, and the Coblentz Rhein- und Moselzeitung, for the juridical position is not altered by the moral character of the individual case, let alone its political and religious views.
The press is shorn of rights "as soon as its existence is made dependent on its opinions. To this day there exists no code of opinions and no law-court of opinions." When another paper distorted these passages, Marx reiterated them: "We counterpose the fact of bad opinions, for which there is no law-court, to the fact of bad actions which, if they are illegal, do have their law-court and their penal law." 77

9. THE DIALECTICS OF ENDS AND MEANS

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

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

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

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

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

This inquiry into the "nature" of the censorship does not turn into a philosophical one: Marx proceeds to some of the political arguments we have already summarized. He shows that censorship assumes not that
The society is healthy but that the press is diseased. In particular he attacks the justification of censorship as a preventive measure.* Then:

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

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

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

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

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

* This ends with an analogy:

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

** One more specification is perhaps already implied in the proposition that "Not only the result, but also the way to it, belongs to the truth." This is the consideration that an "unholy" means, consistently pursued, not only leads to "unholy" ends-as-consequences but also tends to transform (assimilate to itself) the end-as-intent. But this, after all, is only another way of pointing out that, in the long run, ideology tends to be brought into line with realities. On the reciprocal interrelation of ends and means, see Marx's comment on the process of exchange in the Grundrisse. 83
aside the ethical consequences for the moment, keep in mind that you could not enjoy the advantages of a free press without tolerating its inconveniences. You could not pluck the rose without its thorns! And what do you lose in losing a free press?

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

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

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

10. NOT ONLY WITH LANCES . . .

The Diet speaker, says Marx, denies that freedom is "a positive good" and argues in effect that "Freedom involves the possibility of evil. Therefore freedom is evil." Marx replies that this position is untenable even from the speaker's viewpoint. For there always is freedom
of the press in a sense—if only for the privileged few, for the government. The censor enjoys "freedom of the press," does he not? So it cannot be evil in itself. In fact, it is so precious that these people want it for themselves alone!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* The German Kritik translates as either "criticism" or "critique"; this should be borne in mind for later chapters also. Kritik was used virtually as a technical
Censorship is criticism as a government monopoly; but does not criticism lose its rational character if it is not open but secret, ... if it operates not with the sharp knife of reason but with the dull shears of arbitrary power, if it wants only to make criticisms but not take them, ... if it finally becomes so uncritical as to mistake an individual for universal wisdom, the verdict of force for the verdict of reason, inkspots for sunspots, the censor's crooked blue-penciling for mathematical constructions, and the striking of blows for striking arguments? 91

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

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

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

We will give them the answer that the Spartans Sperthias and Bulis gave the Persian satrap Hydarnes: "Hydarnes, the advice term in the Young Hegelian vocabulary. (Compare the tag "Critical Criticism," the philosophical label used by the Bauers, which is derided in The Holy Family; see Chapter 10.) The word connoted the process of analytical thought in arriving at truth through counterposition of views, and by extension, theoretical analysis in general. As Marx moved to the left, he gave it a more militant content—"It is not a surgical knife, it is a weapon"—by 1843. 90
you give us is not equally balanced on both sides. For you have tried one of the alternatives on which you advise; but the other remains untried by you. That is, you know what it means to be a slave; but you have never yet tasted freedom, to see if it is sweet or not. For had you tasted it, you would advise us to fight for it not only with lances but with axes.''

11. THROUGH BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY—AND BEYOND

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

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

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

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

His immediate solution, in order not to break with these "progressive-minded" permeators of the system, was to suggest a division of labor: "all general theoretical discussions on political constitutions" should go
into “purely scientific” journals, not into the newspaper, which should tackle the thing from the side of concrete problems: “Real theory must be clarified and developed within the framework of concrete conditions and existing relationships.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* The volumes were to be published in Cologne by Hermann Becker. He was arrested (by order of Marx's brother-in-law, Minister of Interior Ferdinand von Westphalen, as Marx noted ironically more than once) as part of the harassment which led to the Cologne Communist Trial of 1852. Becker had already issued a prospectus, dated April 15, 1851, about the time the first volume appeared.101
During the Rheinische Zeitung period, Marx's constant concern with freedom of the press was not due only to the importance of this freedom. The censorship was not merely a topical issue; it was a daily threat. In January 1843 the authorities finally decreed the paper's suppression as of April 1. Some months before, Marx had written a friend:

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

The government cracked down both because the political content of the paper was dangerous and because it was reaching people. When Marx became editor there were only 800 to 900 subscriptions; in a month the figure was up to 1,820; in another month and a half to 3,400. Actual readership must have been a multiple of these figures. The government issued its decree before circulation mounted again.

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

Oh, leave Berlin, its dust and grit and sand,
And watery tea, and overclever crew
Who use Hegelian phrases to construe
Anything they do not understand.
In contrast, Marx was operating in the thick of the most advanced political and economic milieu in Germany, flanked on the one hand by the practical men of the government's watchdog agencies, and on the other by the practical businessmen who were shareholders and sponsors of the *RZ*. Between the harassment of the one and the screams of the other, he was taking a quick course in some of the socioeconomic problems of the day.

1. **THE SHIFT IN ORIENTATION**

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

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

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

   The *Rheinische Zeitung*, which cannot concede even *theoretical reality* to communist ideas in their present form, much less wish their *practical realization* or even consider them possible, will submit these ideas to a thoroughgoing criticism. . . . but writings like those of Leroux, Considérant, and above all Proudhon's perspicacious work cannot be criticized with the first superficial notions that occur to you, but only after long-sustained and deep-searching study.\(^5\)
As a matter of fact, Marx, along with other writers for the RZ, was already involved in a study group on these ideas, but he had not jumped to embrace them. Indeed, he never did accept "communist ideas in their present form."

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

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

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

Now, Marx's main point in this article is that he has no ready solution for these problems; he is arguing only for the need to discuss them openly. One must remember that it was only in this same year, 1842, that the words socialism and communism appeared in German for the first time.8
2. The Wood Theft Law. Later that same month, Marx started writing another article on the debates in the Rhenish Diet. The subject may strike the modern reader as a tenth-rate problem compared with those already mentioned, yet this article is easily the most important that Marx wrote as editor, and we will come back to it shortly. For now it must suffice to explain that the subject of the article was the proposal, on behalf of the owners of forested land, of a harsher law to stop the gathering of dead wood. Wood gathering had been a traditional right of the peasants, but now when times were hard for them, the state was cracking down on it. Even dead wood was needed for commercial enterprises. As a result of this collision between the needs of mass poverty and the needs of property and business, prosecutions for wood theft had climbed dramatically during the preceding decade, especially in the agricultural district around Trier (Marx's hometown) and Coblentz. For example, around Trier, wood thefts formed an amazing 97 percent of all thefts in the period 1830-1836 (for which there are figures); in all Prussia in 1836, offenses in forest, hunting, and pasture lands (probably mostly wood thefts and poaching) formed almost 77 percent of all prosecutions. This situation continued until the 1848 revolution.9

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* The Rhenish historian H. Stein wrote in this connection: "Karl Marx's articles on the Moselle and wood theft questions, from the contemporaneous viewpoint, had the task of drawing public attention to the distressed economic situation and to the defects of the administrative bureaucracy, both of which were little known or not at all known among broader circles due to the pressure of the pre-1848 press censorship. But even today these essays still deserve the attention of scientific research. They are contributions to an important sector of Rhenish economic and social history...." 11
do with the way people lived rather than merely the way they ratiocinated. The practice—not merely the theory—of freedom of expression built a bridge of struggle between the two spheres which were too well separated in Hegelian theory: the sphere of the state and the sphere of civil society, which included everyday economic life.

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

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

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

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

But if the government official upbraids the private citizen for elevating his private affairs to the level of state interests, the private citizen likewise upbraids the official for demeaning the state interests into his private affair, into interests from which all others are excluded as laymen, so that even the crystal-clearest reality seems illusory to him as against the reality embodied in the documents under his nose—which is therefore the official reality, the state reality . . . so that only the domain of governmental authority seems to him to be the state, as against the world which lies outside this domain of authority and plays the role of object for the state. . . .
A little later we are going to see a sharper formulation of the idea that the state bureaucracy comes to look on the state as its own private property.

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

2. WOOD THEFT AND THE STATE

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

The basis for this too was laid during the RZ period, but only the basis. To complete this development, it was necessary for Marx to develop a concept of the state that did not involve the Hegelian type of dichotomy between state and civil society, but, on the contrary, showed the integral dependence of the state on the socioeconomic sphere. The need was for forging the theoretical links between politics and economics. The unmet task was not simply to realize the importance of the "social question," but to utilize this new understanding in order to shed a backlight on the old "political question" and see it too in a new way, without rejecting it.
There are already some anticipations of this in the material we have reviewed so far, but it is in Marx's article on the wood-theft law that its beginnings can be seen most clearly. Here elements of later Marxist theory exist in the form of discrete insights, germinal ideas that are not yet connected.

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

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

The rights of property versus the rights of people

Typically, Marx—still the philosopher by training—approaches the question from the abstract side in the intellectual fashion of the time. The law subordinates the rights of men to the rights of trees—their right not to have branches broken off, and so on. In view of the penalties against picking up dead wood, either human beings or trees are going to be mistreated: which shall it be? 17

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

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

If every violation of property, without distinction or closer determination, is theft, then would not all private property be theft? By my private property, do I not exclude every other person from this property? Do I not therefore violate this right of property? 18
To be sure, the phrase that "property is theft" had two years previously acquired a succès de scandale with the publication of Proudhon's *What Is Property?* It had made such a rapid tour of Europe that to this day some writers still believe that Proudhon meant what it said and others that he originated it. But certainly in 1842 it sounded very radical and was associated with subversive doctrines. Here Marx's way of putting it is juridical rather than social, but it fulfills the function of questioning the sacredness of the rights of property.

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

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

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

* In his 1882 essay "The Mark," written as an appendix to *Socialism Utopian and Scientific* in order to deal with the old German village community, Engels refers back to the process whereby rising capitalism eliminated the last remnants of common property in land: "The chief use of the common Mark was in pasturage for the cattle and feeding of pigs on acorns. Besides that, the forest yielded timber and firewood, litter for the animals, berries and mushrooms. ... The common woodlands that are still met with here and there are the remnants of these ancient unpartitioned marks. Another relic, at all events in West and South Germany, is the idea, deeply rooted in the popular consciousness, that the forest should be common property, wherein everyone may gather flowers, berries, mushrooms, beechnuts, and the like, and generally so long as he does no mischief, act and do as he will. But this also Bismarck remedies, and with his famous berry legislation brings down the Western provinces to the level of the old Prussian squirearchy."¹⁹
of a conception of the relation between law and socioeconomic inequality. Man, he says, has been divided into two groups "whose relationship is not equality but rather inequality—an inequality fixed by laws. The world condition of unfreedom requires laws of unfreedom. . ."\footnote{21} How has law entrenched inequality? And how does Marx pull off the trick of proving that customary rights, as distinct from statutory rights, should redound only to the poor?

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

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

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

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

From another side, Marx uses the Diet debates to show how the customary rights of the poor get destroyed. Take the question of berrying: it had been carried on by the children of the poor since time immemorial, with the forest owners' toleration. But in the Diet a deputy explained why it could not be tolerated now: in his district these fruits had become an article of commerce, shipped out by the
barrel. In other words, a customary right had to be made illegal because it collided with a new commercial interest—because it had been made into a "monopoly," says Marx, a monopoly of the rich. 25

The state and the property owner

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

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

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

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

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

This arrogant presumption of Private Interest, whose shabby soul has never been moved or enlightened by a single thought of the state, is a serious and profound lesson for the state. If the state lowers itself, if only on a single point, so far as to carry on its
activity in the manner of private property instead of in its own way, it follows immediately that it must accommodate itself to the limits of private property, in the form of its means. Private Interest is cunning enough to push this consequence to the point where it makes itself, in its most limited and shabby form, into the limit and rule of the state’s action. . . . But if it clearly appears here that Private Interest wishes to and must prostitute the state to the means of Private Interest, would it not follow that a representative of Private Interest, the estates, want to and must prostitute the state to the thinking of Private Interests? 29

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

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

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

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

Private Interest considers itself the end-aim of the world. Therefore, if the law does not realize this end-aim, it is unsuitable law. Law which is disadvantageous to Private Interest is therefore law with disadvantageous consequences. 33
Finally, another question arises: is the wood thief to be punished for an offense against the property owner or against the law (the state)? The fact that the owner has been given authority to enforce the law himself suggests this thought:

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

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

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

* The article has an earlier section on crime and punishment which we have not yet noted. It is directed against the practice of draconic penalties for wood theft. Marx attacks the idea of treating these acts as crimes, even if they are infractions of the law: "The punishment ought not to inspire more abhorrence than the offense; the disgracefulness of the crime ought not to be transformed into the disgracefulness of the law; the groundwork of the state is undermined if misfortune turns into crime or crime into misfortune." But the Diet is far from this point of view: "The petty, wooden, mindless, and selfish soul of [Self-] Interest sees only one point, the point where it has been damaged ..." In this way the law is regarded by the powers above simply as a rat-catcher, an instrument for dealing with vermin. But the "lawbreakers" here are human beings, citizens of the state—it is wrong for the state to make "criminals" out of them. So goes Marx's line of thought. 35
It has been shown that "private interest has overruled right." Of course, the Diet should act in the interest of the whole province, not of special interests, "but it goes without saying that Special Interest knows no fatherland just as it knows no province; it knows no general spirit just as it knows no homeland spirit." 39

3. THROUGH SOCIAL REALITY TO THEORY

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

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

Once again, as in the wood-theft article, the most interesting idea is the dominance of property interests in the governmental setup, observed as a fact and counterposed to the ideal of the state. But this time the spotlight is on the question of popular representation. Should the people be represented by social estates (classes) or by ownership of land? Of course, neither is satisfactory to Marx. 41 He directs particular attention to the play of competing class differences in politics, and formulates his objections within the framework of the Hegelian concept of the state. That is: the ideal-rational state should represent the people's interests as a communal collectivity, rather than the narrow selfish interests of parts of society; class differences distort the state. 42

The important thing is not the extent to which Marx still discusses in

* However, allowance must also be made for the inhibitory effect of the increasing pressure of the censorship, which put the paper's fate in jeopardy if Marx gave free rein to his pen. Indeed, Cornu discusses this article as an example of a pulled punch. 40
terms of what should be, but the extent to which he brings out social reality: the clash of class interests within society as reflected in the state.

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is not much point in simply repeating again that Marx's thinking is still imprisoned within the Hegelian conception of the "true state," that is, the one that does not exist in reality. What is happening during Marx's RZ period is that, within the womb of this abstraction, a realistic appraisal of the real forces and dynamic lines of power in
society is in gestation. It will be born later, not as the result of some sudden intellectual act of creation at a particular moment, but because it was already roughly formed before it emerged from the philosophical-speculative matrix in which it incubated.

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

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

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

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

I heard Marx say again and again that it was precisely through concerning himself with the wood-theft law and with the situation of the Moselle peasants that he was shunted from pure politics over to economic conditions, and thus came to socialism.46
In his 1859 preface to the *Critique*, Marx next mentions the effect of having to write his article on communism in reply to the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, and adds:

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

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

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

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

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

1. INVERTING HEGEL

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

*Recht* ("right") included the field of law, jurisprudence, state concepts, and even (political) justice at large.
in the course of the real struggle were also validated by "philosophical" analysis.

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

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

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

More important is this passage:

> Hegel is not to be blamed because he describes the essence of the modern state as it is, but rather because he presents What Is as the essence of the state. Whether the rational is real [actual, existent] is manifested precisely in the contradiction of the irrational reality which everywhere is the opposite of what it predicates and predicates the opposite of what it is.⁵
And more of the same.* In terms of political ideas, this was eventually to push Marx toward the realization that it is not the state that shapes society, but society that shapes the state.

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

2. THE STATE AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

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

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

* Like: "He [Hegel] does not allow himself to measure the idea by what exists; he must measure what exists by the idea." And for him, "The philosophical task is not the embodiment of thought in determinate political realities but the evaporation of these realities in abstract thought."
The long discussion on primogeniture, then, reflects an important front of the struggle between the new and the old propertied classes, and the former's resentment of the stifling hold of the aristocracy on the society. "Landownership is ... true private property," whereas "the wealth of the 'universal class' [the bureaucracy] and of the 'business class' is not true private property," writes Marx, with the vague explanation that the property of the latter two groups is in some sense "universal" and "social," that is, not simply a "particular" interest. When he writes further that "The political constitution at its highest summit is, then, the constitution of private property. The highest political opinion is the opinion of private property," he is referring mainly to the big landowners' class. But the relationship formulated here between this private property and the state is similar to that expounded later with reference to bourgeois private property.

It is in this connection that he speaks of "the power of abstract private property over the political state," as against Hegel's illusion that the institution of primogeniture represents the power of the political state over private property. What then is the power of the political state over private property? Private property's own power, its essence brought into existence. What is left to the political state as against this essence? The illusion that it is the determining element when [in fact] it is the determined element.

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

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

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

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

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

3. THE STATE AND THE BUREAUCRACY

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

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

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

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

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

Hegel had raised something like this question himself—whether state sovereignty is the "private property" of the royal family—in order to
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deny it categorically. (Not in his *Philosophy of Right* but in the somewhat later *Philosophy of History*.\(^{14}\)) Turning Hegel around on this offered a useful way of rooting state theory in the real society.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Twenty-eight years later Marx again used this figure of the state power as a sort of "private property." In a contrast between the Commune and the bourgeois state, he remarked that under the Commune, "The public functions would cease to be a private property bestowed by a central government upon its tools."\(^{15}\)
but of the capacity of the universal class to be really universal, that is, to be the class of every citizen. But Hegel proceeds on the premise of the pseudo-universal, illusorily universal class, the universality of a particular class.17

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

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

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

... as if the hierarchy itself were not the chief abuse, and as if the few personal offenses of the officials were at all comparable with its necessary hierarchical offense; the hierarchy punishes the official insofar as he commits an offense against the hierarchy, or commits an offense which is needless from the hierarchy's standpoint; but it takes him under protection whenever the hierarchy itself commits an offense through him; besides, it is hard to convince the hierarchy of an offense committed by its own agents....19
Another solution, according to Hegel, is the countervailing restraint exercised by communities and corporative bodies, which allegedly supplement hierarchical control from above with control from below. Regarding this, Marx interjects: "as if this control does not take place from the viewpoint of the bureaucracy hierarchy itself..."

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

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

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

4. POLITICAL LEXICON: DEMOCRACY

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

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

* Note that here government and governmental power denote the executive as distinct from the legislative department. The executive is indeed the entire meaningful government when the legislative assembly is mostly window-dressing and the judiciary bodies are mere appendages. This terminological restriction of government to the executive appears again prominently in the drafts for The Civil War in France, especially the second draft, but (interestingly enough) this usage is clearly eliminated from the corresponding passage of the final version.21 However, it keeps cropping up because it is the common political language of the time.
being or taking on new meanings and connotations. It cannot be assumed that any given term meant the same thing then as it does to us now, or that it had one uniform meaning even then. 23

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

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

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

As an indicator of social content, democracy could be used almost as the equivalent of social equality, or equalitarianism in general, as it was in Tocqueville, without losing its tendency to blur back and forth between such social meanings and the governmental forms presumed to implement them. From this side too—among the English Chartists, for
example—the Democracy came to refer not to government at all but to the movement of the people, or to the People, the Masses. (In fact, the Democracy took on something of the red bogyman character that the Masses had in a more recent era.) This last meaning will become very important when we take up the problems of the bourgeois revolution. A “democrat” was one who sympathized with the Cause of the People; perhaps the first published use of the word communist was Caber’s 1840 article, “Le démocrate devenu communiste, malgré lui.”

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

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

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

In the Middle Ages the political constitution is the constitution of private property, but only because the constitution of private property is a political constitution. In the Middle Ages the life of the people and the life of the state are identical. Man is the real
principle of the state, but it is *unfree* man. It is therefore the *democracy of unfreedom*, alienation carried through to the end.  \(^{26}\)

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

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

### 5. THE STATE AND DEMOCRACY

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

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

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

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

Marx quotes a passage from Hegel stating that "the sovereignty of the people is one of the confused notions based on the wild idea of the people." Marx retorts: "The 'confused notions' and the 'wild idea' are to be found here only on Hegel's part.... The question is just this:
Isn't sovereignty as embodied in the monarch an illusion? Sovereignty of the monarch or sovereignty of the people, that is the question.... And these, he adds, are "two completely opposed concepts of sovereignty." 29

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

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

* At about this time Marx was making notes and excerpts on his historical readings. One of his excerpts from a work by L. Ranke is summarized this way by the editors of the Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe (MEGA): "Out of fear of the revolutionary demands of the people was born quasi-legitivism, the union of popular sovereignty and divine right." 30 Here too the thought is that popular sovereignty lay behind the absolutism of the monarchy, in the specific sense that the Crown leaned on the determining power of the people in order to subordinate the aristocracy. The same thought was expressed by Engels in an article the following year—quite independently, for the common source was Hegel (as Engels' context showed on the very next page). Explaining why the English system is not as democratic as commonly supposed, he wrote: "England is indeed a democracy, but in the way Russia is a democracy; for, without being aware of it, the people rule everywhere, and in all states the government is only a different expression for the people's level of education." 31
indirectly, for the people (remember) are always "the real state," even if this does not appear to be so; whereas under a democracy, "The constitution appears as what it is, the free product of men." 32

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

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

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

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

Q.E.D.—What Marx has thus done is to build a bridge of argumentation, wholly inside the Hegelian system, between democracy as a form
of government embodying the open sovereignty of the people, and democracy as the unity of the universal and the particular.

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

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

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

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

Hegel mentioned the form of the republic without clearly differentiating it from the idea of a democracy, a blurring of terms that was very common. Marx proceeds to explain quite clearly that while "the abstract state-form of democracy is the republic," a state-form which is merely republican in political constitution is not a real democracy if
democracy does not permeate the social as well as the political complex. Going right to the point, he gives the example of the American republic:

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

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

6. DEMOCRACY AND REVOLUTION

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

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

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

* Marx made this same point in passing earlier in the notebook: the state needs a constitution "that has within itself the character and principle of advancing along with advances in consciousness, advancing along with man as he is in actuality, which is possible only when 'man' has become the principle of the constitution."\(^{38}\)
It was the legislative power that made the French Revolution; in general, that is what made the great organic, universal revolutions, when it came out in its specific character as the ruling element.

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

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

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

This is spelled out a little later:

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

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

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

The striving of civil society to transform itself into political society, or to make political society the actual society, manifests
itself as a striving for the most fully possible universal participation in legislative power.\footnote{45}

This also means the widest possible suffrage, universal suffrage:

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

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

As before, this reference to the “dissolution of the political state” is not an echo but, more accurately, a correction of the newly fashionable talk about no-state. This is quite clear here since the dissolution of “the abstract political state” is linked with “the dissolution of civil society” too; that is, both are to be abolished as contradictories, as mutually antagonistic particularities, because the truly democratic state establishes a unity between politics and economics.\footnote{*The notebook contains still another reference to the abolition of the “political state,” when Marx discusses a situation where “on the one side stands the political state (government and sovereign) and, on the other, civil society as distinct from the political state (with its various estates). Thereupon, then, the political state is abolished as a totality.”\footnote{47} The last word, emphasized by Marx, makes doubly clear that what is to be abolished is the claim of the political state—that is, the absolutist regime (government and sovereign)—to constitute the totality of society.}
7. THE BREAK WITH HEGEL

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

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

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

This means, Marx charges, that Hegel would really like to pack the lower chamber with “pensioned government officials.” Hegel demands not only that the deputies have a “sense of the state” but also a predilection for hierarchical and bureaucratic authority. He has (Marx demonstrates by further quotation) a deep distrust of what he calls “the so-called people” and their deputies, who are likely to be irresponsible. In reply, we do not get much of an argumentative refutation from Marx, but rather this: “Here Hegel’s unthinking inconsistency and ‘hierarchical’ sense become really disgusting.”49 In another few lines, Marx bursts out again:
Here Hegel goes almost to the point of servility. One sees he is infected through and through with the miserable arrogance of the Prussian world of officialdom, which, from the patrician heights of its bureaucratic narrowmindedness, looks down on the "self-reliance" of the "people's subjective opinion about itself." Here the "state" is everywhere identical for Hegel with the "government."

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

Here is the picture: at the beginning of the notebook, Hegel and Marx are, as it were, two philosophers looking at the state and society, and disagreeing. What happens at the end is that Marx sees Hegel in an entirely different context, apart from the extent of philosophical disagreement. Hegel is no longer simply in error: he is (to use a later expression) on the other side of the barricades. He is not simply voicing mistakes about the state; he is a voice of the state. He is not simply wrong about the problem; he is a part of the problem.
During the same months that Marx was settling accounts with Hegel in his private notebook, he was also trying to think out a political perspective for himself. Was he a socialist (communist), and if so, which of the dozen socialisms or half-dozen communisms was he for? If he did not like any of the existing isms, should he concoct one of his own? What else could one do?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In 1850, during the trial of a group of socialists arrested for organizing a Union of Workers Associations, the defense attorney (a Maître Laissac) retorted to a prosecutor’s jibe with these words: “Socialist—yes; that’s understood. We are all socialists, you as well as I, sir; only, we are so from different points of view.” The day before, a defendant had been rallied by the judge for using “these new words [like socialism], which crop up only in time of revolutions.” The defendant answered (with a shrug, I imagine): “They’re plays on words, if you wish; for
Buonarotti's book), whose best-known leaders were Blanqui and Barbès. But writers and publicists like Dezamy (whom Marx had already read, or read about, in Germany) collaborated in the clubs as "communists." The German artisan Wilhelm Weitling, learning the new ideas in Paris, worked out his own version of "communism."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The context demanded only a phrase like “the communal mode of being in which the individual exists.” By substituting the brand-new word communistic, with its current implications, Marx was suggesting an equation between the innate communality of man and his “communistic” essence. (The word Wesen also means “essence” or “essential nature.”)
question "Where from?" confusion reigns all the more about the question "Where to?" Not only has a general anarchy broken out among the reformers, but everyone will have to admit to himself that he has no exact notion of what is to be.\(^\text{13}\)

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

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

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

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

* The notable exception was Blanqui, who criticized the system-makers for quarreling about the future reconstruction of society. His famous formulation of this criticism was directed at Cabet and Proudhon, whose followers (he said) stood on a riverbank disputing what is on the other side. "Let us cross and see," he advised. That is, first make the revolution, and then worry about how to constitute the new society. This was an assertion that conceptions about socialist society were unnecessary; as we explain below, this is quite different from Marx's idea, which bears on how such conceptions are to be developed eventually. Moreover, in the Blanquist movement this "let us cross and see" attitude was part of its general antitheoretical, anti-ideological bias. Another statement by Blanqui is closer to Marx's spirit. "One of our most grotesque presumptions," he wrote, "is that we barbarians, we ignoramuses, pose as legislators for future generations."\(^\text{14}\)
This bears most obviously on the detail in which the system-makers envisioned their future social order, as against the general lines and conditioned presuppositions of a socialist society that emerge from Marx's approach.
time is not our job, yet what we have to accomplish at the present time is all the more certain—I mean the ruthless criticism of everything that exists, ruthless in the sense that the criticism is not afraid of its results and just as little afraid of conflict with the powers that be.\textsuperscript{15}

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

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

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

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

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

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

In that way we do not confront the world in doctrinaire fashion with a new principle: "Here is the truth, here fall on your knees!" We develop new principles for the world out of the principles of the world itself. We do not tell the world: "Desist from your
struggles, they are stupid stuff; we wish to yell the true slogan of the struggle at you." We merely show the world why it is actually struggling; and consciousness is a thing it must acquire even if it does not want to.

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

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

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

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

3. TOWARD THE POLITICALIZATION OF SOCIALISM

It is in this context that we get a very important statement of where Marx stands at this point on socialism and communism. It must be kept in mind that his references are to the specific socialisms and communisms of 1843. The following passage takes off from the thought that one must help the dogmatists clarify their own tenets:
Thus, communism in particular is a dogmatic abstraction, but by this I have in mind not any imaginable or possible communism but the communism that actually exists, as taught by Cabet, Dezamy, Weitling, and so on. This communism is itself only a special phenomenal form of the humanist principle when it is infected by its opposite, privatism [*Privatwesen*]. Abolition of private property and communism are therefore by no means identical, and it was not by accident but by necessity that communism saw the development of other socialist doctrines distinct from it, such as those of Fourier, Proudhon, etc., because it is itself only a particular, one-sided realization of the socialist principle.\(^{19}\)

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

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

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

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

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\(^{18}\) The thought of this sentence will be elaborated in the chapter on private property and communism in Marx's Paris manuscripts of 1844.
philosophical preoccupations. Rather, the broader agenda is necessary because

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

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

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

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

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

* The main exception was constituted by the left-wing Chartists of England, with whom Marx was not yet familiar. The coming alliance with left Chartism was one of Engels' important contributions.
that reason is being realized. But also everywhere it gets into a contradiction between its ideal goal and its real presuppositions. Out of this conflict of the political state with itself, therefore, the social truth can everywhere develop.\textsuperscript{22}

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

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

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

\* The "womb" metaphor had already occurred in the last sentence of Marx's second letter in this exchange: "The more the course of events gives thinking humanity time to reflect and suffering humanity time to gather themselves together, the more finished a product when it is brought into the world will be that which the present bears in its womb." \textsuperscript{23}
The example that Marx gives—advocacy of a system based on representation of voters as against an assembly representing the social estates \textit{[Stände]} as such—was about the most immediate issue of political democracy that existed.* Against the “crass socialists,” Marx’s argument in favor of getting into this question goes from the practical to the strategic:

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

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

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

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

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

* For example, in January 1841 Engels, still merely a radical democrat, had formulated this slogan in an important article for the Young Germany movement: “No estates system but rather a single big nation of citizens with equal rights!”\textsuperscript{24}
that he had held and put into writing even before assuming the editorship of the *Rheinische Zeitung*:

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

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

This approach turned Marx toward one of the then important “signposts” of the 1840s in Germany, a question of the day that spotlighted one of the riddle words of advancing bourgeoisification.
Marx applied the new direction, or supplied a practical example of it, in the first article he wrote for publication after leaving the *Rheinische Zeitung*. Published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, the article dealt with a currently controversial political issue of the hour, with a "real struggle" going on in the political field. It identified itself with the progressive side in the struggle in order to direct the question toward the solution of the basic "social question."

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

1. THE JEWISH EMANCIPATION QUESTION

The French Revolution had provided the first example in Europe of the complete legal emancipation of the Jews, and in this as in other respects, had had a great impact on those parts of Germany where Napoleon's armies smashed the old regime. With the reaction after 1815, gains made by the German Jews went into decline, but by the beginning of the 1840s the issue had been raised again and the debate was raging, especially in the commercial centers such as the Hanseatic towns and the Rhineland. In fact, in 1843 the Rhenish Diet by a large majority voted for legal emancipation, but it was quashed by the king. It was not until 1847 that Jewish political emancipation would be won partially, in 1848 completely (though temporarily), in Prussia.
In the Rhineland [relates the historian Elbogen], where industrial development was already far advanced and where the Jewish upper stratum of owners already played an integrating role in the economy, the liberals were seized at the beginning of the 1840s by a general enthusiasm for religious tolerance and for the idea of the brotherhood of man.\(^2\)

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

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

2. MARX ON JEWISH EMANCIPATION

Marx had originally intended to write an article on the subject of Jewish emancipation back in August 1842, shortly before he became editor of the Rheinische Zeitung (which had been publishing articles on the subject every month since March).\(^4\) His target was going to be the same C. H. Hermes, editor of the Catholic Kölnische Zeitung, whom he had attacked the previous month on the free-press issue.\(^5\) In the latter article the third installment had been devoted entirely to the right of
the press to discuss freely the relationship between religion and the state, and the necessity for the separation of church and state. It went on to argue against any religious criteria for the individual's relation to the state.\(^6\) The argument thus already implicitly embraced the Jewish-emancipation question, although this was not its subject.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The crux of Bauer's position was that the German condition could not be solved primarily via political steps—like giving Jews equal political rights with Christians—but only by emancipating all Germans from
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religion as such, Christian religion as well as Jewish. For Bauer it was the question of religion—the destruction of religion—that was the key to social and political change, not the reverse. "Religious prejudice is the basis of civil and political prejudice. . . . As soon as the belief in the religious sanction of civil and political prejudice is shaken, the political prejudice loses its self-assurance." He thinks he is being very radical, very "extreme," in counterposing basic change to a mere partial reform, hence coming on the question from the "left:" As far as this goes, his stance is that of the classic sectarian: "All reforms will be palliatives only" until the one and only remedy is effected—though it is something of an anticlimax to find that this sure cure is merely "complete disbelief in servitude, belief in freedom and humanity." He attacks "this faintheartedness and cowardice which fights one sort of oppression without considering the general lack of freedom under which humanity still suffers. . . ."¹⁴

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

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

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

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

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

Bauer errs in that he criticizes the Christian state (a state formally espousing Christianity) rather than the state in general; but in some of the United States, we see examples of a state which is purely secular, hence purely political, juridically detached from all religions. Only here can the relation of the Jew, of the religious person in general, to the political state—hence the relation of religion to the state—emerge in its characteristic and pure form. . . . Criticism then turns into criticism of the political state. 19

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

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

The state can be emancipated from religion without the people being emancipated from religion. Marx makes the following comparison: When the property qualification for voting is abolished, the state is abstractly (that is, only juridically) separated from private property.
"Yet, with the political annulment of private property [in this way], private property is not only not abolished, but rather it is even presupposed." Everyone is then "an equal participant in the sovereignty of the people" in the political form, but private property (and other features of the present system) continue to exert their practical effect in their own way. "Far from abolishing these factual differences (differences in private property, etc.), it [the state] exists, rather, only on the basis of presupposing them. . . ." 21 Thus—

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

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

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

This secular conflict to which the Jewish question is reduced in the end—the relation of the political state to its presuppositions whether these be material elements like private property etc. or intellectual ones like education and religion, the conflict between general and private interests, the split between the political state and civil society—these secular antitheses Bauer allows to keep on existing while he polemizes against their religious expression. 24
Marx, on the contrary, wants to downgrade the religious form in which political conflicts manifest themselves, and instead go behind the political conflicts to the social import of the question. That does not mean that the political conflicts should be ignored:

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

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

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

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

* The meaning behind calling the democratic state a “real” state will be explained in Chapter 8.
4. "HUMAN EMANCIPATION" AS THE END

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

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

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

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

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

* Remember that this term civil society stands for bürgerliche Gesellschaft, which can also be translated "bourgeois society," and that the meaning shifts from one to the other in this period, depending on context, as explained in Chapter 1.
Marx brings up the "puzzling" fact that the French Revolution, in the name of freedom, proclaimed "the justification of the egoistic man, isolated from fellow men and the community," instead of overcoming egoism and exalting community.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Feudal society was dissolved into its foundation, into man. But into man as he actually was its foundation—into egoistic men. This man, the member of civil society, is now the basis, the presupposition of the political state. 35

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

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

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

What Marx distinguishes from political emancipation is human emancipation (social emancipation in later terms). This is defined in terms of the reintegration of political and social power:
Only when the real, individual man . . . has recognized and organized his "forces propres" [his own power] as social power, and hence social power is no longer divided within itself in the form of political power, only then is human emancipation consummated. 37

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

5. BAUER: ROUND TWO

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

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

* This aspect is proportionately less prominent in the brochure, but it should be understood that there is no change in views involved. Near the very beginning of the brochure Bauer protests: "There is an outcry, as if it were treason against humanity if a critic starts to investigate the particular character of the Jew. The very same people who look on with pleasure when criticism is aimed at Christianity . . . are ready to condemn the man who subjects Judaism too to criticism." 38 One trouble with this protest is that Bauer's criticism of Judaism is aimed at keeping a minority deprived of political rights.
partial emancipation, of only a few people, when we others need total emancipation—religious emancipation? This line had been demolished from various sides, including articles in the Rheinische Zeitung, as we have seen; and it fades into the background in his 1843 follow-up essay. After all, even if we grant that all religion is reactionary, still—pending the happy day when it is all rooted out—why shouldn't Jews have the same legal rights as Christians? And if it is no great issue, why go to the lengths of writing and publishing a whole brochure to convince people to oppose this measure? Even woodenheaded sectarianism does not quite seem an adequate explanation.

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

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

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

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

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

3. Specifically, Jews have played no role in the struggle against religion, that is, the philosophic criticism of Christianity; they merely felt malicious joy at the exposure of Christianity. They are servitors of
the religious illusion; not a single Jew has done anything important to combat it.

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

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

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

He immediately adds, apropos of Bauer's thrice-repeated sarcasms about the Sabbath observance of religious Jews: "Let us consider the actual secular Jew, not the Sabbath Jew, as Bauer does, but the everyday Jew." This is the special theme of the second part of Marx's essay: not the religious Jew but the economic Jew; not the role of religion in Jewry but the role of Jewry in the socioeconomic world.

The economic everyday meaning of Judentum was not a controversial subject in 1843, not for the right or the left, for conservatives or liberals, for intellectuals or illiterates, and, to a considerable extent at least, not even for the Jews. It had been built into the very language, let alone the popular stereotyped image of the Jew, since before Shakespeare wrote The Merchant of Venice. Behind this process was the skewed economic structure into which the Jewish people had been cramped by medieval restrictions: the "economic Jew" had been created by the Christian state. Overwhelmingly Judentum and Jude
were inextricably associated, not only in thought but in language, with the underside of the economic world: with usury (as in Bauer’s brochure, for example); with huckstering (Schacher); in general, with money-making.

6. DISSOLVING THE JEW-CHRISTIAN ANTITHESIS

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

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

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

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

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

Judged by medieval standards, his [the Jew’s] business outlook was immoral... the business methods of the Jews were rehabilitated by being universally adopted—the pursuit of profit and free competition became the guiding principle of the capitalist system.44
Jews have emancipated themselves insofar as the Christians have become Jews."^{45}

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

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

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

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

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

It must be understood that, like the rest of the socialists in this period before Marxism, Marx himself has only the usual superficial notion of what this new commercial society really is. Like everyone else, his emphasis as yet is on the role of money and the spirit of money-making, not on the system of production, class exploitation,
and so on. What is uppermost is "the contradiction between politics and money power. While the first is ideally superior to the second, it has in fact become its serf." So, while it is thus incidentally recognized that the state as it is has become the tool of a new economic power, this new master is seen only as the money power.*

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

7. THIRD ROUND WITH BAUER

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

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

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

Compare this with the section entitled "The Power of Money in Bourgeois Society" in Marx's Paris manuscripts of 1844, with its long passage from Shakespeare on "yellow, glittering, precious gold." 51
Also repeated, but in somewhat more developed form, is the conception that Jewish emancipation, or more generally complete political emancipation, is necessary but not sufficient. Marx insists again on the difference between political and human emancipation, and that "the states which are not yet able to emancipate the Jews politically are to be judged, once again, as against fully evolved political states and rated as undeveloped."\(^56\) The "fully developed modern state" is only "the democratic representative state," which is equated with complete political emancipation of the individual citizens. But at the same time this fully developed state of political democracy lays bare most clearly "not only the relative but the absolute defects constituting its very essence."\(^57\)

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

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

1. Philippson was right in pointing out that Bauer's case has to do with his "philosophical ideal of a state," not with the existing state.\(^60\) (Philippson, incidentally, had previously had the honor of being the
Jewish spokesman attacked by name in Bauer's brochure *The Jewish Question*, for an article published in the *Rheinische Zeitung*.)

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

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

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

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

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

Herr Riesser correctly expressed the meaning of the Jews' desire for recognition of their free humanity when he demanded, among other things, the freedom of movement, sojourn, travel, earning one's living, etc. These manifestations of "free humanity" are explicitly recognized as such in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. The Jew has all the more right to the recognition of his "free humanity" as "free civil society" is thoroughly commercial and Jewish and the Jew is a necessary link in it.
6. In general Marx emphasizes in various ways the validity of the argument that religious freedom is a necessary part of political emancipation. In this connection he comments on the latest book published by Bauer:

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

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

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

The point of the Jewish question in 1843, then, was to get away from controversy over religion in general or the Jews in particular, and to establish that religion was a private matter with relation to the state, thereby emancipating the state from the religious question. The political emancipation of the Jews was a means to general political emancipation.
In the editorial exchange of letters in the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, a good deal of space was taken up by a problem that need not detain us long: the perennial one of revolutionary confidence in the future (revolutionary optimism) versus despair and defeatism.

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

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

* The opening threnody of Ruge's letter goes like this: “Your letter is an illusion. Your courage discourages me even more.—We are going to live to see a political revolution? We, the contemporaries of these Germans? My friend, you believe what you want to believe. Oh, I know! it is very sweet to hope, and very bitter to put aside all illusions. Despair takes more courage than hope. But it is the courage of reason, and we have reached the point where we may no longer delude ourselves.”—And so on to paint the gloomy picture of the present: all are sheep; man was not born to be free; the German soul is a base thing; there is no future for the German people: “Oh this German future! Where is its seed sown?”¹
Itself, it would be a lion that falls back in order to spring."* The revolution is coming even though no one believes in it: "One could perhaps let a ship full of fools run before the wind for a good while; but it would run into its destiny for the very reason that the fools do not believe it. This destiny is the revolution that looms before us." 4

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

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

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

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

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

1. POLITICAL LEXICON: PROLETARIAT

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

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

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

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

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* The original—and overquoted—meaning of the Latin proletarius goes back to the sixth century B.C. as a census term: one who contributes nothing to the state except offspring; but this technical meaning was obsolete by the second century A.D.
period of change—in society and in the words required to talk about it—the term *proletariat* began to assume its new meaning, not only after an identifiable class of wage-workers arose with the development of capitalism, but particularly after this class began to be conscious of a novelty in its position. This can roughly be placed after the revolution of 1830.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Some advocated the self-organization of the working class—the workers as a whole rather than merely an advanced tip—on a corporate basis, that is, to further their corporate interests within the society, along the lines of Buchez's cooperatives or Flora Tristan's Union Ouvrière.
Marx's conception of the relationship between socialism and the proletariat would be basically different from any of these. It did not appear full-blown in a sudden article but developed in a number of steps during 1843 and 1844.

3. THE ROAD TO THE NEW ORIENTATION

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

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

Weitling was not the only one writing about the new concern with the workers even then. In autumn of the same year Lorenz von Stein's important book on the socialist and communist tendencies in France was published to the accompaniment of great public interest. It emphasized the new role of the proletariat, as we have already mentioned. But Marx was only just becoming interested in such new social questions; he was not yet a socialist, and it was unlikely that he was wondering who was going to make a revolution he was not yet in favor of. If Marx read von Stein at the time (as is possible but unrecorded), its effect might well have been only latent. 16 Perhaps more important was the discussion of von Stein's book in the form of a review by Moses Hess, which appeared in July 1843 in a collection of essays by various hands,17 including two other articles by Hess and one by Hess's new disciple Engels. A year later Marx was going to give due credit to the influence on his thinking exercised by Hess's essays in this book, without specify-
ing among them.\textsuperscript{18} True, in the case of this article it could not have been Hess's viewpoint—which \textit{objected} to von Stein's emphasis on the proletariat and on class—that influenced Marx, but its publication was one of the events that at least raised the question at a point when Marx was preparing material for the \textit{Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher}.

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

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

* The excerpts in Marx's reading notebooks are summarized in \textit{MEGA}. Of some interest in this connection is the summary of W. Wachsmuth's history of the French Revolution and L. Ranke's history of the German Reformation period.\textsuperscript{19} The summary of Marx's excerpts from Hamilton shows much emphasis on the rule of wealth and the deprivation of the lower classes from power—for example: "... the Federalists against right to vote by the propertyless. Position of the Negro, formally free, yet treated as pariahs; the fight against the whites' prejudices against them is necessary. Arrogance of the rich, in spite of legal equality of all citizens. Mammon and huckstering the idols of the Americans.... In New York civil society has split into two parts—working people and those who do not have to work. Aims of the combinations among the manual workers: equal education of all citizens, abolition of the educational monopoly; but in part also equal division of property: the agrarian law. Danger of the overturn of the state by a simple vote, under complete democracy; this does not yet exist at present in America, for its citizens are mostly property owners. Influence of the money aristocracy in America...."\textsuperscript{20}
There is likewise no indication of a special interest in the proletariat either in the editorial exchange of letters in the *DFJ* or in the essay "On the Jewish Question."

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

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

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

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

### 4. THE IMPACT OF PARIS

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

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

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

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

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

But in any case it is among these “barbarians” of our civilized society that history is making ready the practical element for the emancipation of man.
One must be acquainted [he wrote in *The Holy Family*] with the studiousness, the craving for knowledge, the moral energy and the unceasing urge for development of the French and English *ouvriers* [workers] to be able to form an idea of the *human* nobility of that movement.26

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marx does not take the line of defending the “philosophical” party, but rather maintains that both have been one-sided. On the one hand, he lectures the practicals: You cannot get rid of philosophy simply by turning your back on it and refusing to acknowledge it as a part of the German reality. “You demand starting from actual germs of life, but
you forget that the German people’s actual life-germ has up to now flourished only in its cranium.” In order to abolish or transcend (aufheben) philosophy, he tells them, you must first make it real for the first time: “You cannot abolish philosophy without actualizing it.” Then he turns to the others, the party from which he himself is emerging, and tells them that they have committed the bisymmetrical error of seeing only the philosophical struggle, of turning even critical social insights into philosophical formulations, of failing to see that “philosophy as philosophy” was a dead end. “Its basic defect,” Marx sums up with the same bisymmetry, “may be reduced to this: it could actualize philosophy without abolishing [transcending] it.”

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

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

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

This was the standard Young Hegelian attitude—squarely at odds with what was going to be Marx’s developed conception of class forces
in history. Within the year he was going to start his first polemic against this very attitude in *The Holy Family*, after he had moved in the opposite direction and after Bauer had moved to push this Young Hegelian intellectual élitism to its extreme.

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

6. NEW CONCEPT OF THE UNIVERSAL CLASS

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

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

Revolutions require a passive element, a material basis. Theory will always be actualized in a people only insofar as it is the
actualization of their needs. Now will the enormous gap between the demands of German thought and the answers of German actuality correspond to the same gap between civil society and the state and within civil society itself? Will theoretical needs be immediately practical needs? It is not enough that thought should strive toward actualization; actuality must itself strive toward thought. 38

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

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

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

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

*It has been claimed that by the passive element Marx here means the proletariat. Obviously not; the paragraph spells out its reference perfectly plainly. The proletariat has not even been mentioned up to this point and for some pages still to come.
promoted as against the general interests of society as a whole (which in Hegel means those of the state). Thus the particular aspirations of the bourgeoisie were, by definition, antisocial, as were similarly limited practical needs of any other social group. Only the bureaucracy, for Hegel, represented the social whole, and hence only the bureaucracy was the universal class, a class which represented not the interest of a part but the general interest. As we have seen, Marx’s notebook critique of Hegel’s theory sought to refute precisely this conception of the bureaucracy: he sought to show that the bureaucracy too had its own interests separate from and opposed to the best interests of the social whole. But if the bureaucracy could not be considered the universal class because it acted for its own practical needs, could there be any universal class at all?

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

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

No class of civil society can play this role unless it arouses an impulse of enthusiasm in itself and in the masses; an impulse in which it fraternizes and coalesces with society in general, identifies with it, and is felt and recognized to be its general representative; an impulse in which its demands and rights are truly the rights and demands of society itself and in which it is really the head and heart of society. Only in the name of the universal rights of society can a particular class lay claim to universal dominance. To capture this position as emancipator and thereby gain political exploitation of all spheres of society in the interest of its own sphere, revolutionary energy and intellectual self-confidence alone are not sufficient.
Just as this class appears as the embodiment of all society's interests, so another class must embody the “notorious crime of the whole society,” must have the role of the oppressor class.

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

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

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

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

7. THE PROLETARIAT AS “UNIVERSAL CLASS”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

. . . a sphere which can no longer invoke a historical title but only a human one; which does not stand in one-sided opposition to the consequences, but in all-around opposition to the premises of
the German political system; a sphere, finally, which cannot emancipate itself at all without emancipating itself from all other social spheres, thereby emancipating all those other social spheres; a sphere, in short, which is the complete loss of the human being, and hence only by fully regaining the human being can it gain itself. This dissolution of society in the form of a particular class [Stand] is the proletariat.42

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

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

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

But even in Paris—let alone France, a geographical entity sometimes forgotten by Paris residents—the new class was still far from embracing a majority of the people, or even of the working people. Yet earlier in this essay Marx had written that, as distinct from backward Germany,
in France and England it is a question of abolishing monopoly, which has progressed to its final consequences . . ."! This may be taken as a warning against brashly announcing "final" stages, but of course Marx knows little about economic development as yet. Even so, it is worth noting that not only does he make no claim about the size of the proletariat in France or England, but his whole mode of approach eliminates this as a pivotal question. In the present essay, the decisive thing about the proletariat is that it can play the role of the general representative of society; later it will be added that it can lead the general majority of society.

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

8. PHILOSOPHY AND THE PROLETARIAT

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

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

Let us summarize the result:

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

* Even as late as 1847 Marx could refer to "the proletariat of feudal times," that is, the serf class; he does this twice in his book The Poverty of Philosophy. On presenting the book to a friend in 1876, he corrected the phrase in the margin to the "working class" of feudalism.43
supreme being for man... The head of this emancipation is philosophy, its heart is the proletariat. Philosophy cannot be actualized without the abolition [Aufhebung] of the proletariat; the proletariat cannot be abolished without the actualization of philosophy. 44

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Barely settled in England, he began writing a series of articles for the *RZ* on the social situation in the country. Soon (exact time unknown) he formed a liaison with Mary Burns, an Irish workingwoman, who was to be his companion till her death. This link was no doubt important in giving him access to the life of the working class and its movements, for Mary Burns was a militant revolutionist of the plebeian Irish nationalist type which, under English industrial conditions, was one of the greatest leavens of the proletarian and socialist milieu of the time. Engels has been accused of seeing England through her “prejudiced”
eyes; but at the same time he was surrounded in his business life by the
choicest representatives of the industrial bourgeoisie. It was a double
life, making possible a double vision which could hardly have been
enjoyed by any other observer of the new economic reality in its
most advanced bastion.

2. FROM BARMEN TO MANCHESTER

Engels' progress toward a new view of the proletariat was a gradual
one. During his Bremen period, when he oriented himself toward
socioliterary journalism after the Börne model, he succeeded in raising a
small scandal with a two-part pseudonymous article "Letters from the
Wuppertal," published in the organ of Young Germany. The first part
devastatingly describes how "the whole district lies submerged under a
sea of Pietism and philistinism," and includes striking views of the
misery of the workers. But the workers are only the object of pity and
indignation; they are seen wholly from the outside. The writer notes
that the factory workers resort to drink as an anodyne, the artisans to a
mindless religiosity laced with brandy; and it is clear that this much one
can see hurrying through the streets. The factory operatives are viewed
merely as victims: they are forced to breathe more coal dust and smoke
than oxygen; from the age of six they lose their strength and joy in life;
they are mercilessly sweated and suffer an incredible incidence of
disease; child labor ruins the next generation.

But the rich manufacturers have an elastic conscience, and blight­
ing the life of one child more or less does not send any Pietist
soul to hell, especially if he goes to church twice every Sunday.

When the occasion arose, Engels' invocation was to the people in the
usual liberal fashion. One such occasion was the anniversary of the July
revolution of 1830 in France, celebrated in classical meter under the
title "German July Days":

A-toss in my boat, I am thinking of you, O princes and kings of
Germany:
The patient people once raised you up on the gilded throne that
you sit on,
Bore you in triumph the homeland through, and expelled the
daring invader.
Then you grew brazen and arrogance-filled, you broke your word and your promise,
Now out of France whirls the storm, and the masses of people are surging,
And your throne is tossed like a boat in the storm, in your hand the scepter is trembling.
On you above all, Ernst August, do I bend my eyes in anger:
Rashly, O despot, you flouted the law—hark to the storm's roar swelling!
As the people look up with piercing eye and the sword scarce rests in the scabbard,
Say: Rest you as safe in your golden throne as I in my boat a-tossing? 5

But there were no princes or kings in the Wuppertal; the workers whom the young man pitied were exploited by the same factory princes and cotton kings whose class had put Louis Philippe on the throne in July 1830. The king, Friedrich Wilhelm III, who had broken his promise to grant a constitution after Napoleon was expelled, had mainly aroused the anger of the church-going sweaters, not of the inebriated operatives or the psalm-singing craftsmen. This was still the rhetoric of Young Germany.

England changed all that. Socially, Manchester was a different world—a thoroughly bourgeois society such as could not be found anywhere in Germany, not even in Paris, nor even yet in London in concentrated form. At this point Engels was one of the few Continental revolutionaries who could be said to be living under capitalism.

As he circulated in the milieu of his business associates, he attended meetings of the workers' movements, read their press, got acquainted with their propagandists, met their leaders—John Watts and James Leach in Manchester; George Julian Harney, the left Chartist leader, in Leeds; the Owenites of The New Moral World, which began publishing articles by him in February. And what is most important, here there was a genuinely proletarian movement, quite class-conscious on various levels, from the revolutionary socialist wing of Chartist which Harney represented to the trade unionists. Three months before Engels' arrival, the trade unions had arrived at the point of attempting a general strike covering the industrial north—the so-called "summer uprising" or "August insurrection" which was intimidated by armed force.
In this capitalist society, not only was there an advanced economic development and class structure, but a pattern of political movement which was congruent with the class structure. There were parties roughly reflecting the main classes of the society. While *party* was an elastic term,* this was true even of organized movements—Tories, Whigs, Radicals, Chartists, and so on.

Late in life, Engels remarked in a letter that he had been "fortunate in being thrown into the center of modern, big industry and in being the first to keep my eyes open for the interconnections—at least [he added modestly] the most superficial ones." Rejecting an intended compliment which labeled him the "founder of descriptive economics" on the strength of his *Condition of the Working Class in England*, he pointed to the economists before him who had written descriptively on workers' conditions and general economic conditions. What he had pioneered in developing was the connection between descriptive economics and a new type of socialist theory. 6

3. REPORTS FROM ANOTHER WORLD

The articles on the situation in England that Engels started sending back to be read by German leftists were therefore quite unusual, if not unique, at the time. His first series of five were sent to the *Rheinische Zeitung*, and must have passed through the hands of Marx as editor; they were published during December 1842. It had been only a few months previously that von Stein's book on French socialism and communism had first revealed, to the unsettlement of the German burgner, the portentous political world of Paris, and classified the new social animal called the proletariat. Engels' articles must have read to many like reports from another planet: indeed they gave a picture of another world.

From the first article, one of Engels' main points was that revolu-

*Political lexicon: At this time and for a long time to come, the word *party* in the European languages did not necessarily imply an electoral organization, nor, in fact, necessarily an organized movement of any kind. It frequently meant nothing more than a political or ideological *tendency*. When the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was published by the Communist League in 1848, the title did not imply that an organization named the Communist Party existed.*5a
tionary ideas were not a characteristic of a wing of the educated classes as in Germany, but rather rife among the workers, the proletarians.

Hence Chartism has been able to strike no roots at all among the educated in England, and will not do so very soon. When Chartists and Radicals are mentioned here, it is taken almost universally to mean the yeast of the masses, the mass of proletarians.7

To be sure, in these articles Engels' conception of what exactly comprised the working class was not at all fixed, since it did not rest on a theoretical generalization. It was a description rather than a scientific term. His second article began by speaking of the "lowest class," and of the "propertyless" or "non-property-owners" as if this was the name of a class. Included were also the tenant farmers on the land, who were indeed workingpeople too.

This is followed by increased emphasis on the workers in industry, but it would be misleading to try to read an exact class notion into the terms:

... industry does indeed enrich a country, but it also creates a class of non-property-owners, of the absolutely poor, who live from hand to mouth, who increase by leaps and bounds—a class which cannot subsequently be abolished since it can never acquire stable property. And a third, almost a half, of England belongs to this class. The slightest stagnation in trade makes a large part of this class jobless [literally, breadless]; a big trade crisis makes the whole class jobless... But by virtue of its size this class has become the strongest in England, and woe to the English wealthy if it becomes conscious of that fact.

It certainly has not, so far. The English proletarian is only as yet beginning to suspect his strength, and the result of this suspicion was the turmoil of last summer [August].8

The difference from Germany is brought out specifically. The middle class, writes Engels, has the position of an aristocracy in relation to the workers,

and in a country like England which lives only on industry and therefore has a mass of workers, this fact must instill consciousness sooner than, for example, in Germany, where the artisans and peasants are conceived of as middle class and the extensive class of factory workers are not known at all.9
After this series for the *Rheinische Zeitung*, there is a hiatus of some months, during which Engels read political economy and history. Meanwhile the *RZ* was suppressed, leaving no successor in Germany; his next articles were sent to a Swiss republican organ as "Letters from London," published during May and June 1843. The subject is again a more or less connected account of the social situation in England. The second letter (of four) describes the strength of the Chartist movement among the workers and hence the mass of the population; the third makes the socialist (Owenite) movement look very important. The fourth reflects the education derived through Mary Burns and is devoted to the Irish question, including the Irish workers' movement inside England. (The young man writes, about the mass support wasted on Dan O'Connell: "Give me two hundred thousand Irishmen and I could overthrow the entire British monarchy.")

The December reference to the Radicals is corrected here: the Radical party is identified as mainly lower middle class; the Chartists as "the working men, the proletarians"; the Owenite socialists as recruited from both class strata.

Thus England exhibits the noteworthy fact that the lower a class stands in society and the more "uneducated" it is in the usual sense of the word, the closer is its relation to progress and the greater is its future.

This sounds like a conclusion about the proletarian nature of the social revolution, but in fact Engels has not yet generalized that far; it holds only for England.

In Germany the movement stems not only from the educated but even the learned class [that is, university elements]; in England the educated and the learned elements have been deaf and blind to the signs of the times for three hundred years.

4. ENGELS' FIRST PERIOD IN MANCHESTER

How very far Engels was, in fact, from a revolutionary social theory of the proletariat was fully brought out in the autumn of 1843, when he started writing about social movements on the Continent for the Owenite paper, *The New Moral World*. Conceptually he
was still where Hess had left him. German development is entirely different from that of England or France, apparently solely because of the national character: "the Germans became Communists philosophically, by reasoning upon the first principles," he informs the practical English. In France, it is true, he sees the rise of communism as the outcome of the working class, which "seized upon Babeuf's Communism" after 1830; and it would appear that communism then spread among the workingmen. But then he also thinks that the communists in France include not only the peaceful Cabet but also the reformist Leroux, the Christian socialist Lammenais and the very anti-communist Proudhon.

The state of his thinking becomes most evident with respect to Germany. He recognizes Weitling's movement as a workingmen's communism, while justly explaining that "Germany having comparatively little manufacturing industry, the mass of the working classes is made up by handicraftsmen." The Weitlingites form the "popular party" which "will no doubt very soon unite all the working classes of Germany." But he devotes more space to the philosophical Communism that emerged from Young Hegelianism, including in this party not only Marx but also Ruge and the poet Georg Herwegh, who were in no sense communists. Obviously this other kind of communism has, itself, nothing to do with the working classes. It will win the Germans, however, because they are so philosophical:

... the Germans are a philosophical nation, and will not, cannot abandon Communism, as soon as it is founded upon sound philosophical principles. ... There is a greater chance in Germany for the establishment of a Communist party among the educated classes of society, than anywhere else. The Germans are a very disinterested nation; if in Germany principle comes into collision with interest, principle will almost always silence the claims of interest. The same love of abstract principle, the same disregard of reality and self-interest, which have brought the Germans to a state of political nonentity, these very same qualities guarantee the success of philosophical Communism in that country. It will appear very singular to Englishmen, that a party which aims at the destruction of private property, is chiefly made up by those who have property; and yet this is the case in Germany. We can recruit our ranks from those classes only which have enjoyed a pretty good education; that is, from the universities and from the
commercial class; and in either we have not hitherto met with any considerable difficulty.\textsuperscript{14}

This too was pure Hess\textsuperscript{15} on the background of the student élitism of the Young Hegelians. He had not yet advanced beyond it theoretically, even though English conditions enforced quite different views for the English case.

Engels' first articles in the English press were published in the Owenite \textit{New Moral World} and the left Chartist \textit{Northern Star}.\textsuperscript{*} The Owenite movement was definitely socialistic in the sense familiar to Engels: it proposed a model (utopian) socialist society like those of Cabet, Weitling, and so on; but it was not a working-class movement. As he himself had noted, it recruited workers as well as middle-class people, but it was not a movement \textit{of} the working class. On the other hand, Chartism was not only a movement of the working class, it was \textit{the} movement of the militant working class; it was the very embodiment of the English class struggle at the level the class had then reached. It was, as he shortly wrote, "nothing but the political expression of public opinion among the workers."\textsuperscript{16} But as a whole it was definitely nonsocialist; and even its socialist wing, while revolutionary enough in an English sort of way, was by no means ideologically clear by the standards of the Continent.

Engels had earlier got acquainted with the German émigré communists in London who formed the League of the Just—Schapper, Moll, Bauer, and the rest; and the great impact they made on him was recorded in 1885.\textsuperscript{17} But in fact its effect was latent. He developed his relations with Harney and the left Chartists—a very important fact for the near future—but for the present Chartism was labeled radical democratic\textsuperscript{18} as against Owenism's tag of socialist.

Then there was a third sector of the working-class movement, neither Chartist nor Owenite socialist—the trade unions, new and embattled. They had in fact just attempted a general strike, no less. But Engels' unanalyzed attitude, here too, is standard Continental. There is as yet no indication that he has any special contact with them, is interested in a relationship, or holds a view about their future.

\* The new English version of the Marx-Engels \textit{Collected Works}, volume 3, discloses new pieces by Engels in \textit{The Northern Star}, showing that he began writing regularly for the periodical earlier than previously known.
All this describes the then standard revolutionary attitude in its best form. It provides a benchmark from which to measure the great transformation to be accomplished by Marx's theory of the proletariat. The sequel for Engels will appear in Chapter 10.

5. ON CARLYLE

It was while Engels was writing his first articles for The New Moral World (November 1843 to beginning of 1844) that he also wrote the two articles for the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

One of them—actually the second one written—was a continuation of his series of articles on the “Condition-of-England question,” to use the phrase which had already been made famous by Thomas Carlyle. This one, in fact, was a review of the latest book by Carlyle himself, Past and Present. Carlyle’s views will concern us in another volume, but we must mention now that his prophetic uniqueness among the well-known writers of the time was his sensitivity to the threat of subversion from below, from the Lower Orders, specifically the Working Classes (capitalized, of course). In this book, as before and after, his message was an appeal to the ruling classes to do something before the dark sullen masses overran Civilization. The “something” was usually philanthropy, plus despotism, but in the earlier versions it was philanthropy that set the tone, accompanied by a rhetorical broadside against both the aristocracy and the middle class.

In his article Engels quoted Carlyle’s castigation of the ruling classes with natural relish but used it to present the English working class in a quite different light—not as a menace to be pitied, propitiated, and put down, but as the class of the future that would replace the worn-out and exhausted holders of present power.

The English—that is, the English of the educated classes, from whom the national character is judged on the Continent—these English are the most contemptible slaves under the sun. Only the sector of the English nation that is unknown on the Continent, only the workers, England’s pariahs, the poor, are really respectable, despite all their roughness and all their demoralization. From them will come England’s salvation; they still possess plas-
ticity; they have no education, but also no prejudices; they still have forces to expend on a great national achievement—they still have a future. 19

On the one hand is the condition of the ruling strata according to Carlyle: the landed aristocracy sunk in idleness, the bourgeoisie in Mammonism, Parliament in corruption, philosophy in laissez-faire, religion in despair; everywhere "a general spiritual death"; the educated classes are "impervious to any progress, and still kept going to some degree only by the pressure of the working class," says Engels. 20 On the other hand, "a disproportionately strong working class, under intolerable conditions of hardship and misery, wild dissatisfaction and rebellion against the old social order, and hence a threatening, irresistible advancing democracy. . . ." 21

In this essay, as we have noted before, the attitude toward Chartism is favorable but cool—cool because it is merely about political, not social, change. "Social evils are not to be cured by People's Charters," Engels writes critically, "and the people feel this—otherwise the People's Charter would be the basic law of England today." Chartism has to be victorious, but it will be only a passing stage. He is critical of the Owenites too—for they are, after all, empirical Englishmen and panacea-mongers in their own way—but they are "the sole party in England that has a future, relatively weak though they may be. Democracy, Chartism must soon win out, and then the mass of workers will have only the choice between starvation and Socialism." 22

6. FIRST STEP IN POLITICAL ECONOMY

It is Engels' other article in this issue of the DfJ that marks a new step—and that also had an immediate impact on the magazine's editor, Marx. Entitled "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy," it was the fruit of Engels' studies of the British economists, and was a first effort (outside of England itself) to draw socialist conclusions from their work. It is, perhaps, more important now for its effect on Marx than its contribution to the subject, for a materially based theory of the proletariat as revolutionary class could be based only on such an inquiry into the economic system.

But in the essay itself, the spotlight is by no means on the working
class or its role. The worker is only one of the cast of characters, so to speak. Indeed, at first the focus is on trade, not production; further on, the productive system takes center stage, but not in a systematic way. It is only incidentally that we hear of "the division of mankind into capitalists and workers—a division which daily becomes ever more acute, and which, as we shall see, is bound to deepen." The article ends with the statement that another subject, the factory system, has been left out, because he has "neither the inclination nor the time to treat this here." There is no doubt that this essay of Engels' was at least one of the important influences, if not the most important one, that turned Marx toward the study of political economy at this time. He was anxious to acknowledge its impact more than once.* The economists whom he proceeded to read were, for the most part, those mentioned in Engels' article. His study notebook shows excerpts first from that article itself, then Say, Skarbek, Smith, Ricardo, and James Mill—at which point there occurs an extended comment which turns into Marx's first draft of an essay in economics. Our interest, as before, is not in its significance for the development of Marx's economic theory, but a more limited one: its relationship to the development of a theory of the proletariat.

The difference from Engels' article is that, for most of the note, the focus is on labor and the laborer, though there is only an incidental mention of "the antithesis between capitalist and worker." The subject, however, is not wage labor (Lohnarbeit) but what Marx here calls Erwerbsarbeit, labor carried on to earn a living. The difference between the two is crucial to understanding what Marx is writing about. Labor for wages puts the spotlight on the relation between the worker and the capitalist who pays him; labor to earn a living spotlights the difference between labor performed for its own sake and labor performed simply to stay alive, with no interest in the labor itself. The latter is therefore a broader term, comprising more than wage labor. Marx indicates this also by deriving it from the relationship of ex-

* Later in 1844, writing the preface to his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, Marx noted that the German socialist works on political economy that he had used were Hess's articles of 1843 and Engels' articles in the D.F.J, plus Weitling's writings. Engels' article is also given considerable credit by Marx in The Holy Family. In the preface to his Critique of Political Economy of 1859, Marx also acknowledges Engels' "brilliant sketch." It is even quoted three times in the first volume of Capital, and mentioned once.
change, not from the capitalist-worker antithesis: wherever products are made for exchange, not out of immediate human need or enjoyment by the laborer, there you have Erwerbsarbeit.

This conception, Marx will find, is not serviceable to explain the laws of motion of capitalist production; but that is not the line of thought in which Marx is engaged at this point. The concept of Erwerbsarbeit does concretize what Marx had discussed in his DFJ article: it gives something of an economic meaning to the dehumanizing effect of labor on the "class with radical chains."

For, when labor is merely labor to earn a living, it becomes altogether accidental and immaterial not only whether the producer's relationship to his product is one of immediate enjoyment and personal need, but also whether the activity, the act of working itself, is for him the self-enjoyment of his personality, the realization of his natural predispositions and spiritual aims.

In this case, the worker labors only to satisfy social needs that are alien to him, external to his own individuality, needs that act as an external constraint on his being and to which, therefore, he has the relationship of a slave. The aim of labor becomes merely to maintain existence, not the act of labor itself; living becomes merely earning a living. My labor should be a free expression of life, hence an enjoyment of living. [But] on the premise of private property, it means alienation of life,* because I work in order to live, in order to provide myself with the means of living. My working is not living. . . . On the premise of private property, my individuality is alienated to the point where this activity is hateful to me, a torment, only the appearance of an activity, and therefore also only a forced activity, one which is imposed on me by an external, accidental need, not by an internal, necessary need.

This conception of alienated labor will shortly be elaborated in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, whose passages on the subject

* There is an incidental play on words here: "expression of life" is Lebensäußerung, and "alienation of life" is Lebensentäußerung. This may help to underline that Entäußerung can be translated as "alienation" only if it is understood to connote also externalization—not one's alienation from life, but the making of a part of one's life (labor) a thing external to one's human predispositions. This is essentially the same way that the similar word Entfremdung (estrangement, alienation) is used in Capital and in the Grundrisse.
are better known, and still later integrated into the economic analysis in *Capital*. What we are interested in, at this point, is what it does not yet say. For as long as labor is conceived as *Erwerbsarbeit*, rather than wage labor, one can arrive at an important observation about work in general and about the working classes in the old sense; but one cannot arrive at a theory of the proletariat, the modern working class.

It is exactly this conception that is transformed in the very first sentence of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*.

7. ENTER: THE CLASS STRUGGLE

The key to understanding the Manuscripts is that they are the first fruits of Marx's study of political economy, that is, of the system of *developed* capitalism.* For the first time the subject does not revolve around German problems and German conditions. The impact of Engels' writings and of his own readings in British and French political economy is evident in the references especially to English social conditions. For the first time Marx confronts modern capitalism in its contemporary form, rather than the backwardness of a country that still has one foot in the old regime. Even more specifically, the focus is not simply on the commercial phenomena of capitalism but on industry, the factory system:

All wealth has become *industrial* wealth, the *wealth* of labor, and *industry* is consummated labor, just as the *factory system* is the perfected essence of *industry*, that is of labor, and *industrial capital* is the consummated objective form of private property.34

* With the exception, of course, of the incidental notebook passage on James Mill already discussed. The title *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* was conferred in *MEGA* (1932) and is a little misleading, for until the very last chapter it is definitely focused on political economy, not philosophy. In fact, in writing the preface with a view to publication, Marx felt called on to explain that he "considered the concluding chapter of the present work, the settling of accounts with the Hegelian dialectic and philosophy in general, to be entirely necessary, [since] a job like that has not been carried out." Before this, referring to the work as a whole, he had stressed that it resulted from "a wholly empirical analysis based on a conscientious critical study of political economy." He clearly saw the subject of the work as political economy, not philosophy.
This realization was a giant step. Even Engels' essay had not felt compelled to start with the factory system; that subject was merely promised for a future time. This step likewise does away with the category of Erwerbsarbeit (labor to earn a living) as a central notion. In the factory system, labor is wage labor. Hence the first sentence of the first manuscript is this: "Wages are determined through the antagonistic struggle between capitalist and worker." 35

Thus with the first sentence the concept of the class struggle becomes inseparable from the analysis of modern society. In Marxist theory the class struggle is the middle term, the trait d'union, between economics and politics as between economics and historical analysis. This is where it starts, as a consciously formulated approach.

The class struggle between labor and capital is not simply a fact, it is the active principle representing the contradiction within modern society:

But the antithesis between propertylessness and property, as long as it is not understood as the antithesis of labor and capital, is still a passive antithesis, one which is not grasped in its active connection, in its internal relationship—not yet grasped as a contradiction. 36

It is in modern times, under the factory system which produces this antithesis between labor and capital, that the antithesis becomes a "developed relationship of contradiction, hence a dynamic relationship driving to resolution." 37 Moreover, it is built into the system; the political economists are wrong to view it as accidental:

... the political economist postulates the original unity of capital and labor as the unity of capitalist and worker; this is the original state of paradise. How these two factors, as two persons, leap at each other's throats is for the political economist an accidental event, hence to be explained only from the outside. 38

The working class is not merely the suffering class; it is organically linked with the idea of a class that "has to struggle." 39 The class struggle is generalized even beyond the labor-capital relation. Thus

The rent of land is established through the struggle between tenant and landlord. Throughout political economy we find the hostile contraposition of interests, struggle, warfare, recognized as the basis of social organization. 40
But the decisive antagonism today is between the two polar classes characteristic of the new system; for the capitalists acquire landed property and the landlords become capitalists:

The final result is therefore the disappearance of the difference between capitalist and landowner, so that thus there remain, on the whole, only two classes in the population, the working class and the class of capitalists.\(^{41}\)

And, finally, as the landowners are ruined as a class, and the conditions of the workers are worsened, all this "necessarily leads to revolution."\(^{42}\) Marx sees "the necessity that the whole revolutionary development finds both its empirical and theoretical basis in the development of *private property* of the economy, to be exact."\(^{43}\)

These form a series of momentous conclusions for the recasting of the socialist movement. The formulations are far from finished; the argumentation is full of gaps; but already this is a socialism (or communism) which is qualitatively different from any existing. No longer is the proletariat merely a suffering class, merely a "class with radical chains"; it is the class which is at the levers of the whole economy. No longer can the new type of worker, the industrial wage-workers, blur into the same background as other people who earn a living by their labor—they now have a meaning as a class in their own right. No longer is this class merely an object of injustice and oppression; it is a class that *must* struggle.

The basic elements of a theory of the revolutionary proletariat are now in existence.

8. NEW CONCEPT OF ALIENATED LABOR

There is a second big change wrought by the Manuscripts in the concept of the proletariat: in the meaning of the *alienation* of labor. In the notebook comment on Mill, Marx was still working with, or working out, a notion of alienation which was by no means essentially original with him. It had already been largely suggested (via Hegel and Feuerbach's idea of alienation) by Moses Hess's essays of 1843 and 1844, which Marx had read with appreciation.\(^{44}\) The target, as we have seen, was the *kind of work* enforced on the laborer by the existence of private property exchange relations.
This is now seen by Marx as only one aspect of the alienation of labor. It is still very important, to be sure: it is twice elaborated to considerable effect. But what is new is that Marx explains another aspect of this alienation that ties in closely with his new view of the economy in society.

This new aspect emerges only through “considering the direct relationship between the worker (labor) and production.” Until now, Marx says, we have been considering only the worker’s relationship to the products of his labor—that is, he is compelled to labor on things that have no direct, human meaning for him. “But the estrangement [or alienation] manifests itself not only in the result but in the act of production, within the producing activity itself.”

Specifically, it is production in the factory system that is in question. The shift in perspective is a basic one, with long-range implications for Marx’s continuing analysis of economic forces. Consider this difference: the earlier aspects of alienation would also apply, say, to a peasant who is economically forced to produce a cash crop for consumption by others. His labor too is alienated labor. But the crop does belong to him when he harvests it. The same is true for a master artisan. Something different happens in the process of factory production:

... the external character of labor for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own but someone else’s, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs, not to himself, but to someone else.

The product of labor becomes “an alien object dominating him.” Both labor and the worker become a commodity, and “this fact expresses nothing but the following: The object which labor produced, its product, confronts it as an alien entity, as a power independent of the producer.” So far in Hegelese. Now Marx works toward plain German:

We have formulated this fact in terms of a concept in the following way: estranged, alienated labor. We have analyzed this concept, thus analyzing simply a fact of political economy.

Now let us see further how the concept of estranged, alienated labor must be formulated and presented in terms of reality.

If the product of labor is alien to me, confronting me as an alien power, to whom does it then belong? ... To someone other than myself.

Who is this someone? ...
If the product of labor does not belong to the worker and is an alien power confronting him, this is possible only because it belongs to some other person than the worker. If his activity is torment for him, it must be pleasure for another, the joy of another's life. . . .

[It must be] that some other person, who is alien, hostile, powerful and independent of him, is the master of this object. . . . [His labor is] activity in the service of and under the dominion, coercion, and yoke of some other person.\textsuperscript{50}

Marx's step-by-step argument is much more drawn-out than appears in this condensed extract. Yet the whole thing could have been stated in two lines. Why so circumspect? Because there is a novelty: he is translating a Hegelian concept into real-life terms (instead of the other way round). He is developing a novel reinterpretation of alienation. He is transposing it out of the speculative sphere of philosophy, through the ideological sphere of the bourgeois economists, into the realities of the social struggle. The conclusion is not left in doubt:

Thus, through estranged, alienated labor the worker creates the relationship to this labor of a person who is alien to labor and situated outside it. The relationship of the worker to labor creates the relationship to it of the capitalist—or whatever one wants to call the master of labor.\textsuperscript{51}

This is an alienation of labor which is peculiar to capitalism, which is specific to the worker-capitalist relationship, whereas the other had long existed wherever private property and exchange relations reigned.\footnote{There is still a third aspect of alienation expounded in the same section—the estrangement of man from nature and from his own "species-life"—which for present purposes can be considered along with the first aspect presented.\textsuperscript{52}} The peasant, selling his good grain to others while he lived on stunted potatoes, could not be conscious that his product was alienated from him; the laborer in the workshop or mill saw his product taken from him, knew indeed that it did not belong to him for a moment. It was taken by one who "is alien, hostile, powerful, and independent of him." \textit{This} type of alienation was as inseparable from the class struggle as from the act of production. This was the type of alienation specific to the proletariat. At the same time it pointed beyond:
From the relationship of estranged labor to private property it follows, further, that the emancipation of society from private property, etc., from servitude, is expressed in the political form of the emancipation of the workers—not as though it is only a question of their emancipation but because in their emancipation universal human emancipation is comprehended; and this is so because the whole of human servitude is involved in the relationship of the worker to production, and all relations of servitude are only modifications and consequences of this relationship.\textsuperscript{53}

Thus the concept of alienation—mutated from Hegel through Feuerbach and Hess—became an integral part of a revolutionary theory of the proletariat. But not as a merely philosophical notion: it was now a part of the socioeconomic foundation of the politics of class struggle.
TOWARD A CLASS THEORY OF THE STATE

The *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* scarcely mentioned a basic aspect of political theory with which Marx had been previously much concerned: the nature of the state. One might conclude that Marx was uninterested in it at this time, were it not for an important article which he published in the midst of working on the Manuscripts. This article was provoked by an unexpected event.

The relationship between the state and other elements of society had previously played an important part for Marx, as we have seen; naturally so, in view of its importance in Hegelianism. In previous chapters we have occasionally pointed out anticipations of the future to be seen, for example, in Marx’s articles in the *Rheinische Zeitung* (especially the article on the wood-theft law) or in the notebook analysis of Hegel’s philosophy of right. There had also been considerable attention paid to the state in the essay “On the Jewish Question,” since it dealt directly with a current political issue.

The anticipatory elements were usually connected with Marx’s discussions of real political life, not theoretical generalization; for, from the standpoint of state theory, the latter were dead ends. They could not be otherwise as long as they remained within the framework of the Hegelian conception of the state as the organization of communality distinct from egoistic civil society. While by now Marx had drawn many conclusions in opposition to Hegelian views (old Hegelian and Young Hegelian), his thinking still revolved inside the Hegelian category of the state—a category which did not correspond to the new social reality.

At bottom, it was not the power of Hegelianism that enforced this; it was the conditioning influence of the backward German social and political conditions. The Hegelian way of looking at the nature of the
state still seemed to make sense in Germany, no matter what objections it raised, whereas it made no sense at all in France or England. In absolutist Prussia, the state was still in the hands of a precapitalist ruling class which was habituated for centuries to identify its social morality with everything worthwhile in society, with the dictates of the Absolute Spirit of God, and hence with the God-given nature of the state as the realm of communality as against the selfish strivings of a rising bourgeoisie which was obviously interested in individual enrichment and the devil take the hindmost. There was an obvious gulf between the state on one hand and the civil society of the bourgeoisie on the other; and if Hegelian theory took this contemporary fact as basic to a definition of the state, the error was hard to see from the inside.

That this state was not the instrument of the bourgeoisie was obvious; but could the notion easily arise that it was the instrument of any other class—of the aristocracy, for example? It was not that simple: as we shall see later, it could be understood in class terms only as a transitional balancing act between two social worlds. Its complexity could be analyzed in class terms only after a class theory of the state had been worked out—just as in Capital complex labor can be understood only after simple labor has been isolated. This Prussian state was indeed forced to exercise control over the aristocracy itself; it was no longer the simple feudal state, but the Beamtenstaat of absolute monarchy—the state of the functionaries, who had to keep a rein on all classes in order to keep the growing antagonisms from pulling society apart.

1. THE SHELL OF HEGELIAN STATE THEORY

Now we already know that in his notebook critique of Hegel's philosophy of right, Marx had seen through the theory that the state bureaucracy was the universal class, the class that embodied the communal interest as against every other social estate's particular or selfish interest. But not there, and not in the essay "On the Jewish Question,"

* In the discussion of absolute monarchy as a type of autonomized state, in Chapter 19.
had Marx yet broken with the Hegelian type of definition of the state as the embodiment of communality.

This is what explains the otherwise peculiar statements in "On the Jewish Question" on the relation between political state and society. There Marx refers more than once to the "split between the political state and civil society"; to "civil society in its antithesis with the political state," and so on.\(^1\) There he is under the impression that the French Revolution was a time "when the political state as political state was forcibly born out of civil society,"\(^2\) instead of seeing it as the transformation of one type of state into another. If the political state was born only in 1789 in France, what about Prussia? There is no political state in that benighted country, he explains in this essay; for unless there is a democratic state expressing the sovereignty of the people, no state exists at all. The reason is simple enough once the premise is understood: only a democratic state can be said to embody the communal interest.* This is a very important break with Hegelianism, but it takes place within the Hegelian view of what the state is.

In this essay, therefore, remarks that now sound like an approach to a class theory of the state were not really intended to have that meaning. Marx comments on the contradiction between "the practical political power" of Jews (due to their "money power") and their lack of political rights; this contradiction, he says, is "the contradiction between politics and money power in general." And he adds: "While the first [politics] ideally stands superior to the second [money power], it has in point of fact become its serf."\(^6\) That money power has enserfed political power is, however, regarded as abnormal; it is a distortion of social life and constitutes one of the evils of this egoistic society.

\* This is why the democratic state is called the "real state" whereas in Germany there exists "no political state, no state as a state."\(^3\) Elsewhere in this essay, he writes, within the same dozen lines, that "the so-called Christian state" of Prussia is (a) "simply a nonstate"; (b) "the Christian negation of the state"; and (c) "the imperfect state."\(^4\) Also involved, still, is the basically Hegelian-idealistic approach of evaluating the existing state in terms of the Ideal State: if only the Ideal State is a "real" state (or really a state), and if the existing state is so very distant from this ideal, then the existing state is not really a state at all. If only the democratic state has been "perfected" as a state (that is, brought close to the Ideal State of communality), then the existing state is an "imperfect" state. So it goes in Hegelise. We should mention that this Hegelise wordplay about nonstates was destined to become fused (confused) with anarchoid conceptions. In 1845 the protoanarchist Max Stirner published his book *The Ego and His
Within this framework of thought, the different social eras are differentiated not according to the class which controls the political power but according to the relationship between politics and economic life in a quite different sense. In medieval society, civil society was not separate from the political sphere—political power and social power were one; but this oneness existed in a condition of unfreedom. The French Revolution, inaugurating the bourgeois era, forcibly split society into two parts—the political state on one hand, civil society on the other—in a systematic and "perfected" way. Every person was now a split entity like the society itself: a member of the political state on one hand, a member of the civil society on the other. What dominates this interpretation is the view that society has bifurcated into these two aspects which were once united; this is what characterizes the bourgeois era for Marx at this point. He does not raise the general question: which aspect rules the other, bourgeois society or the political state? The point is not that he gives a different answer than he was to give later, but that he had not raised the key question.

By the same token, the era of human emancipation (not merely political emancipation) which was to dawn would be characterized by the reintegration of social and political life—when "social power is no longer divided within itself in the form of political power"—only this time, unlike the oneness of the Middle Ages, the reassociation would be under conditions of freedom. That was the goal of communism.

This schema by no means disappeared in later Marxism: it reappeared as the reintegration of communality and individualism. However, it would not do as the historical explanation of real social change. It was a schema that could be entertained on the assumption that societies acted out philosophical categories, just as Life bodied forth the Idea. But when real social forces replaced the permutations of the Spirit as the motive force of historical development, it had to go by the board. Own, in which (among other things) the state is handily abolished; it is the Hegelian state of communality as well as the political state which is abolished in favor of egoism. Writing The Holy Family in 1844 Marx uses the word anarchy itself to describe the modern civil (bürgerlich) society which has been purged of feudal privilege. The formulation that "no state" exists in Prussia is not repeated; indeed "the anarchy of civil society is the basis of the modern public order just as the public order is in turn the guarantee of this anarchy." Here anarchy does not refer to chaos or planlessness, but simply to the separation between the state and the business of civil society—the laissez-faire idea. (Marx's later reference to anarchy of production under capitalism reflects the different idea of planlessness.)
2. BREAKING THE SHELL

Marx's transplantation from Germany to Paris was more than a move from backward conditions to more advanced conditions. The case was not simply that Germany was a more backward bourgeois society while France (like England) was a more advanced one; for the qualitative political difference was that in Germany the bourgeoisie was still virtually excluded from participation in the state power. In France, on the contrary, capital was king—in fact, the king himself was the bourgeois monarch of the July revolution, Louis Philippe. Likewise, it became clear from British political economy that the interests of capital were also the dominant interests in the constitutional monarchical state and even in the English aristocracy itself, not to speak of the "milocracy."

The eventual effect of this shift on the schema just explained—the one embodied particularly in "On the Jewish Question"—was shattering. The pattern which Marx ascribed (at some length too) to the society established by the French Revolution, that is, the separation of the political state from civil (bourgeois) society, simply did not exist in actuality. On the contrary, it turned out to be a peculiarity of the German reality, precisely because Germany had not yet had its 1789, rather than a characteristic of a more advanced society which had had its bourgeois revolution (what Marx had mistakenly considered merely political emancipation). Wherever absolutism still maintained its state in the face of, and counterposed to, a rising bourgeoisie, there did the separation between political state and civil society still loom large; there did society seem to be split into two aspects. But where absolutism had been overthrown, where the interests of capital were accepted as the most important interests of the state, that separation was reduced to its minimum. Political life and economic life were reintegrated indeed, but not in the medieval fashion and not in the communist way. Capital ruled politically as well as economically.

Marx's development in the direction of this view begins with the analyses he performed in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts. Just as this was a view that could hardly have been acquired from a preoccupation with German conditions, so was it a view that could hardly be avoided once the optical angle was moved to England. Hegel had philosophized that it was wrong for selfish economic interests to
rule state and society; but Adam Smith and Ricardo not only assumed it was right for capital to rule, they demonstrated that it did rule, and that society could progress only if it ruled. Marx, as he explained some years later, did not have to discover the class struggle; what he discovered was that French historians and British political economists took it for granted as a fact of life. All Marx had to do was to explore its role in social change, without inhibitions.*

We have noted that, from the first sentence of the Manuscripts, the class struggle is seen to play a basic role in political economy, manifesting itself in economic terms as the struggle over the appropriation of the products of labor. But political economy is the endoskeleton of the state—that is what makes it political. The shift in optical angle, therefore, meant that the state too had to be viewed within the context of a class struggle which necessarily raged over all of society.

In the course of the year 1844, all of the elements for such a theory of the state had accumulated. There is no need to suppose that some cataclysmic wrench was necessary. There is a Jules Verne tale in which our hero stands on the shore of a strange sea and observes that the water's temperature has already descended to the freezing point, yet it has not frozen over. He shows his companions what is involved: an object is thrown into the water, and as the ripples spread the surface turns to ice. For all the molecular changes preliminary to freezing had already taken place; only a relatively slight addition of energy was needed to precipitate the change in state, from liquid to solid.

Yet, as has been mentioned, the class theory of the state which is implied by the analyses of the Manuscripts scarcely appears in its pages; Marx is working out the economic side mainly. A reference to the nature of the state occurs in passing as part of a broader statement about the economic basis of (what will later be called) the ideological superstructure. For Hegel state power, like religion, etc., was only a "spiritual entity," but now Marx sees clearly that the basis of social dynamics is the economy. We have already mentioned his statement that "It is easy to see the necessity that the whole revolutionary development finds both its empirical and theoretical basis in the development of private property—in the economy, to be exact." This is immediately followed by the following germinal passage, loosely

* Even Hegel had explained, within his own framework, that the state arises in response to class distinctions and property relations. These passages are cited (in another connection) on page 648-649 fn.
worded as compared with later Marxism but unmistakable as the starting point of the materialist conception of history:

This *material* and directly tangible private property is the material and tangible expression of *estranged human* life. Its development—production and consumption—is the *tangible* manifestation of the development of all previous production, that is, the actualization or actuality of man. Religion, family, state, law, morality, science, art, etc. are only *particular* ways of production and fall under its general law. The positive abolition of private property, which means taking on a *human* way of life, is therefore the positive abolition of all estrangement, hence the reversion of man from religion, family, state, etc. to his *human*, that is, *social* existence.\(^\text{12}\)

Here, just as the concrete and tangible content of alienation (estrangement) is seen to be economic in nature, so too the state is seen concretely as a manifestation of the general laws governing production.

3. LIGHTNING FLASH FROM SI LESIA

Yet the changeover from the old to the new view of the state took place in ragged steps, not neatly at all. The first evidence appeared in an article written at the end of July 1844, before the Manuscripts were completed.

Marx was moved to a direct discussion of the state by an unexpected event. Now faded out of the history books, it was like a lightning flash across the social skies of Germany: the first German workers' uprising against bourgeois exploitation, immediately confronted by the state's armed force. Its impact on Marx cannot be exaggerated. He had scarcely begun to realize that in France at least there was a rebellious working class in motion such as had not been visible in Germany—when lo, here it was erupting in Germany for the first time!

This was the so-called revolt of the Silesian weavers in June of 1844, today better known through a poem by Heine and a play by Hauptmann than through the attention of historians. (Engels translated Heine's "The Silesian Weavers" into English for the December 1844 issue of the Owenite paper, after sending two reports on the event to the Chartist *Northern Star.*)\(^\text{13}\)
These weavers were not factory workers, but rural domestic-industry workers living in East Elbian villages—no longer peasants but not yet modern proletarians.* Paid incredibly low rates for their weaving by the few local employers, men, women, and children of whole families labored night and day without always succeeding in staving off death by starvation. During the "Hungry Forties," attempts at workers' "combinations" and strikes (for example by the cotton printers in Berlin or the railway workers in Brandenburg) had already been put down by police clubs. Resistance was hunger-driven, planless, the product not of plots but despair. Such actions also took place in Bohemia; but the most extensive movement broke out on June 4 in the Silesian weaver village of Peterswaldau (now Petřvald, Czechoslovakia), against the most brutal of the local nabobs, the Zwanziger brothers. A crowd of weavers had gathered before the Zwanzigers' mansion to sing the defiant Weavers' Song ("Das Blutgericht"), which had arisen line by line and stanza by stanza from the people themselves; one was arrested. The demonstrators demanded higher pay; scornfully rebuffed, they finally stormed the house and ripped it apart, allowing the Zwanzigers themselves to flee unharmed. The next day, three thousand marched to Langenbielau (now Bielawa, Poland), where the establishment of the hated Dierig brothers was stormed. The military, called in by the masters, fired on the unarmed crowd, killing eleven outright and fatally wounding twenty-four others. The weavers, picking up cudgels, rocks, and axes, drove the soldiers away. The following morning, three companies of infantry, plus gun batteries, artillery, and cavalry, took over the battlefield. Weavers who fled to the mountains and woods were hunted down; scores were sentenced to prison.15

The Prussian government was understandably inclined to belittle the significance of the movement, to treat it as a local contretemps. But the same tack was also taken by Marx's former coeditor of the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, Ruge, who had moved from disbelief in the possibility of revolution to a liberal dismay at its reality. Ruge's article, published in the Paris German-language organ Vorwärts, was entitled "The King of Prussia and Social Reform," and signed "A Prussian." Marx took the occasion to reply in the same paper in an open political break with Ruge, with his "Critical Notes on 'The King of Prussia and Social Reform.'"

* See the reference to the rise of rural weavers' settlements in The German Ideology, and compare Engels' description, in the first few pages of his Condition of the Working Class in England, of the English counterpart.14
The center of the argument was the evaluation of the uprisings. Marx took the following passage from Ruge as his butt:

It is impossible [wrote Ruge] for an unpolitical country like Germany to perceive the distress of factory districts in a part of the country as an affair of general concern, let alone as an injury to the whole civilized world. For Germans the event has the same character as any local drought or famine. For this reason the king considers it an administrative defect or lack of charity. On this ground, and because it took few soldiers to deal with the weak weavers, the destruction of factories and machines did not inspire even the king and the authorities with "terror."¹⁶

Marx gives a crushing reply to the "weak weavers" argument: the political banquets of the bourgeois liberals had collapsed before a mere decree of the king; "not a single soldier was needed to quash the desire of the entire liberal bourgeoisie for freedom of the press and a constitution." On the other hand, in a country where passive obedience is the order of the day, in such a country was not the compulsion to use armed force against weak weavers an event, indeed a terror-inspiring event? And the weak weavers won out in the first encounter. They were suppressed by a subsequent troop reinforcement. Is the uprising of a mass of workers less dangerous because it does not need an army to stifle it? Let our clever Prussian [Ruge] compare the Silesian weavers' uprising with English workers' uprisings, and the Silesian weavers will look like strong weavers to him.¹⁷

The favorable comparison with the "English workers' uprisings" no doubt refers to the outcome of the general strike movement of August 1842 in the English factory districts, which collapsed before the threat of armed force without actually joining battle. To be sure, the comparison is unfair when all the facts are examined; but a full story of what had happened in Silesia was not easy to get out of the German and French press immediately after the embarrassing events themselves. Further on, Marx's article also gives a glowing picture of "the theoretical and conscious character" of the Silesian action as greater than anything in England or France—a considerable exaggeration in hindsight, though this was no doubt the general view taken by the gleeful German workers' movement abroad. The exaggeration, reflecting their enthusiasm at seeing something break the ice of the apparently frozen social situation in Germany, was premature by four years.
The implicit meaning of the weavers' outbreak was endowed with more conscious generalization than then existed:

To begin with, let us remember the weavers' song,* those bold watchwords of struggle, in which home, factory, and district are not mentioned once, but rather the proletariat directly roars out its antagonism against the society of private property in a striking, sharp, ruthless, powerful way.¹⁹

But beyond doubt was the salient fact that this uprising was aimed directly against bourgeois exploiters, not against the old ruling class. This was its portentousness; this linked it to the new social phenomena in England. Its future was also visible in England:

In England the distress of the workers is not confined to a part, it is universal; it is not limited to the factory districts but has spread to the rural districts. There these phenomena are not just in inception; they have recurred periodically for nearly a century.²⁰

Even in England the authorities still ascribe economic distress to "administrative defects," and so on, but no more than in Prussia can this explanation hold. Also, English experience has amply demonstrated that it cannot be abolished "by benevolence and administrative measures." All this is, rather, "the necessary consequence of modern industry." All England can do with pauperism, chronic poverty, is "to discipline it and perpetuate it"—institutionalize it. It cannot be eliminated by political will, by a state decree, whether issued by Napoleon or the Prussian king or even the French revolutionary Convention, "that high point of political energy, political power, and political intelligence."²¹

* This does not refer to Heine's poem but to the homespun song sung by the weavers before the mansion of the Zwanzigers on the eve of the explosion. Here are most of the stanzas quoted in Mehring's history:

Here torment slowly shuts your eyes,
Here torture victims languish,
Here men exhale a million sighs
As witness to their anguish.
The hangmen are the Zwanzigers,
The constables serve their Graces.
How brave they crack the whip, the curs,
They should find hiding-places.
You villains all, you hellish drones,
You knaves in Satan's raiment!
You gobble all the poor man owns—
Our curses be your payment!

No use to plead or beg, we know,
In vain is lamentation:
If you don't like it, you can go
And die of slow starvation!
Now think you that this sore distress,
Drawn limbs and cheeks so ashen,
Without a crumb of bread to bless,
Would move them to compassion?
Compassion? Ha! All mercy lacks.
You cannibals, take our curses!
You want the shirts from off our backs,
Our hides to stuff your purses!¹⁸
4. FIRST REACTION: ANTISTATISM

Marx then asks: "Can the state proceed in any other way?" No, it cannot; it is useless to seek "the cause of social ills" in the political domain. "Even the radical and revolutionary politicians seek the cause of the evil not in the nature of the state but in a specific state form, which they want to replace by another state form." 

This makes clear the present direction of Marx's thinking about the state: he is not moving directly toward a class theory of the state but rather toward a depreciation of the state in general. Ruge's article had asked: who can remedy poverty, "the state and the authorities?"—only to answer insipidly, "No, but the union of all Christian hearts [can]." Marx argues back that neither the state nor Christian hearts can solve such basic social ills.*

In a key passage of this article, old and new views jostle side by side. First the old (Hegelian) view of the state is reiterated to this extent: "It [the state] rests on the contradiction between public and private life, on the contradiction between general interests and particular interests." But the conclusion that follows reverses Hegel's view of the central role of the state:

The administration must therefore limit itself to a formal and negative activity, since its power has come to an end exactly where civil [bürgerliche] life and its work begins. Indeed, vis-à-vis the consequences springing from the unsocial nature of this civil life, this private property, this commerce, this industry, this mutual plundering of different sectors of civil society—vis-à-vis these consequences the natural law of the administration is impotence.

This is very far indeed from seeing the state as a class weapon and a potent one. Yet it, in turn, is immediately followed by a statement about the class basis of this state's existence:

* This also makes clear what he had in mind in writing at the beginning of the article that he was going to examine "the general relationship of politics to social ills." Today the proletariat stands counterposed to the bourgeoisie, he also wrote, but when it gets stronger it will "turn the whole enmity of politics against itself."
For this internally torn and debased condition, this *slavery of civil society* is the natural foundation on which the *modern* state rests, just as the *civil society of slavery* was the natural foundation on which the state of *antiquity* rested. The existence of the state and the existence of slavery are inseparable. The state and the slavery of antiquity (with their candid *classical* antagonisms) were not more intimately *welded* together than are the modern state and the modern huckster world (with their hypocritical *Christian* antagonisms). 26

But while the state is recognized as having a varying class basis (in a rather passive sense: the state "rests" on a particular form of civil society), it is seen only on the negative side, only on the side of what it cannot do: it cannot solve the basic *social* ills. This inability is not linked with its particular class bias but with the general impotence of the state. Therefore the only conclusion is that the state must go:

> If the modern state wanted to abolish [aufheben] the *impotence* of its administration, it would have to abolish the present-day *private life*. If it wanted to abolish this private life, it would have to abolish itself, for it exists *only* in contrast with this life. 27

But the state cannot realistically be expected to commit suicide: "Hence the state cannot believe in the *inherent* impotence of its administration, that is, of its own self." This is why it explains events like the weavers' movement by "administrative defects."

This sort of flat counterposition of the political sphere to the social was (as we saw in another connection) typical of the thinking of the radicalism of the day.* Marx had broken with this pattern by advocating positive participation on political issues. But the extent to which he still shared its blind spot is fully visible here; it will not altogether disappear until virtually the writing of the *Communist Manifesto*.

One result is a gaping contradiction, which was typical of the contemporary radicalisms. The state and political thought in general are impotent to solve social ills, Marx reiterates—yet we find next that this

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* This general negative attitude toward the political sphere can, to be sure, be labeled anarchism, as has been done often enough. But at this early date, the label can be misleading if taken too literally; strictly speaking, it puts a part for the whole. Anarchism proper took shape out of this general mood to negate politics, by pushing all its implications *ad absurdum* and systematizing its errors. But other isms also flowed out of this general pool of anti-politicism too, including pure-and-simple trade unionism, cooperative movements, and so on.
very impotent state is the source of what is wrong with society. The trouble with the political approach, says Marx, is that it is not inclined
to seek the cause of social ills and grasp their general principle in
the principle of the state, hence in the present ordering of society
of which the state is the active, self-conscious, and official ex­
pression.

Even the political thought of the French Revolution shared this mis­
take: "Far from discerning the source of social defects in the principle
of the state, the heroes of the French Revolution rather discern the
source of political abuses in social defects." 28

It would seem, then, that something called the principle of the state
is the source of social evils—of the same social evils which political
thought is impotent to do anything about. Nothing else is vouchsafed
about this all-potent principle of the state, for this train of thought was
common coin and did not have to be explained to readers who had seen
it before often enough.

If the principle of the state is the source of social evils, what then is
the source of the principle of the state? This interesting question could
not possibly be answered by Marx as yet, but more important, it could
not have been asked on the basis of this approach.

However, at the end of this article we get a clear statement on one
aspect of the state and politics: the conception of a political revolution
which is also a social revolution. If we leave out the fuzzy polemical
form in which this is cast against a remark by Ruge,* the following
remarks stand out.

A revolution which is merely political—Marx means one that changes
the state but leaves private property, like the French Revolution—is one
that "necessarily organizes ... a ruling sector in the society, at the
expense of society." 30 And: "Every revolution breaks up the old
society; to that extent it is social. Every revolution overthrows the old
power; to that extent it is political." 31

The coming revolution, says Marx, has to be "a political revolution
with a social soul." (The specific phraseology is due to his reversing a
phrase of Ruge's.)

* The same passage also contains a formulation about the nature of the state
which is the fuzziest Hegelense in the article: "an abstract whole, which exists only
through separation from real life, and which is unthinkable without the organized
antithesis between the general idea and the individual existence of man." 29
Revolution in general—the overthrow of the existing power and the dissolution of the old relations—is a political act. And without revolution, socialism cannot be realized. It needs this political act insofar as it needs the destruction and dissolution. But where its organizing activity begins, where its own aim and its soul emerge, there socialism throws away the political husk.  

The germinal idea here will later be formulated as the task of first smashing the old state power (the political aspect of social revolution) and then organizing the new social relations (the social revolution proper). What is missing is the conception of what must come in between, a transitional period based on a new type of "political husk." But if there is no conception visible as yet of a new class state (workers' state) as a class weapon, that is hardly surprising since the article likewise betrays no conscious conception that the existing state is a class weapon of the old order. Caution: this lack does not mean that Marx had not observed the class role of the existing state; it means that this observation of fact was not integrated into a theory of the state.

In the same issue of Vorwärts that carried the last installment of Marx's article, there was also a short item headed "From a German Lady's Letter"—actually an excerpt from a letter by Marx's wife Jenny, written from Trier where she was visiting. Marx had had it inserted into the paper. It is therefore interesting that Jenny's comment on a recent assassination attempt against the Prussian king is that "right here is proof once again that in Germany a political revolution is impossible, but for a social revolution all the seeds are present." The idea is that a purely political revolution, a merely political revolution, is impossible; the coming political revolution must become a social revolution. This central idea of what soon afterwards became the concept of permanent revolution is boldly stated in Jenny's letter but is only implicit in Karl's article.

5. ENGELS TAKES THE LEAD

Marx worked on the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts until August; toward the end of that month Engels, returning home from England, met Marx in Paris and the two decided to collaborate on a polemic against the Bauer brothers, which occupied Marx till Novem-
ber. This was *The Holy Family*, a book which we will examine more closely in Chapter 10. For, as far as the theory of the state is concerned, it marks no qualitative change, and need not detain us long. Its plan entailed no systematic positive exposition on any subject, though there are some positive statements in incidental passages. On the state, the nearest thing to a theoretical discussion occurs in a section dealing with the French Revolution (Chapter 6, section 3c).

As compared with the essay "On the Jewish Question," there is a distinct advance in that the social transformation is no longer interpreted in the Hegelese terms of the integration of civil society with political life. Instead, the French Revolution is very clearly seen as the overthrow of the society of feudal privilege and the inception of a bourgeois society, "freed by the revolution itself from feudal fetters" and stimulating a powerful new economic development. The whole pattern is portrayed in class terms.

The very word *bürgerlich*, hitherto equivocal ("civil" or "bourgeois"), is given a class meaning: "The *bürgerlich* society is positively represented by the *bourgeoisie*. The bourgeoisie thus begins its reign." Napoleon's dictatorship is accurately seen as the suppression of bourgeois liberalism in the sphere of political forms, but

Napoleon, to be sure, already had insight into the nature of the *modern state*, the insight that it rests on the unhampered development of bourgeois society and the free movement of private interests, etc. as its basis. He decided to recognize and protect this basis. 34

With the revolution of 1830 (the establishment of Louis Philippe's bourgeois monarchy), adds Marx, the bourgeoisie was resigned to exclusion from direct political power as long as its social interests were taken care of. 35

However, there is no advance beyond this still static view of the basis on which the modern state "rests." 36 As for the idea of a political transitional period, good will might possibly read something into Marx's comment that he "considers material, practical upheavals necessary even to win the time and means that are required just for concern with 'theory'!" 37

While Marx was working on *The Holy Family*, of which he wrote the bulk, Engels was in Barmen writing his book *The Condition of the Working Class in England* amidst a sea of English books and documents.
This first book by Engels is a treasury of seedlings; a good deal of later Marxism can be found in it, by hindsight, in seminal form; the temptation is to read into its passages much more than was consciously in Engels' head when he wrote it. For it is so permeated with the influence of the English class struggle that parts of it, by dint of merely generalizing a little on the English facts, sound like theoretical generalizations of wider import. It is one of those germinal works of which it can be said (as Rupert Brooke did in another connection) that "thoughts go blowing through them, are wiser than their own."*

The bourgeoisie is the ruling class (Marx has not yet used such a term); it is "the chief, in fact, the only power in Parliament"; the cabinet minister is "the obedient servant of the bourgeoisie . . ." Even more directly:

... theirs [the workers'] is not a state in which a man or a whole class of men can think, feel, and live as human beings. The workers must therefore strive to escape from this brutalizing condition, to secure for themselves a better, more human position; and this they cannot do without attacking the interest of the bourgeoisie which consists in exploiting them. But the bourgeoisie defends its interests with all the power at its disposal by wealth and the might of the state.**

Here, before anything to be found in Marx, Engels states the basic idea that the state is a class weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie, to

* Not to be overlooked is also the influence of the left-wing Chartists, particularly George Julian Harney, editor of the Northern Star, whom Engels had met in Leeds in autumn 1843. Harney had no head for theory but was well ahead of Marx and Engels in a class-struggle approach to socialism. Schoyen rightly says:

There was a great deal that this young foreigner [Engels], with his German training in philosophy, could, and did, learn from such radical leaders as Harney. Immersed from early youth in the struggles of a working class confronted for the first time with the problems of industrialism, Harney was saturated with ideas and attitudes which were new to Engels. When, for example, Harney told an average Chartist meeting that profits and wages, and thus the interests of the middle class and the working class, were diametrically opposed, neither he nor his audience considered these concepts anything out of the ordinary. But Engels, still filled with abstractions, was only in the process of realizing such concepts; he had just recognized the dominance of interests over principles in Manchester.***

In general, the influence of left Chartism, then the most advanced proletarian revolutionary tendency in the world, on the maturation of Marx and Engels has been undervalued. Though it is indubitable, it is largely undocumentable; there are no manuscripts about it requiring exegesis.
keep the working class in its condition of subjection. The idea is elaborated at even greater length in a subsequent chapter. The state, explains Engels, is a burden in bourgeois eyes from the standpoint of free competition and its laissez-faire yearnings.

Since, however, the bourgeoisie cannot dispense with government, but must have it to hold the equally indispensable proletariat in check, it turns the power of government against the proletariat. . . .

He applies this class view of the state so effectively to an analysis of the state of law and justice that it reads like something that he or Marx might have written ten years later—but like nothing that Marx has written so far:

Let us turn now to the manner in which the bourgeoisie as a party, as the power of the state, conducts itself toward the proletariat. It is quite obvious that all legislation is calculated to protect those that possess property against those who do not.

The judges construe the law in accordance with what the ruling class wants—for one thing, because “they are themselves bourgeois, who see the foundation of all true order in the interests of their class. And the conduct of the police corresponds to that of the Justices of the Peace. . . .” Events show “how little the protective side of the law exists for the workingman, how frequently he has to bear all the burdens of the law without enjoying its benefits.”

6. ENGELS IN ELBERFELD

This is, without doubt, a very important step forward, and bears witness to the contribution which Engels was to bring to the coming Marx–Engels partnership. (So far they had spent only ten days together talking in Paris, followed by some correspondence.) But some additional facts must be presented to avoid exaggeration.

At the same time that Engels was writing in this vein about English conditions, he was also confronting the far more backward German conditions: first as an activist and speaker in organizing communist meetings in the Rhineland, and second in reporting on the German movement for the English Owenite organ The New Moral World. To
what extent does his insight into the English bourgeois state carry over into his approach to German activity?

Only partially at best; this is a caution against exaggerating the extent of the theoretical clarity embodied in *The Condition of the Working Class*. The difference is not due to any notion that England was in some way exceptional, as distinct from merely more advanced. While working on the book, for example, Engels remarked in a letter to Marx that "it is self-understood that when I hit the bag I mean to strike the donkey, namely, the German bourgeoisie, of whom I say clearly enough that it is just as base as the English, only not so courageous, consistent, and adept in sweatshop methods." Yet in Germany, in letters and in articles, Engels was elated over the "rapid progress of communism in Germany" when, in fact, as he explained in the same contexts, the meetings and groups had not reached any workers at all, only bourgeois scions, intellectuals, and other men of good will of the "educated classes," including the police inspector in Barmen.

Besides the articles for *The New Moral World*, which may have been affected by the non-class-struggle character of the Owenite movement on the receiving end, an interesting glimpse is afforded by the text of two speeches made by Engels in February 1845 at meetings held in Elberfeld to propagandize for communism. The emphasis in making the case for communism is overwhelmingly on the need for rationality in social planning and organization and on the prospect of a decent life for all men in a rational social order. The approach is obviously appropriate for a middle-class audience. The class struggle is not overlooked, but there is a tendency to represent it as a threat which can be avoided only by taking steps toward a communist society which would satisfy the workers' grievances.

Here are some representative excerpts showing both sides.

Today what keeps the administrative authorities busy is, in origin, the continuing state of [social] warfare: the police and the whole administration do nothing but make sure that the warfare remains hidden and indirect and does not develop into open use of force and into crime.

A standing army, he explains, is needed only because of the authorities' fear of revolution; and "Fear of revolution is indeed only a consequence of a conflict of interests; where all interests coincide, there can be no thought of such fear."
Yet the plea in these speeches is for "a peaceful transformation of society" through three key demands: universal education, state-sponsored productive associations for the jobless poor, and a progressive capital levy to finance it all. This is just where the mild socialists were; in fact, Hess, who did not have a class-struggle notion in his head, was organizing this propaganda movement.

To be sure, Engels' second speech in Elberfeld laid stress on the inevitability of social revolution:

A social revolution, gentlemen, is something altogether different from the political revolutions seen up to now; it does not direct itself, like the latter, against the property of monopoly but rather against the monopoly of property. A social revolution, gentlemen, is the open war of the poor against the rich. And such a struggle... threatens to become more intense and bloodier than all its predecessors....

If these consequences are correct, gentlemen, if social revolution and communism in practice are the necessary result of our existing conditions, then we should concern ourselves before anything else with the measures whereby we can obviate a forcible and bloody upheaval in the social situation. And there is only one way to do that, namely, the peaceful introduction of, or at least preparation of, communism.

There is more of the same, in an implicit appeal to his audience to do the needful before an exacerbated proletariat does it to them with bloody violence. Moses Hess and G. A. Köttgen also spoke for "communism" at these meetings, where Köttgen answered criticism by explaining that only a spiritual transformation of society was proposed, and where it was agreed that another meeting would discuss "How communism might be introduced among us under the present [social] relations and constitution."

One must conclude that the insights which the English class struggle had enforced regarding the nature of the state had not yet been integrated into a theory of social revolution.
7. PRELUDE IN BRUSSELS

It is in the first work written jointly by Marx and Engels, begun a year and a half after these speeches were delivered, that the characteristic Marxist theory of the state is present in all its essentials for the first time. This is *The German Ideology.*

A great deal had happened during the intervening year and a half (over two years if we count to the date of completion). The written record is sparse, and yields few documents for exegeses; hence, it is easy to overlook the crucial importance of this period as the birthtime of Marxism—its parturition as distinct from its gestation or conception. The best known document of the period is Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach," which we will come back to in another connection. For present purposes, it does not bear directly on the theory of the state, although its germinal importance is indisputable, especially in effectuating a final break with Hegelianism—Hegelianism in its last-ditch Feuerbachian form—the "German ideology" itself. Again, this does not mean that Marx was uninterested in political questions; on the contrary, he actively planned to write a book on that subject, and his brief outline for it is extant.**

What *did* happen during this parturition period? Let us mention three salient developments:

1. **Relocation to Brussels.** At the beginning of February 1845 the French government, under Prussian pressure, expelled Marx and others of his circle; he moved to Brussels. It is Belgium, therefore, that has the honor of providing the locale for this crucial period, as well as providing

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* The *Holy Family* had been a collaboration of the two men, but had not been written jointly. Different sections were written either by Marx or Engels separately. Indeed, even the discussions that gave rise to it could not have lasted more than a part of the ten days that they spent together at this time, since Engels had dashed off his assignments before he left town.

** The outline is tantalizing in its intimation of what might have been written. Here it is:

(1) The **genetic history of the modern state** or the **French Revolution.**—The overweening presumptuousness of the political sphere—confusion with the state of antiquity. Relationship of revolutionaries to civil [bürgerliche] society. Duplication of all elements in the domain of civil society and of the state. (2) The **proclamation of the rights of man** and the **constitution of the state.**—Freedom, equality, and unity. The sovereignty of the people. (3) The **state and civil society.** (4) The **representative state** and the **Charter** [program of the British Chartists].—The constitutional
systematic police harassment for its guest. Brussels was not Paris as far as the organized revolutionary movement was concerned any more than in other well-known respects; but Belgium’s socioeconomic development was about on France’s level. Besides, it had its advantages. Socially as well as geographically, it faced toward England, France, and Germany (especially the Rhineland), the three main fronts on which society was being transformed in Europe. The optical angle from this binational, bilingual country added another dimension to Marx’s cosmopolitanism, as an ingredient in internationalism. And Brussels had its own radical democratic movement, which Marx helped to build, as well as a German workers’ colony and a gathering of Polish and Italian revolutionary émigrés.

2. Beginning of collaboration with Engels. In early April Engels came to live in Brussels near the Marx family. It is from this date that regular intellectual communication between the two became possible, hence the definitive amalgamation of the special contributions which each brought to the union of minds. Un-Boswellized conversation leaves no historical deposit, unfortunately; but the written documents are no more the sole content of intellectual biography than potsherds are of archeology.

3. Visit to England. In July and August, for about a month and a half, Marx and Engels visited England together—Marx for the first time. Most of the time was spent in Manchester, where Engels knew his way around, on two activities: reading in political economy (as Marx had been doing in Brussels too) and getting acquainted with the English working-class movement through Engels’ contacts. In London, they held discussions with Chartist leaders, especially Harney, and with the leaders of the German émigré revolutionary group then called the League of the Just (the future Communist League), which was ideologically in flux.

It was right after their return to Brussels that Engels quit writing for the Owenite periodical. And both started work on The German Ideology. Marx later summed it up this way:

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Friedrich Engels, with whom I had maintained a constant epistolary exchange of ideas since the publication (in the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher) of his brilliant sketch of a critique of the economic categories, had come to the same result as I by a different path (compare his Condition of the Working Class in England); and when he too settled in Brussels in spring 1845, we decided to work in common to hammer out the contrast between our own view and the ideological [idealistic] view held by German philosophy—in fact to settle accounts with our former philosophical conscience. 52

8. THE FIRST “MARXIST” WORK

*The German Ideology* is the first work that can be read as a reliable exposition of the essential views of developed Marxism (except in economics). In that sense it is the first “Marxist” work, all previous writings being anticipations, forerunners, or harbingers to one extent or another. This is true above all of the Marxist theory of social change (historical materialism), the underlying basis of all Marxist social science and hence also of political theory. With this work there is no more point in talking about the “young Marx,” regardless of the fact that he was twenty-eight when the manuscript was substantially completed—though, to be sure, there are many modifications and additions still to come.

Another way of putting it is that the bulk of the content of the *Communist Manifesto* is already contained in it, including the content of the Manifesto’s famous opening:

... society has hitherto always developed within the framework of a contradiction—in antiquity the contradiction between free men and slaves, in the Middle Ages that between nobility and serfs, in modern times that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. 53

The theory of the state as a class-bound institution, of course, rests entirely on the previous development of a class-struggle view of social dynamics in general. In the first few pages Marx already makes the point that empirical observation of historical facts must bring out “the connection of the social and political structure with production. The
social structure and the state are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals" who are grouped as social classes.$^{54}$

The Hegelian antithesis between particular interests and universal (or general) interests is not entirely abandoned; but it is filled with a new theoretical content and therefore entirely transformed. The book starts with an analysis—nowhere done again as thoroughly—of the basic role played in the development of society by the division of labor, beginning with the division of labor between the sexes. The social division of labor, while historically necessary, is seen as implying the contradiction between the interest of an individual (or family) and "the communal interest of all individuals who have intercourse with one another."

And indeed this communal interest does not exist merely in the imagination, as the "general interest," but first of all in reality, as the mutual interdependence of the individuals among whom the labor is divided.$^{55}$

The state arises out of this contradiction, not out of a class plot.

And out of this very contradiction between the interest of the individual and that of the community, the latter takes an independent form as the state, divorced from the real interests of individual and community, and at the same time as an illusory communal life, always based, however, on the real ties existing in every family and tribal conglomeration . . . and especially, as we shall enlarge upon later, on the classes, already determined by the division of labor, which in every such mass of men separate out, and of which one dominates all the others.

This is essentially the same view of the state's origin that Engels will elaborate later, as explained in Chapter 11. The rise of the state is not impelled simply by a thrust toward class oppression. There are two related impulsions: on the one hand, the basic need for an institution to take care of certain social tasks that had become more complex, without which the community as a whole could not survive; and on the other, the fact that this takes place within the framework of developed class antagonisms. The socially necessary institution becomes also a class institution.

With regard to this sequel, the above passage continues on as follows:
It follows from this that all struggles within the state, the struggle
between democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy, the struggle for
the franchise, etc. etc., are merely the illusory forms in which the
real struggles of the different classes are fought out among one
another. . . . * Further, it follows that every class which is strug­
gling for mastery, even when its domination, as is the case with the
proletariat, postulates the abolition of the old form of society in
its entirety and of domination itself, must first conquer for itself
political power in order to represent its interest in turn as the
general interest, which in the first moment it is forced to do. 58

The state is clearly seen as a historically evolved institution, develop­
ing out of earlier tribal society without a state 59 and culminating in the
modern state which is thoroughly dominated by the bourgeoisie.

Through the emancipation of private property from the commu­
nity, the state has become a separate entity, beside and outside
civil society; but it is nothing more than the form of organization
which the bourgeois necessarily adopt both for internal and
external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and
interests. . . . The modern French, English, and American writers
all express the opinion that the state exists only for the sake of
private property, so that this fact has penetrated into the con­
sciousness of the normal man.

Since the state is the form in which the individuals of a ruling
class assert their common interests, and in which the whole civil
society of an epoch is epitomized, it follows that the state
mediates in the formation of all common institutions and that the
institutions receive a political form. 60

In every case the rule of a particular class is expressed in the
existence of the state. 61 Subsequent discussions in the book are likewise
permeated with the class view of the state, which plays an important
part in the polemic against Max Stirner, one of the book's chief targets.

* At this point Marx makes the claim that "a sufficient introduction to [this]
subject" already appeared in the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher and The Holy
Family. This claim is partly explained when it is repeated later: "In the Deutsch-
Französische Jahrbücher this was done, in view of the context, only in relation to
the Rights of Man proclaimed by the French Revolution." 56 This plainly refers to
the section of the essay "On the Jewish Question" at the end of the first part,
already discussed in Chapter 5 above. 57 From our hindsight, this was hardly a
"sufficient introduction," to be sure, but the statement is interesting as evidenc­
ing Marx's strong feeling of continuity in the development of his views.
Stirner, in the Hegelian and general German tradition, sees the state as the root and crux of society; as against his emphasis that "the state pays well," Marx replies:

This should read: the bourgeois pay their state well and make the nation pay for it in order to be able without danger to pay poorly; by good payment they ensure that they have among the state servants a force that protects them, the police; they willingly pay, and force the nation to pay, high taxes so as to be able without danger to shift the sums they pay on to the workers as tribute (as deductions from wages).

Law reflects the interests of the mode of production on which the particular state rests:

The individuals who rule in these conditions, besides having to constitute their power in the form of the state, have to give their will, which is determined by these definite conditions, a universal expression as the will of the state, as law—an expression whose content is always determined by the relations of this class, as the civil and criminal law demonstrates in the clearest possible way.

It is not "will" that creates the state but, rather, the state that shapes social will: "Hence the state does not exist owing to the ruling will, but the state which arises from the material mode of life of individuals has also the form of a ruling will."

To be sure, the bourgeois keep the state from interfering in their own affairs as much as possible. Still the state has and utilizes powers over private property insofar as this is necessary in the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole. But it is an illusion to believe, because of such phenomena, that the state therefore really controls private property while the bourgeoisie is simply its servitor.

Marx quotes Stirner’s view that "the state has the factory as property, the manufacturer only as fief, as possession." No, answers Marx—"In exactly the same way when a dog guards my house it has the house ‘as property,’ and I have it only ‘as fief, as possession’ from the dog." What sometimes appears as the power of the state over private property is one aspect of the way in which the bourgeoisie uses the state "in order to safeguard their common interests." True, "if only because of the division of labor," the state may "delegate the collective power thus created to a few persons," but it is a fantasy to conclude from this that it is the state that is at bottom the controller of society. On the
contrary, views like Stirner's merely flow from "the petty-bourgeois German idea of the omnipotence of the state, an idea which was already current among the old German lawyers and is here [in Stirner] presented in the form of grandiloquent assertions." 66

It is true that there is "external compulsion" in society, but society is not based on it; rather, it is the result of the way society is organized. It is false to see this compulsion "only as the compulsion exercised by the state in the form of bayonets, police, and cannons, which far from being, the foundation of society, are only a consequence of its structure." 67

Many of the themes enunciated and problems suggested in The German Ideology remain to be further explored in Part II.
CHARACTER AND REVOLUTION

With Marx's arrival at the theoretical level represented by *The German Ideology*, there remains for consideration one more aspect of the political development of the young Marx.

We have kept the purely biographical side of Marx and Engels to a minimum, not because it is irrelevant to their political development—after all, we are dealing with the thought of two individuals—but on the assumption that the reader will find this background elsewhere. However, there is one aspect that is not purely personal and not quite theoretical: it stands between these two categories in a fashion which is as unmistakable as it is undefinable. Obviously rooted in character and temperament, it intertwines with the questions of theory we have already discussed and eventually shows up in a principle that lies at the heart of Marx's politics, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

This factor of character or temperament has a tag, usually derived from the experience of the Russian revolutionary movement: the division between the Hards and the Softs. In individuals this division underlies formal differences in political opinion and program. Two pieces of statuary, both representing the same reality, may be made one of wax, the other of steel; so also the apparently same political view may be held by a Hard or a Soft. The difference concerns the degree to which an individual finds *revolutionary oppositionism* congenial or tolerable—not simply as an occasional or symbolic gesture, but as a relationship to the established currents of society around which to build one's life. Its powering agency appears as "revolutionary energy.”

* Not to be confused with simple rejection of established society, implemented by a life-style of disaffiliation (from St. Simeon Stylites to today). This is
Like other character traits, for example firmness or pigheadedness, its name is duplex. Compare the following book titles: Karl Marx: Man, Thinker, and Revolutionist, edited by D. Ryazanov; and Karl Marx: A Study in Fanaticism, by E. H. Carr. These two titles tell us more about the writers than about the subject: to Carr, the Marxist is a revolutionary fanatic; to the Marxist, Carr is a bourgeois philistine. To Marx himself, the political leader who slithered about without steadfast convictions ("fanaticism") was a scoundrel. Happiness meant to fight—this can be taken as the credo of the Hard.**

1. OF DEMONS

Marx was able to fight his way through to a new view of society and politics only by battling against the current in threefold fashion: first, obviously, against the dominant ideological influences in society; second, against the pressures of his own immediate milieu, beginning with his parents; third, against conforming to any of the dominant non-conformist trends of the time, that is, the socialisms and communisms of the day.

Marx’s father recognized the problem early. An intelligent and cultivated man, a modest success in his profession, Heinrich Marx was intellectually content in his liberal Prussian patriotism; there was no

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a classic recourse of Softs; it tries to avoid the choice between oppositionism and adaptation by moving away from both at right angles. There is, of course, a larger problem of the relationship between individual psychology and social ideology, which is outside our purview.

** For Marx the very type of slithering politician was Disraeli. Disraeli had been baptized by his father in boyhood—like Marx—but what outraged Marx was that this cynic should become the defender of clericalism. He wrote his Dutch uncle Lion Philips in 1864:

Our blood-brother [Stammgenosse] Benjamin Disraeli has in recent weeks again brought great discredit on himself, by parading at a public meeting as monitory guardian angel of the 'high church' and the 'church rates' and as its defender against criticism in religious affairs. He is the best evidence of how great talent without conviction makes scoundrels, albeit galooned and "right honorable" scoundrels.

Marx filled out daughter Laura’s copy of “Confessions,” a questionnaire game of the time. Part of it went like this: “Your chief characteristic: Singleness of purpose. Your idea of happiness: To fight. Your idea of misery: Submission.”
demon in his breast pressing toward a clash with established society. When he recognized that his son showed unusual intellectual ability, he reacted like a father: "Your rise to a high position in the world, the flattering hope of seeing your name in high renown one day, as well as your worldly well being, these not only lie close to my heart, they are long-nourished illusions that have rooted themselves deeply." In this letter, written to Karl who was then at the University of Berlin and not quite nineteen, he wondered "since your heart is evidently inspired and ruled by a demon not vouchsafed everyone, whether this demon is divine or Faustian in its nature." He mentioned Karl's "demonic genius" a little further on.3

The same year, his son presented him on his birthday with a notebook of poems which should have settled the doubt: the demon was Faustian. In the section entitled "Epigrams," homage was rendered repeatedly not only to Goethe in general but to the figure of Faust in particular.4 The year before, in a set of poems presented to his fiancée Jenny von Westphalen, the Faustian note had been struck in an explicit credo,5 part of which goes:

I would compass all, attaining  
Every boon the gods impart:  
Dare to crave all knowledge, straining  
To embrace all song and art.

*   *   *

So let's dare all things to seek out,  
Never resting, never through,  
Not so dead as not to speak out,  
Not to want, and not to do.

The main characteristics of this body of juvenile verse are, on the one hand, a passionate energy of spirit, and, on the other, a "protest against the intellectual domination of the philistine" which, in D. Ryazanov's view, is "nothing but the germinal form of rebellion against the dominant state of things in society."*

Passion and reason were never mutually exclusive for Marx. Intellectual passion and the passion of intellect are nowhere exhibited more strikingly than in a letter he sent his father on November 10, 1837,

* See Special Note B for a fuller discussion of Marx's youthful verse.
describing his efforts to orient himself amidst the currents of contemporary thought, art, and philosophy.*

When he wrote this letter, Marx had already joined the Doctors' Club at the university, the group of radical Young Hegelians in which his first political thinking would develop. There he earned a reputation both for intellectual brilliance and passionate intensity. For the first, there is the evidence of the well-known letter in which Moses Hess wrote of Marx: "he combines the most profound philosophical seriousness with the most biting wit; think of Rousseau, Voltaire, Holbach, Lessing, Heine, and Hegel united in one person—I say united, not thrown together—and there you have Dr. Marx." 8 For the second, there is the amusing evidence of the impression Marx's character made on his young associates in a long, satiric epic poem written by Engels in protest against the March 1842 dismissal of Bruno Bauer from his university position. The leading Young Hegelians are introduced as Bauer's troops, with descriptions that are friendly caricatures. The passage devoted to Marx, whom Engels did not yet know personally, goes approximately as follows, in limping hexameters:

Then who, with fiercesome rage, comes rushing thereupon?  
A swarthy chap from Trier, a real phenomenon.  
He neither walks nor skips but springs up in the air,  
And storms about with red-hot fury as though to tear  
Down to the earth the far-hung tent of the broad sky—  
His arms he stretches up to seize the winds on high.  
With angry fist up-clenched, he rages without rest  
As if ten thousand flaming demons him possessed. 9

No other year saw more hard thinking on Marx's part than 1844; but it was in that year that he twice consciously confronted the conjunction of reason with passion. In the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts he wrote it down as an aphorism: "Man as an objective, sentient being is therefore a suffering being, and since he is a being that feels his

* The entire letter needs to be read to appreciate this. Several English translations are available. 6 Marx would certainly have agreed with an address adopted by the International Association (not to be confused with the First International) in 1859, in which its Central Committee proclaimed: "We speak to the reason of democrats. Passion is in its place when there are great things to be created; calm judgment is to do its work, when there is before our eyes a society which dies, and a lie which triumphs." 7
suffering, a passionate being. Passion is man's essential force striving energetically after its object.”¹⁰ (There is a wordplay here: Leiden, “suffering,” and Leidenschaft, “passion,” have the same stem.) Then in the fall, in a letter to Feuerbach, he criticized a Fourierist maxim which seemed to see people simply in terms of their passions: “Don’t all these statements look as if the Frenchman had deliberately counterposed his ‘passion’ to the actus purus of German thought?” It is the counterposition of one against the other that is wrong. He goes on to criticize Bauer’s view—which he will shortly attack in The Holy Family—that all mankind is nothing but an “inert mass” counterposed to spirit. “It is therefore considered to be the worst of crimes if the critic possesses heart or passion; he has to be an ice-cold, ironical sophos.” Quoting Bauer, he shows that the result is Bauer’s “tone of passionless contempt,” contempt for the mass of “decaying humanity.”¹¹

We may suggest further that behind such an apparent “tone of passionless contempt” is passionate rancor against a mass so inert as to misprize the passionless superiority of the Thinker. In contrast, to Marx passion is not a mindless storm of emotion, but the driving force of mind. This is what it also was to Hegel: “nothing great in the world has ever been accomplished without passion.”¹²

2. OF SIEGFRIED AND OTHER HEROES

Engels himself had the same threefold obstacle course to get over. To begin with, he had a longer distance to travel from the authoritarian Pietism of his family and friends. His father, who had more than the usual premonitions about demonic possession, wrote to his wife about the boy before he had turned fifteen:

Externally, as you know, he has become better behaved, but in spite of previous strict chastisement, he does not seem to have learned unconditional obedience even out of fear of punishment. Thus today once more I was grieved to find in his desk a nasty book from a lending library, a tale of chivalry from the thirteenth century. Noteworthy is the carelessness with which he leaves such a book around in the drawer. May God mend his nature—I am often uneasy about the otherwise excellent youngster.”¹³
Here indeed was a situation made to order for antiparental rebellion! The touch about the "tale of chivalry from the thirteenth century" was typical; the young Engels dreamed of going out into the world to do great deeds. A year after the above revelation of his depraved taste in literature, one of his earliest poems celebrated a vision of idealistic heroes of chivalric literature.*

Of this parade of heroes, it was the image of Siegfried that recurred during Engels' youth. In 1839 he composed a lengthy "Fragment of a Tragicomedy," entitled Der gebörnte Siegfried.15 Naturally it begins with Siegfried's leaving home to make his way in the world. ("Why tarry longer staying / Here in the castle hall? / Outside my steed is neighing, / My sword hangs on the wall.") The romantic clichés are there, but while this was written in the same year as Marx's poetry notebooks for Jenny, the choice of clichés is different. For one thing, Engels was two years younger, and not in love.

Four years later, in more mature retrospection, he looked back at this pattern as a social phenomenon:

What is it that moves us so powerfully in the myth of Siegfried? . . . Siegfried is the representative of the German youth. All of us whose bosom bears a heart not yet beaten into submission by the restrictive narrowness of life—we know what it is trying to say. We feel in us the same aspiration for great deeds, the same defiance of tradition, that drove Siegfried out of his father's castle; the eternal weighing of pros and cons, the philistine fear of the bald deed is repugnant to our very soul; we want out into the free world; we want to leap over the bounds of circumspection and reach out in struggle for the crown of life, the deed. Giants and dragons have been attended to by the philistines especially in

* The poem, untitled, was inscribed in the fashion of an illuminated manuscript, and decorated with his own drawings. It went like this:

There dawns on my eyes the far light
Of a lovely vision that gleams:
As through the clouds the starlight
Shines down its tender beams.
They come, and now I distinguish
Their faces and forms aglow:
I see William Tell the marksman—
Siegfried—his dragon foe;
Faust the defiant is coming,
Achilles is at hand,
Bouillon the noble champion
And all his knightly band;
And also—laugh not, brothers—
Don Quixote of chivalrous deed
Who roams the wide world over
Upon his noble steed.
Thus they come by, and never,
Never stop or stay;
Oh, can you bind them forever,
Keep them from fleeting away?
Oft may you see the vision
Sweet poetry shows to you,
That cares and sorrows may vanish
As they gleam into view!
the domain of church and state. But those days are gone; they stick us into jails called schools ... and when we are released from discipline, we fall into the hands of the gods of the age, the police. Police for thinking, police for speaking, police for moving, riding, traveling—identification papers, residence permits and customs forms—the devil take giants and dragons! They have left us only the shadow of deeds—the rapier instead of the sword; and what is the good of any skill in fencing with the rapier when we are not allowed to apply our skill with the sword? 16

At this point, Engels was a liberal adherent of the Young Germany tendency. Gone was the boyish pattern of looking back to heroes of the past: the keynote of Young Germany was modernization—on a mildly liberal basis. The praise of the deed, of course, comes from Goethe’s famous lines. In modern jargon, young Engels was yearning for activism.

Writing to a friend in 1839, the nineteen-year-old adopts the cause of the most recent popular uprisings and movements—first of all, the French revolution of July 1830: “What did we have before 1830? ... Then came the July revolution, like a thunderbolt—the finest expression of the will of the people since the wars of liberation [of Germany against Napoleon].” Young Germany, he tells his friend, expresses “the ideas of the century” on the “natural rights of every man.”

These ideas include: above all the participation of the people in running the state, hence a Constitutional Assembly, furthermore the emancipation of the Jews, abolition of all religious coercion, all aristocracy of birth, etc. Who can have anything against this?

He is writing this letter from Bremen, where his family had installed him as a commercial apprentice, and the detested Prussian coat of arms hangs in the workroom.

I cannot sleep at night for thinking of nothing but the ideas of the century; when I am at my job and glance up at the Prussian coat of arms, the spirit of freedom seizes hold of me; every time I look at a periodical I go searching for the progress of freedom ... 17

Adherents of Young Germany “wish and strive to imbue the German people’s flesh and blood with the ideas of our century, the emancipation of the Jews and serfs, constitutionalism in general, and other good ideas.” 18 That was what the liberal youth was for: all the Good Ideas
that would bring the backward society of Germany up to date, under Good Men.

'The year 1840 was a turning point for these vague aspirations.

3. OF SAVIOR-RULERS

One of the characteristics of Softs is a propensity to attach themselves to Power, to look upward for emancipation. It is naturally the common pattern of liberalism. Under conditions of absolutism, it gravitates perforce toward the illusion of the savior-ruler. A common form of this illusion has always been hope for salvation from the ascent to the throne of a new, liberal monarch. Marx went through this at an early age along with Rhenish liberalism and the Left Hegelian circle.

In mid-1840 the old king of Prussia was succeeded by his son, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who as crown prince had excited great hope in liberal circles that he would grant constitutional reforms, for he had made certain noises about liberty and national unity. It was a not uncommon habit of royal heirs: the same pattern had held a century before, when Frederick the Great had uttered similar "nice phrases...shortly or immediately after his accession to the throne." So remarks Mehring in *The Lessing Legend*, which observes that this is "the noted liberalism of crown princes." The leading figure of the Young Hegelians, Bruno Bauer, seized the opportunity to pay fulsome homage to "the highest idea of our state life," the spirit of the Hohenzollerns. 19

These hopes for democratization from above collapsed quickly. Bauer's prostrations before the crown earned only a kick in the face: the new king appointed an orthodox reactionary to the university post that Bauer wanted. Next, Bauer was even ousted from his post at the University of Bonn. 20 The events made it clear to Marx that an academic career was closed to him, unless he was ready to bootlick the establishment like academia in general.

There is indirect evidence that Marx was caught up with the rest in the liberal illusion about the new king. In April 1840, looking to the new reign, Marx's close friend K. F. Köpken—a prominent left Hegelian, ten years older than Marx—had published a book on Frederick the Great. 21 One biographer of Marx describes the book as follows:
Köpken honored Frederick, "in whose spirit we swore to live and die," as the enemy of Christian-German reaction. His basic idea was that the state was embodied in its purest form in a monarchy ruled over by a monarch like Frederick, a philosopher, a free servant of the world spirit. Renewal could only come from the top...

Köpken's book was not simply an exercise in history but a tract for the times. He wanted to suggest that the new monarch should bear the torch of the savior-ruler like his great predecessor. Mehring comments:

The fact that a man like Köpken yearned for "the spiritual resurrection" of the worst despot in Prussian history in order "to exterminate with fire and sword all those who deny us entrance into the land of promise" is sufficient to give us some idea of the peculiar environment in which these Berlin Young Hegelians lived.

This is unjust and, what is worse, unhistorical: there was nothing "peculiar" about Köpken's attitude. It had been dominant, among intellectuals as among others, since time immemorial, and essentially it is still dominant. Frederick may have been the worst despot but he was a modernizing despot, and this variety still gains mass allegiance from well-intentioned people, especially those who would like to be the modernizing bureaucrats or mouthpieces for the modernizing despot. Liberal circles held to the old illusion that, if only power found its way into the hands of a Good Man, he would hand salvation down from his seat of rule—and thus, incidentally, spare one all the inconveniences of having to conquer salvation for oneself in struggle against power.

Köpken's book was prominently dedicated to "my friend Karl Heinrich Marx of Trier." No doubt at this point Marx, along with the rest of this circle, shared the attitudes of the work that was dedicated to him.

4. OF PROMETHEUS AND PRINCES

The following year Marx returned the compliment with an admiring mention of Köpken's book. It is rather dragged in by the hair, for it occurs, of all places, in the foreword that Marx wrote, in March 1841,
for the planned publication of his doctoral dissertation on Greek philosophy. But the case was simply that Marx was obviously determined to utilize this opportunity, \textit{faute de mieux}, to make a declaration of conscience against the political status quo. The tribute to Köpen's work on Frederick was a way of taking a stand on the current political alignment.

The rest of the foreword is deliberately chip on the shoulder. Next comes a thrust against religion, by upholding the "sovereign authority" of philosophy against religion. He rests this first on a quotation from Hume, who asserts that if the hegemony of philosophy is questioned from an inferior area, then "This puts one in mind of a king arraign'd for high-treason against his subjects." Marx underlines this sentence so that it cannot be missed. Epicurus is the next witness. And finally there is the most provocative antireligious statement of all using the figure of Prometheus:

\begin{quote}
Philosophy makes no secret of it. Prometheus' avowal, "In a word, all gods I hate," is its own avowal, its own dictum against all gods in heaven and on earth who do not acknowledge human consciousness as the supreme divinity. There shall be none beside it.

To the wretched rabbits, however, who gloat over the apparent worsening in the social position of philosophy, it replies once more in the words of Prometheus to the lackey of the gods, Hermes:

\begin{quote}
Never would I exchange my doleful lot
For your servitude—be sure of that.
Better it is to be bound to this rock
Than serve Father Zeus as faithful errand-boy.
\end{quote}

Prometheus is the noblest saint and martyr in the calendar of philosophy.
\end{quote}

Thus, although the dissertation's subject was Democritus and Epicurus, in writing the foreword Marx handed the center stage over to Prometheus, as a means (a typically academic means, to be sure) of raising the banner of rebellious defiance of authority. The dissertation itself had not mentioned Prometheus, although in his workbooks for it Marx had written:

\begin{quote}
... just as Prometheus, after stealing fire from heaven, begins to build houses and settle on earth, so philosophy, upon reaching
\end{quote}
out to the world, directs itself against the world that makes its appearance.  

Prometheus never reappears in any of Marx's writings as a symbol of rebellion, but the quickening spirit of dissent broke out in his notes to the dissertation. There is the significant observation that

It is a psychological law that the theoretical mind that has become free in itself turns into practical energy; emerging as will out of the shadow-realm of Amenthes, it directs itself against the world of actuality that exists apart from it.

Further on, he writes that when "philosophy as will" is inspired to realize itself, it enters on a state of tension with existing reality. "The inner self-sufficiency and rounded wholeness are broken up. What was an inner light becomes a consuming flame which turns outward." He bids Schelling, whom the Prussian regime had installed as official state philosopher, to think back to what he had once written: "It is time to proclaim freedom of the mind to a better humanity, and no longer suffer it to bewail the loss of its fetters."

Even the dedication (to his future father-in-law, Baron von Westphalen) is written as a thrust against the reactionaries: he is fortunate to admire a graybeard of youthful strength, who welcomes every progressive step of the day with the enthusiasm and thoughtfulness of truth and with that sun-lit idealism of deep conviction which alone knows the true word to call forth all the spirits of the world, which never shrank before the shadows cast by specters of retrogression or the often dark cloudrack of the time, but rather with divine energy and a man's steady gaze ever saw through all dissimulation right to the empyrean that burns at the heart of the world.

His friend Bruno Bauer warned him against using the quotation from Aeschylus, invoking Prometheus, at the close of the planned foreword to the dissertation: it was an act of "temerity" that would keep him from getting any academic post. "Only not now!" advised Bauer. "Afterwards, once you have a university post . . . you can say whatever you want and in whatever form you want."

Bauer's caution was an echo of the counsels of timorous prudence given to Prometheus by the leader of the chorus in Aeschylus' drama.
As things turned out, the dissertation was never published in any case. But we are at a watershed here: this is the point where Marx had to make an intellectual commitment to a course of oppositionism.

To be sure, he was not the only one. The new king's failure to conform to others' illusions brought about a revulsion of feeling in liberal circles. The result was later described by Engels as follows:

"Indeed, the middle classes, who had partly expected that the new King would at once grant a Constitution, proclaim the Liberty of the Press, Trial by Jury, etc., etc.—in short, himself take the lead of that peaceful revolution which they wanted in order to obtain political supremacy—the middle classes had found out their error, and had turned ferociously against the King."

The young Engels had also gone through his process of disillusionment with benevolent rulers, before and after Friedrich Wilhelm IV's accession. In 1839 the nineteen-year-old Engels was already boiling over with disgust at the failure of the old king (Friedrich Wilhelm III) to carry out his promise of a constitution. We have seen his sentiments in verse in Chapter 7; a few months later, he wrote to the same boyhood friend in good prose:

"The same king who in 1815, sweating with fear, promised his subjects in a Cabinet Order that they would get a constitution if they pulled him out of that pickle—this same shabby, lousy, god-damned king now lets it be known... that nobody is going to get a constitution from him.... There is no period richer in royal crimes than 1816-1830; nearly every prince that reigned then deserved the death penalty.... Oh, I could tell you delightful tales about the love that princes bear their subjects—I expect anything good only from the prince whose head is buzzing from the buffets of his people, and whose palace windows are being smashed by a hail of stones of the revolution."

After the accession of the new king in 1840, Engels published an essay attacking his political and social views and warning that a free press and a real parliament would not be granted by the monarch but would have to be won by the people. The article closed with a hint that Prussia was nearing its 1789.

At about the same time, in 1840 or 1841, the twenty-year-old Engels wrote an opera libretto (unfinished) on the figure of Cola di
Rienzi; it is of exceptional interest in this connection. Rienzi was the popular leader of fourteenth-century Rome whose career has often been idealized as a herald of modern nationalism and national liberation. Only a few years before, an immensely popular novel about him had been published by Bulwer-Lytton, in Germany as well as in England; Wagner's opera was written a year or so after Engels' piece.

Rienzi would seem to be tailor-made for glorification as a Siegfried type. But by this time, in Engels' literary productions, the role of Siegfried was being played by the people, not by a hero. This had already been manifested in one of his poems glorifying the American Indians as freedom fighters resisting the rape of their land by the whites. In his Rienzi fragment, the people (split into two choruses) are literally brought on the stage as protagonist. Rienzi, the Tribune of the People, is shown in struggle against the old aristocracy—and both sides are depicted as villains of the piece. At first the people are divided; one chorus hails Rienzi as liberator of the people and the other cries "Down with him!" The spokesman for the rebels is a character called Battista: the tribune, he says, is really just as bad as the old rulers—a new despot replacing the old tyrants.

He's just as bad and just as good
As these, our lords of ancient blood.
He has fine words for you to hear,
But it's not the people that have his ear.
Tyrants out and despots in—
In the end it's the same as it's always been.

In another confrontation, Battista, speaking for the rebellious section of the people, denounces Rienzi as head of a band of foreign mercenaries who poses as a liberator but is really afraid of the people. He predicts the people will soon learn this from their own sad experiences.

Haughty and insolent, see him there,
Now that he's led us into his snare.
His haughty airs will soon be through
When the people change their point of view!

On the other hand, Rienzi is depicted as exulting over his ambition to conquer the world even as he is again hailed as liberator. When he kills Battista, the two sections of the people unite against him. As the
fragment ends, they are about to storm the Capitol;* and the people's chorus, now unified, sings:

All of your flattering speeches, meant
Just to seduce us, fail in art.
Now we are alone intent
On vengeance for our freedom's loss! 41

Engels' "Rienzi" is an unusually clear rejection of the hero-liberator or savior-messiah pattern.

5. OF THE SERVILE STATE

The failed hopes in the new king in 1840 merely taught the liberals not to expect much from this particular monarch: by nature, liberalism typically seeks reform by seeking the ear that is connected to the hand holding the levers of power. But for Marx the lesson bit deeper; it was his last illusion in the savior-ruler.

Most immediately, it helped to rid him of the view, dominant among the liberals, that the political goal to be realistically attained was a constitutional monarchy, as successor to the absolutist monarchy. Marx's argument for the rejection of any kind of monarchy was made in his notebook Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right in 1843, as we noted in Chapter 3. 42

Marx later summarized the whole episode in hindsight at a point (May 1843) when he was in midstream of the passage from radical democracy to communism. In one of the DFJ editorial letters, he wrote that the king's "liberal speeches and outpourings" did signify a desire "to bring life into the state," if only his own variety of retrogressive life ("old German fancies"); but when even this variety of change threatened to open the gates to other changes, the old bureaucratic-despotic

* An interesting aspect which we can only mention at this point is that in the last scene, the revolutionary people are being headed by a woman, Camilla, the rebellious daughter of the leader of the aristocracy. However, the fragment ends before her role is developed. The dramatic problem of the continuation would have been integration of her personal motives with the dominant social-political theme. Well before this, young Engels had already shown his awareness of the place in literature of the "modern question . . . the emancipation of women." 40
system "soon killed these un-German activities."* It was a "miscarried attempt to transcend the philistine state on its very own basis."44

One was only mistaken for a while in considering it important which wishes and thoughts the King would come out with. This could not change anything in substance; the philistine is the stuff making up the monarchy, and the monarch is always only the king of the philistines. He can make neither himself nor his people into free, real men, if both sides remain what they are.45

Since it was impossible for this state "to abandon its own basis and pass over to the human world of democracy," the inevitable result was regression to the old fossilized servile state [Dienestaat], in which the slave serves in silence and the owner of the land and the people rules as silently as possible simply through a well-trained, quietly obedient servant-staff. Neither of the two could say what they wanted—neither the former, that they wanted to become men, nor the latter, that he had no use for men in his land. The only recourse, therefore, is to keep silent. *Muta pecora, prona et ventri oboedientia.* [The herd is silent, submissive, and obeys its stomach.] 46

Therefore

The self-reliance of men—freedom—would first have to be reawakened in the hearts of these men. Only this consciousness, which vanished from the world with the Greeks and into the blue mist of heaven with Christianity, can again turn society [Gesellschaft] into a community [Gemeinschaft] of men to achieve their highest purposes, a democratic state.47

For Marx, the freedom of self-reliance meant not only the abandonment of the savior-ruler illusion, but also the decision to abandon the road of scholarship in the university world. For that road was possible

* A similar appreciation was given by Marx much later, in 1859, looking back at 1840: "When the King with the brainless head ascended the throne, he was full of the visions of the romantic school. He wanted to be a king by divine right, and to be at the same time a popular king; to be surrounded by an independent aristocracy in the midst of an omnipotent bureaucratic administration; to be a man of peace at the head of the barracks; to promote popular franchises in the mediaeval sense while opposing all longings of modern liberalism; to be a restorer of ecclesiastic faith while boasting of the intellectual preeminence of his subjects; to play, in one word, the mediaeval king while acting as the king of Prussia—that abortion of the Eighteenth Century."43
only by accepting a life of silent submission to the Servile State, refraining from giving battle to ensconced power, burying one's nose in scholarly busy-work and profound thoughts, while injustice and inhumanity reigned outside the stained-glass windows.

With the liberal bourgeoisie's disappointment at Friedrich Wilhelm IV, they were so exasperated that they, being short themselves of men able to represent them in the Press, went to the length of an alliance with the extreme philosophical party [Young Hegelians] . . . . The fruit of this alliance was the *Rhenish Gazette* [Rheinishe Zeitung].

So went Engels' later account. Thus the same episode that turned Marx to oppositionism also provided the vehicle for his introduction to political life.

We saw, in Chapters 1 and 2, the course of education in the political and social realities of the day that the *Rheinische Zeitung* provided, ending with the government's acknowledgment that it could cope with reason only by swinging the policeman's club. For a while the *RZ* was the David hurling slingshots at the Prussian Goliath; when the regime closed it down, a contemporary cartoon saw its editor as Prometheus bound to a printing press while the royal Prussian eagle gnawed at his vitals. The last issue of the paper carried an unsigned farewell poem breathing defiance of the authorities; the poem was so thoroughly anonymous that one cannot help wondering whether it was a flare-up of Marx's temptation to write verse.*

* The last two stanzas proclaimed:

Our mast blew down, but we were not affrighted,
The angry gods could never make us bend.
Columbus too at first was scorned and slighted,
And yet he saw the New World in the end.

Ye friends, who cheer us till the timbers rattle—
Ye foes, who did us honor with your strife—
We'll meet again on other fields of battle:
If all is dead, yet courage still is life.50

Seven years later, when Marx's *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was suppressed in the same city in 1849, a farewell poem by Ferdinand Freiligrath was published in the final issue, naturally striking the same note.
6. OF A THINKER WHO DREAMS

The character of a revolutionary was formed in Marx and Engels by 1843—one side of it, at any rate: the spirit of revolutionary oppositionism, of defiant resistance to authority. This side can be represented by Prometheus, if a symbol is insisted on. The steel core of that character has been portrayed by Marx’s favorite dramatist (alongside Shakespeare): Aeschylus, in *Prometheus Bound*. Aeschylus does not really explain why Prometheus, insisting on serving humanity whom the new gods would destroy, refuses to bow the neck to Zeus, to Power—like everyone else and as all his well-wishers advise him to do. It is simply the fatality of his character, it would seem. It was also Marx’s and Engels’.

Such a character will naturally excite a variety of reactions. Aeschylus covers this ground for us today. Many are in the position of Hephaestus, who, weeping salt tears very liberally, is the one who actually fetters the hero, protesting it is against his will. “The dirty job must be done,” he whines to Power, “but don’t push me too hard.” More are in the position of Oceanus, who delivers himself of sage advice: “I would admonish thee to prudence . . . see what are the wages of too bold a tongue. Thou hast not learned humility, not to yield to evils. . . .” He will try to negotiate peace with Zeus, but meanwhile: “Do thou keep thy peace, and restrain thy blustering speech.” Others are in the position of the leader of the chorus, who has his own diagnosis of the hero’s sins: “Care not for mortals overmuch, whilst you neglect your own profit.”51 (In other words: get a good job instead of wasting time in the British Museum.) Then there are also the descendants of Hermes, the “lackey of Zeus,” who thinks anyone who does not cringe before power is simply stark mad—an excellent frame of mind for a lackey.

In life Marx’s character naturally excited a similar variety of reactions, since they were mostly dependent on a prior response to what he represented politically. Those who were appalled by his “revolutionary fanaticism” (Carl Schurz, for example) were also offended by his character, for its most striking trait was a hard strength, a thrusting intensity that outraged the Softs. To the latter, a character built around a steel frame was a personal insult.

But those who loved him were just as conscious of the steel frame.
Perhaps the most interesting evidence comes from his wife Jenny: after a year of marriage they were temporarily separated when she went to visit her parents in Germany to display their first child. In a tender letter, she wrote how she awaited his letters:

Please, dear heart, just let the pen skim over the paper, even if it trips and stumbles once or twice and takes a sentence down with it—Your ideas stand up straight like the grenadiers of the old guard, so honor-true and brave, and like them can say: *Elle meurt mais elle ne se rend pas* [It dies but never surrenders]. What does it matter if, this once, the uniform hangs loose and isn’t so tightly buttoned up. How nice it is about French soldiers, that relaxed, easy look. Think of our machine-polished Prussians. It makes you shudder, doesn’t it.—Let the belt out a few notches this time and loosen cravat and shako—let the participles flow, and place the words whichever way they want to go. Such troops should not march with such regularity. 52

Around 1846, a Russian aristocratic tourist named Annenkov, slumming amidst the advanced ideas of the West, made Marx’s acquaintance; many years later, after Marx was already famous, he published his impressions, including this:

Marx himself was a man of the type made up of energy, will power, and invincible conviction—a type of man extremely remarkable also in outward appearance. With a thick mop of black hair on his head, his hairy hands, dressed in a coat buttoned diagonally across his chest, he maintained the appearance of a man with the right and authority to command respect, whatever guise he took and whatever he did. All his motions were awkward but vigorous and self-confident, all his manners ran athwart conventional usages in social intercourse but were proud and somehow guarded, and his shrill voice with its metallic ring marvelously suited the radical pronouncements over things and people which he uttered. 53

In the “fantasy” of this Russian aristocrat, as he put it, Marx represented “the figure of the democratic dictator incarnate. . . . The contrast with the types of people I had left behind in Russia was of the most emphatic kind.” The Russian novel has made us familiar with these types—flabby, futile, and flexible.

Part of Annenkov’s impression jibes excellently with a comment once made by Marx himself. In an article giving a blistering portrait of
the British army bureaucracy as displayed in the Crimean War, he included the following count in the indictment, one that applies to bureaucratic types generally: "Everything with them must be round and smooth. Nothing is so objectionable as the angular forms which mark strength and energy." There is no doubt that Marx's character was "angular" in this sense.

The American Fourierist leader Albert Brisbane, touring Europe in 1848, saw Marx at work in Cologne,

where I found a great popular agitation, and where I found Karl Marx, the leader in the popular movement... His expression was that of great energy, and behind his self-contained reserve of manner were visible the fire and passion of a resolute soul.

After the furor over the Paris Commune, a correspondent of the New York World visited Marx's home for an interview. His thumbnail sketch of the man began by recalling "the bust of Socrates, the man who died rather than profess his belief in the gods of the time." He continued:

Throw a veil over the upper part of the face and you might be in the company of a born vestry man. Reveal the essential feature, the immense brow, and you know at once that you have to deal with that most formidable of all composite individual forces—a dreamer who thinks, a thinker who dreams.

A dreamer who thinks, a thinker who dreams... that can be paraphrased: passion disciplined by intellect, intellect energized by passion. Marx's father was right, of course: there was a demon in his breast, as in the breast of any man who sets out to change the world instead of capitulating to it.
The Promethan rejection of injustice-by-power was only one side of the revolutionary character that Marx was developing. Aeschylus himself raised a pertinent question long before Lord Acton: "Who could endure you in prosperity?" It is the lackey Hermes who directs this sneer to Prometheus. Even in Olympus there were not a few who rebelled against Zeus in order to replace him as ruler. And even if Prometheus' intentions were the best, who else could take the throne if the incumbent were ousted? The opponent of Zeus was merely a philanthropist, an early Owenite.

If the primary question was the revolutionist's relation to society, the next was his relation to the masses whom he aspired to serve. Robert Owen, personally the finest character among the Utopian predecessors of Marx, proposed "to govern or treat all society as the most advanced physicians govern and treat their patients in the best arranged lunatic hospitals, in which forbearance and kindness . . . govern the conduct of all who have the care of these unfortunates. . . ."¹ As we saw in Chapter 6, the mass of workers could be looked on à la Owen as victims and wards or as a battering-ram; as a recruiting-ground for a gang, as a diversionary threat, or merely as a limited interest group. But no one yet looked on them as literally the potential rulers of society.

For this there was no effective precedent, above all none outside the socialist ranks.* The view of the masses as mere tools, born to be

* As usual there are possible exceptions. A prominent candidate is the remarkable Gerrard Winstanley, leader of the True Levellers ("Diggers") as the left wing of the English Revolution; but he was unknown in Marx's time, completely forgotten. Then, perhaps, there was Thomas Müntzer, who was the subject of Engels' historical work written after the 1848 revolution, *The Peasant War in Germany*; and Spartacus—"the most splendid fellow that all ancient history has to
managed and controlled, is the unanimous view of all ruling-class society and its thinkers, back through all recorded history, far as human eye can read. It is a pattern which is not of the socialist movement, but merely extends into it.

1. THE ACHERONTIC DANGER

Before the rise of socialism, the masses could be called out into action under certain circumstances: one section of the propertied classes, beaten on top, becomes desperate enough to resort to arousing the broader masses below both contestants; it sets the plebs into motion, with appropriate promises and slogans; in order to hoist itself into the seats of power. Aristotle already knew all about it. The tyrannoi of ancient Greece became "tyrants" in modern languages not because they tyrannized over the masses any more than the oligarchies, but because they used the masses to tyrannize over the oligarchies themselves.

But there is always a social gamble: after you have called the masses from below onto the stage of social action, how are you going to get them off, and back to their holes, after they have done the job for you? They may become so arrogant as to reach out for something for themselves. That danger existed even in ages when the broad working masses (slaves, laboring freemen, or serfs) could have no vision of a new social order corresponding to their own class interests; when therefore their victory could not in fact mean a reorganization of society from below, but merely chaos. When that changes, what was previously a serious danger to public order becomes a mortal danger to the social order itself.

In Marx's eye, this is the change that takes place in history with the rise of capitalism and its shadow, the revolutionary proletariat. For the first time, there does exist a class below, a class on whose labor society is founded, that inherently does suggest a social program for its own
reorganization of society. Once set in motion (struggle), this class has a historical option: it can “go into business for itself” instead of merely serving as a tool for one upper class (or class section) or another. It is only an option: the new power can still be controlled, to be sure; for it is very immature, largely unformed, often childishy foolish, ill educated. But how long can this adolescent giant be kept in short pants?

Because of this new danger, the class instinct of the bourgeoisie early made it reluctant to call the working masses into civil conflict even as an ally in its own drive to gain power from the old order (a subject to which we will devote considerable attention in Volume 2); and since then, it has been interested mainly in ways and means of fragmenting and channeling the dangerous mass forces below. But individual ideologists and political adventurers are another matter; so also are political tendencies which look in the direction of an anticapitalist élite. Even individual bourgeois politicians vary considerably in their willingness to play with this fire, as Marx once noted. He commented on a similar pattern in his thumbnail sketch of the French liberal politician Thiers who, after servicing both Louis Philippe and Bonaparte, carried out the task of massacring the Paris Commune:

“A professional ‘Revolutionist’ in that sense, that in his eagerness . . . of wielding power . . . he never scrupled, when banished to the banks of the opposition, to stir the popular passions and provoke a catastrophe to displace a rival. . . . The working class he reviled as ‘the vile multitude.’”

This political type had a Virgilian tag: Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo—“If I cannot change the Powers above, I shall set the Lower Regions [Acheron] into motion.” It was much better known in Marx’s day than our own, and the frequency with which it showed up reflects sensitivity to the difference between political movements from above and from below.*

* George Brandes’ biography of Lassalle relates that the would-be workers’ dictator, weighing his political course, “pondering like Achilles in his tent, mentally repeated to himself for nights and days the burden of Virgil’s line. . . .” Since it does indeed provide the key to Lassalle’s politics, it is well that Brandes used the Virgilian quotation as the title-page motto for the biography, as Lassalle himself had done for his pamphlet The Italian War. The motto also came to Engels’ mind as he contemplated the cowardice of the French liberals of a later day: “the flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo is not their business. . . . They are afraid of the proletarian Acheron.” Note also its occurrence in the excerpt from Marx’s youthful “novel,” Scorpion und Felix, given in Special Note B, p. 615 fn.
As against all varieties of socialism and reform which looked on the working masses in the accusative case ("we will emancipate them"), Marx developed the principle of the self-emancipation of the working class. Its classic formulation was written down much later, in 1864, as the first clause of the Rules of the First International: "Considering, That the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves; . . ." But as Engels rightly said, 'by that time the idea had long been their operative conception: "our notion, from the very beginning, was that 'the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself.'"

2. THE EDUCATION OF ENGELS

From the very beginning? This applies to Marxism in a general sense; but it is instructive to explain how it does not apply to Engels in his pre-Marxist period of gestation.

We have seen something of Engels' early development before his association with Marx. By the time he left for England in November 1842, he had been converted to what Moses Hess then called his communism, a philosophical communism quite unlike most of the French communists, essentially reformist and above all alien to any class commitment. This sentimental, petty-bourgeois radicalism was soon baptized "True Socialism," under which label the reader will find it discussed in the Communist Manifesto. Also, Hess was then in his period of Schwärmerei over Proudhon's writings, which he understood, not without justice, to be similar to his own mingle-mangle of ideas; Hess used a vague no-state (anarchist) rhetoric like his model. Such more or less was Engels' theoretical equipment when he arrived in England, insofar as he generalized. We have already mentioned that for a whole period it was precisely these theoretical generalizations, derived from the philosophical radicalism of backward Germany, that warred in his mind with the concrete revolutionary conclusions which he increasingly drew from the experience of the English class struggle and its organizations.

In the autumn of 1843 Engels began his writing career in the English press with articles for the Owenite organ The New Moral World. In a key article he praised Proudhon's What Is Property? as the most
important "communist" work published. (For he was ignorant of the fact that Proudhon denounced communism: his enthusiasm for Proudhon came via Hess, who had adopted that label.) The article especially emphasized this about Proudhon:

"Having proved that every kind of government is alike objectionable, no matter whether it be democracy, aristocracy, or monarchy, that all govern by force; and that, in the best of all possible cases, the force of the majority oppresses the weaknesses of the minority, he comes, at last, to the conclusion: "Nous voulons l'anarchie!" What we want is anarchy; the rule of nobody, the responsibility of every one to nobody but himself."

There was more of this Proudhonism in Engels' article, radical in sound and reactionary in content. The following is pure Proudhonism:

Democracy is, as I take all forms of government to be, a contradiction in itself, an untruth, nothing but hypocrisy . . . at the bottom. Political liberty is sham-liberty, the worst possible slavery; the appearance of liberty, and therefore the reality of servitude. Political equality is the same; therefore democracy, as well as every form of government, must ultimately break to pieces . . . we must have either a regular slavery—that is, an undisguised despotism, or real liberty, and real equality—that is, Communism.

It is in the same article that he boasts that, unlike the economically-minded English and the political French, "the Germans became Communists philosophically, by reasoning upon first principles." We have already cited (in Chapter 7) the whole of the tell-tale passage which ends with the announcement that in Germany the communists can recruit only from the educated classes, "that is, from the universities and from the commercial class," because of the Germans' disinterested "love of abstract principles" and "disregard of reality and self-interest." This regurgitation of Hess's communism may illustrate why later Marx and Engels were so scornful of his "True Socialism" and the whole school of sentimental socialism. As for the marvelously philosophical Germans: in 1885 Engels commented retrospectively that at this time (1843) when he first met the London German communists, "I still owned, as against their narrow-minded equalitarian communism, a goodly dose of just as narrow-minded philosophical arrogance. . . ."

Engels' next contribution to the Owenite paper is especially taken
with Wilhelm Weitling, who had also been praised in the previous article as the leader of the working-class wing of German communism. Engels now stressed

the chief point in which Weitling is superior to Cabet, namely, the abolition of all government by force and by majority, and the establishment in its stead of a mere administration... [and] the proposal to nominate all officers of this administration... not by a majority of the community at large, but by those only who have a knowledge of the particular kind of work the future officer has to perform; and, one of the most important features of the plan, that the nominators are to select the fittest person, by means of some kind of prize essays... 15

Weitling was by no means the only one on the socialist scene who advocated some kind of rule by élite; on the contrary, some version of rule by a new and more meritorious bureaucracy was typical of the extant socialisms and communisms.*

Engels' subsequent articles for the Owenites gradually became more ambivalent about the relation between communism and the classes. When in February 1845 he wrote Marx glowingly about the successful communist meetings in Elberfeld (as mentioned in Chapter 8), he was aware there was a missing piece in the bright picture even while he boasted that "Communism in the Wupper valley is a reality, and indeed almost a power already." For "All Elberfeld and Barmen, from the money-aristocracy to the grocery-trade was represented, leaving out only the proletariat." And a little later: "... nothing new here. The bourgeoisie talks politics and goes to church. What the proletariat is doing we don't know and can hardly get to know:" 17

* Weitling's scheme for civil-service examinations to select an oligarchy reappeared regularly in the later history of socialism; for example, it became the pet proposal by Fabianism's Bernard Shaw on how to replace democracy. Marx had already attacked this scheme as a bureaucratic ritual in the pages of his notebook critique of Hegel's state theory, which anticipated Weitling. The idea of such examinations for state officials, he wrote, "is more germane to becoming a shoemaker than to becoming an executive functionary." For one can be a good citizen though ignorant of shoemaking but not if one is ignorant of political affairs, which should not be the monopoly of a special group.

The "examination" is nothing but a masonic rite, the legal recognition that knowledge of civic affairs is a privilege. The "linking together" of "state office" and the "individual," this objective tie-up between knowledge of civil society and of state affairs—this examination is nothing more than a bureaucratic baptism of knowledge, the official recognition of the tran-
The documentable turning point came in late 1845, when Engels was well under way in collaboration with Marx on *The German Ideology*. This was after Marx's and Engels' joint visit to England and talks with the Chartist leaders. In an article Engels contributed to *The Northern Star*, he spelled out the turn he had made by cautioning the Chartists not to expect any revolutionary change from the middle classes:

It is from the very heart of our working people that revolutionary action in Germany will commence. It is true, there are among our middle classes a considerable number of Republicans and even Communists, and young men too, who, if a general outbreak occurred now, would be very useful in the movement, but these men are "bourgeois," profit-mongers, manufacturers by profession; and who will guarantee us that they will not be demoralized by their trade, by their social position, which forces them to live upon the toil of other people, to grow fat by being the leeches, the "exploiteurs" of the working classes? Those who remain "proletarian in mind" will be infinitely small in numbers, he went on: "Fortunately, we do not count on the middle classes at all." ¹⁸

Engels was now becoming a Marxist.

### 3. THE ACTIVE ELEMENT OF EMANCIPATION

We can now return to a question we raised at the end of Chapter 6. There we saw that, in the 1843 article in which Marx first pointed to the proletariat as the revolutionary class, he included two phrases that have given rise to much speculation: namely, "philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat," and "The head of this emancipation is philosophy, its heart is the proletariat." Taken (out of context) with a previous reference to the "passive element" in revolution, these phrases are assembled together to make the statement that the proletariat is only a passive instrument to be wielded by the philosophers of revolution, the intellectual elite. This reconstruction is all the more

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*substantiation* of profane into sacred knowledge (it goes without saying in every examination that the examiner knows everything). No one heard of Greek or Roman statesmen taking examinations. But after all, what is even a Roman statesman compared with a Prussian functionary! ¹⁶
plausible since this was indeed the pervasive view among the Young Hegelian exponents of philosophical radicalism; and in March 1845 (before joining Marx in Brussels) the young Engels reflected the standard thinking of the time when he referred to this very passage by Marx as meaning that the revolution would go forward "with the philosophers to think, and the working men to fight for us."\(^{19}\)

But already in the middle of 1844 Marx had made his views on precisely this question crystal-clear—to us in hindsight, at any rate, if not to all of his contemporaries. It was published in Paris while Engels was still in Manchester. This is the article in which Marx publicly attacked the views of Arnold Ruge on the Silesian weavers' uprising. As we pointed out in Chapter 8, in this article Marx greatly emphasized the dynamic combativity of the weavers, indeed exaggerated it. For the leitmotiv of this article is the *self-activity* of the working class.

It is therefore in this article that Marx particularly exalts Wilhelm Weitling's book and his standing as a theoretician of the movement; for just as the Silesian weavers showed that the working class could be its own activator, so Weitling showed that the working class could produce its own "heads." In the following passage it is the last sentence which is the crux:

> Where could the bourgeoisie, including its philosophers and scribes, boast of a work like Weitling's *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit* that deals with the emancipation of the bourgeoisie, of *political* emancipation? If one compares the empty, dispirited mediocrity of German political literature with this *immeasurable* and brilliant literary debut of the German workers; if one compares these giant-sized *children's shoes* with the midget size of the German bourgeoisie's worn-out political shoes, then one must prophesy that the *German Cinderella* will have an *athlete's figure*. It must be admitted that the German proletariat is the *theoretician* of the European proletariat, just as the English proletariat is its *political economist* and the French proletariat its *politician*.

Note: it is not the philosophers that are the theoreticians for the German proletariat but the German proletariat that is itself the theoretician. Then the *i's* are dotted:

> For just as the impotence of the German bourgeoisie is the *political* impotence of Germany, so the capacity with which the German proletariat is endowed is—even apart from German
Toward the Principle of Self-Emancipation

theory—the social capacity of Germany. The disproportion between the philosophical and the political development in Germany is not an abnormality. It is a necessary disproportion. Only in socialism can a philosophical people find its corresponding practice; hence only in the proletariat can it find the active element of its emancipation.

The proletariat is the active element of the revolution; its role does not depend on "German theory," that is, German philosophy. In case there could be any doubt that Marx is rebuking the philosophical arrogance of the Young Hegelian mind, he adds the warning that the Ruges should not view themselves as the educators of the workers: they have something to learn.

... the sole task of a thoughtful and truth-loving mind with respect to this first outbreak of the Silesian workers' uprising did not consist in playing the schoolmaster to this event but rather in studying its particular character.

4. ELITISM VERSUS THE MASSES

This line of argument was continued in the book which Marx, in collaboration with Engels, wrote later the same year—The Holy Family. This too was directed against Young Hegelian elitism; for if Ruge was one of the outstanding leaders of the tendency, Bruno Bauer was its most prominent representative.*

*T Not that Young Hegelianism could be considered a homogeneous tendency by this time: on the contrary, it was already fragmenting in various directions. By the end of 1844, Bauer's journal was defunct and Young Hegelianism was dead as an operative tendency.21 Marx's revulsion against Bauer's developing elitism had already been written into the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts earlier in 1844; it is stated there but not elaborated.22 Likewise to be found already in the Manuscripts is Marx's new, dim view of the role of the philosopher: "The philosopher—himself an abstract form of alienated man—sets himself up as the measure of the alienated world," he writes scornfully.23 This is associated with the dim view of philosophy itself which we find there.24
disagreement, albeit sharp disagreement, within a tendency. The Holy Family was a general assault all along the line. The divergence had come from both sides: Marx, as we have seen, had been clarifying his views in a more and more revolutionary direction; Bauer was abandoning the radicalism of the early 1840s and moving to the right. He eventually wound up as a conservative Bismarckian.

The first stage of Bauer’s transmogrification was marked by his onslaught against the main enemy of the revolution, namely the masses. It was no longer simply a question of the traditional intellectual (and Young Hegelian) elitist and patronizing view of the masses; this was qualitatively different. And the theme of The Holy Family—insofar as that sprawling book has a theme*—is precisely a counterattack against the view of the masses taken by the Bauer circle, which called its ideology “Critical Criticism.”

This theme is launched in the first sentence (by Engels): “Critical Criticism, however superior to the mass it deems itself, has infinite pity for the mass.” To be sure, it “shrank from contact with the sinful leprous mass,” but it seeks “to redeem the mass from massiness.”** Just as it tells history “You ought to have happened in such and such a way!” so also it will cure the masses of their “stupidity” by deigning to place its wisdom before the world.25 All the “massy” people have to do is sit at the feet of the Critics, grasp the Criticism, change their con-

* The Holy Family is an exasperating book in form and style of presentation, the worst in these respects that Marx ever wrote. (It is a pity that it, and not The German Ideology, succeeded in gaining contemporaneous publication, even though the latter shares some of the defects in form, particularly in Part II.) Structurally The Holy Family is amorphous and disorganized; stylistically it is often self-indulgent in a sophomoric way; too frequently it has the ingrown air of the literary clique quarrel; sometimes it descends to pointless nit-picking. All of this stands in the way of appreciating the real importance of its theoretical content. And into the bargain, the extant English translation is not exactly a triumph against difficulties. This said, it must be added that the book repays a second reading, after one is able to discount its many defects and read it as a polemic against intellectual elitism, written before there was much consciousness that such a tendency was objectionable.

** Throughout the book there is much word-play with massy (massenhaft) and massiness—terms improvised to convey the scornful attitude of the Bauerites to the real (profane) world in which the masses live, as distinct from the idealist fantasy-land which the “Critical” philosophers inhabit. Thus Critical becomes a synonym for Bauerite; Criticism means the Bauerite tendency; massy history is what actually happened in the world, whereas Critical history is fantasized history as described by the Bauerite ideologists.
sequent knowledge, and—voilà! there is the revolution. 26 But in fact, according to the Critical philosophers, "the worker makes nothing, therefore he has nothing" (quoted from Edgar Bauer). 27

Marx pushes the case further in an important section entitled "'Spirit' and 'Mass.'” (Since the meaning of Geist extends from "spirit" to "mind" and "intellect," the title could be modernized, with some stretching, to "Intellectuals versus the Masses.")

The Critical philosophers counterpose their "Absolute Critical wisdom" to "absolute massy stupidity." The masses constitute an inert, unchanging dead weight on society: to the Critics' eyes, the masses of the sixteenth century and those of the nineteenth are the same "abstract, immutable 'Mass.'” The Critical Truth "addresses itself not to the empirical man but to the 'innermost depths of the soul,'” and when the masses are able to appreciate this, their attitude will change. 28 But meanwhile—here Marx quotes Bauer:

"All great actions of previous history," we are told [by the Critics], "were failures from the start and had no marked success because the mass became interested in and enthusiastic over them; in other words they were bound to come to a pitiful end because the idea involved in them was such that it had to be satisfied with a superficial conception and therefore to rely on the approval of the mass." 29

So, according to the Bauerites, it's all the fault of the masses, because they are moved by interests (a dirty word) rather than ideas. Marx replies that the historical lesson is just the reverse: revolutionary efforts fail insofar as they do not really appeal to the interests of the masses sufficiently. "The 'idea,'” he writes, "always disgraced itself insofar as it was different from the 'interest.'” The French Revolution was a success from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie's interests, a failure from the standpoint of the masses' interests—because the latter were led to act only on the basis of an exalted idea rather than on the basis of their real interests.

The interest of the bourgeoisie in the Revolution of 1789, far from having been a "failure," "won" everything and had "the greatest success" however much its "pathos" evaporated and the "enthusiastic" flowers with which that interest adorned its cradle faded. . . . The Revolution was a "failure" only for that mass which did not find in the political "idea" the idea of its real "interest," whose real life-principle of the Revolution, whose real
conditions of emancipation were essentially different from the conditions within the bounds of which the bourgeoisie could emancipate itself and society. If then the revolution... was a failure, it was so because the mass whose conditions of life were essentially the bounds within which the revolution stayed was an exclusive mass which did not embrace the whole, a limited mass. If it was a failure it was not because the mass became "interested" in and "enthusiastic" about the revolution, but because the most numerous part of the mass—the part that was distinct from the bourgeoisie—found that the principle of the revolution included neither its actual interest nor its own revolutionary principle, but only an "idea," hence only an object of momentary enthusiasm and an exaltation that was only apparent. 30

In historical action the decisive thing is the "active mass," "the empirical interest" involved in the action—not merely the idea in it, as Bauerite Criticism thinks. Because of its fancifully inverted view of historical dynamics, it inverts enemy and ally, and sees the masses as the enemy:

"In the mass," it informs us, "not somewhere else, as its former liberal spokesmen believed, is the true enemy of the spirit to be found." 31

In this quotation from the Bauerites, the emphasis is by Marx. According to them, the enemy of the spirit (or intellect, Geist) is not the absolutist regime, not the bourgeois exploiters (for the worker "makes nothing" anyway); the masses themselves are the enemy to be mastered, by the Critical philosophers.*

5. MARX'S ATTACK ON PHILOSOPHICAL ELITISM

Marx replies with a summary of his conception of how the masses are moved to revolution in order to overcome their own alienation. He brings forward the motto launched by Loustalot's Révolutions de Paris in 1789:

* Further on, the Bauerites are quoted along the same lines again: "Absolute Criticism has declared the 'mass' to be the true enemy of the spirit. It develops this further as follows: 'The spirit now knows where to look for its only adversary—in the self-deception and the pithlessness of the mass.' " Marx sets out to take up the Critics' "campaign against the Mass." 32
If the Critics see the masses as the obstacle to progress, it is because (says Marx) they view progress as simply an “abstract phrase.” Concretely so far, on the present bases of contemporary society, all spiritual (or intellectual) progress has been “progress against [the interests of] the mass of mankind, driving it into an ever more dehumanized condition.” The revolutionary organization of the workers is itself a step toward the solution: “To this communist criticism, there was an immediate correspondence in practice of the movement of the great mass in antithesis to which previous historical development had taken place.”

There follows the passage, already quoted, in which Marx praises the French and English workers’ craving for knowledge, urge to self-development, and human nobility.

Instead of seeing the relationship between spirit (intellect) and material interests, the Critics establish a dogmatic antithesis between them. Moreover,

This antithesis indeed is expressed in history, in the world of man itself, in such a way that a few select individuals are opposed, as the active spirit, to the rest of mankind as the spiritless mass, as matter.

Naturally, the “few select individuals” are the Critical Philosophers themselves, who tower over the masses by virtue of their overweening wisdom, and look upon themselves (and themselves alone) as the “active spirit” of historical change. In the French Restoration, there had been the group of so-called Doctrinaires (like Guizot) “who proclaimed the sovereignty of reason in opposition to the sovereignty of the people in order to exclude the masses and rule alone.”

Even in Hegel, Marx points out to these disciples, it is not the philosophers that constitute the active principle of history. The following passage is important in order to clear up the ambiguity, which we discussed earlier, between the role of philosophy and of the philosopher—that is, of theory and the theoretician:

Already in Hegel, the Absolute Spirit of history finds its material in the mass, and the expression appropriate to it only in philosophy; but the philosopher figures only as the organ in which the
Absolute Spirit, which makes history, arrives at self-consciousness subsequently, after the development has run its course. It is to this subsequent consciousness of the philosopher that his participation in history is reduced, for the real historical development is brought about by the Absolute Spirit unconsciously. The philosopher, then, comes along post festum [after the event].

To be sure, Marx continues, Hegel is inconsistent; but Bauer eliminates inconsistency and goes all the way. Bauer sees himself and his followers as the only active element of history:

*For one thing, he proclaims Criticism to be the Absolute Spirit and himself to be the Criticism. The Criticism therefore deems itself to be exclusively incarnated not in a mass but in a small handful of selected men, in Herr. Bruno and his disciples....*  

On one side stands the mass as the passive, spiritless, historyless, *material* element of history; on the other side stands the Spirit, the Criticism—Herr Bruno & Co. as the active element from which all *historical* action proceeds. The act of social transformation is reduced to the *brain activity* of Critical Criticism.

This section ends with a quip (typical of the book), but this time—by exception—the quip is a pointed one:

Critical Criticism, which becomes *objectified* only in its antithesis—namely, the mass, *stupidity*—must therefore continually *produce* this antithesis for itself, and Messrs. Faucher, Edgar, and Szeliga [of the Bauer circle] have supplied ample proof of the virtuosity they possess in their specialty, the *mass stupefaction* of persons and things.

The Critics' conception of social reorganization is based on the antithesis between spirit and mass, "in which the Spirit, or the Criticism, represents the organizing labor, the mass the raw material, and history the product." The mass of humanity "is only the matter on which Critical Criticism operates."

Thus, in *The Holy Family* Marx wrote the first direct polemic against the pervasive conception that it is the prerogative of some band of superior intellectuals to think for the masses, whose duty in turn is to repay this service by acting as their instruments, flock, or raw material.
6. SUE'S LES MYSTERES DE PARIS

This theme of *The Holy Family* helps to explain why about a third of the book is devoted to analyzing the novel by Eugène Sue, *Les Mystères de Paris*, recently published and a runaway best-seller, not only in France but in translation all over the Continent. The book was not merely a popular novel; it had "social tendencies," that is, a socialistic air. Its positive merit was that it was able "to direct public attention to the state of the poor in general," as Engels wrote in the Owenite organ only a half year before he collaborated with Marx on *The Holy Family*.42

More to our point, it was taken up, among others, precisely by the Critical philosophers of the Bauer circle, and lauded in their organ by Bauer's disciple Szeliga. Marx therefore takes it up as a concrete example of what the Bauerite social views come to, once brought down from the heights of philosophical abstraction.*

Sue's novel must be read in order to appreciate Marx's discussion; *The Holy Family* could and did assume that "everybody and his wife" had read it. The point is this: not only is *Les Mystères de Paris* a prime example in world literature of glorification of the Social Savior from Above, but it is one of the most revolting examples of that genre.

Sue himself is perfectly reflected in it. Scion of a wealthy big-bourgeois family with aristocratic pretensions, he ran through a couple of fortunes through sybaritic living as a dandy à la mode, including the money he made as a writer with conservative, royalist views. What made him a leftist? The turning-point was sheer impoverishment due to unrestrained expenditure on the beautiful life until one day his banker informed him he was ruined; it seems moreover that an aristocratic lady had stingingly rejected his proffered person. In the face of this manifest injustice, he thought of shooting himself, but instead set about writing again. *Acheronta movebo*: having been offended by the powers above, his attention turned to the lower regions. In *Mathilde* he dealt with the world of the people for the first time. His friend Dumas has told of the "physical repugnance" with which Sue went slumming for his material.

* Marx introduces his discussion of Sue with this: "'Critical Criticism' in the person of Szeliga-Vishnu presents an apotheosis of *Les Mystères de Paris*. Eugène Sue is declared to be a 'Critical Critic.'"43 In taking up Sue, therefore, Marx is discussing a writer with whom the Bauerites have expressed ideological solidarity.
In this novel a dour bourgeois is transformed into a philanthropic capitalist.

Then *Les Mystères de Paris* made him famous: it was acclaimed by a new public, including workers who had to have it read to them in groups, as well as the *beau monde*; it was praised by the right-wing press as well as by the Fourierist socialists. Sue became himself an advocate of Fourierism, which by this time was a movement of petty-bourgeois reformism exalting class collaboration and peaceful propaganda. The best thing that can be told of his later career is that he refused to make peace with the second Bonaparte despite solicitation.44

In the 1840s, what was new about Sue's novel was its philanthropic concern with the subterranean hordes of the People who pululated in the entrails of modern society. There is scarcely a worker in the book.* Sue's People consists of criminals, prostitutes, and other social disjecta; at both ends society consists mainly of parasites, the lumpen-world. But there are positive reforms urged in the book: right of divorce, cheaper legal aid to the poor, model farms for the unemployed, a state substitute for pawnshops, and so on. Unquestionably Sue was one of the first literary do-gooders and welfare-statists.

The crux of the novel, and of Marx's criticism, is the hero: Rudolph, prince of Gerolstein, a German principality, who goes about the slums of Paris as plain Mr. Rudolph, doing good. ("To recompense the good, punish the bad, solace those who suffer, probe all the wounds of humanity, to endeavor to snatch souls from perdition—such is the noble task that I have imposed upon myself.") Besides being wealthy, wise, learned, handsome, graceful, and saintly, he can also beat up the toughest hoodlums in Paris—"a man of action, whose physical strength and prompt boldness would always awe the mass." His eyes have such

* The exception to prove the rule is the lapidary Morel, who trots out as the Model Workman, suitably grateful that by backbreaking labor he can earn a sou or two to keep from starving to death. Of him Sue speaks in his own voice:

Does not this mechanic, so wretched, yet so honest, with all this treasure [the gems he works on] within his grasp, represent an immense and formidable majority of artisans, who, doomed forever to evils and privations, but peaceable, industrious, and resigned, see every day, shining before their eyes, without hatred or envy, the magnificence of the wealthy? Is it not gratifying, is it not ennobling to reflect, that it is not force, not fear, but sound moral sense, which alone restrains this formidable popular ocean, whose overflowing would swallow up society! Shall we refuse to cooperate with all the powers of mind and body, with such generous spirits, who ask but a little *sunshine* for so much misfortune, so much courage, so much resignation?45
irresistible magnetism that he can paralyze a malefactor simply by looking at him.\(^{46}\)

7. THE SAVIOR FROM ABOVE AS DESPOT

Aside from the divagations and excursus characteristic of *The Holy Family* as a whole, Marx especially goes after the depiction of Rudolph as the emancipator from above. The main notes struck are these:

1. If the people are to be kept looking for salvation to the powers above even though injustice continues to reign, there must be an explanation available for the failure of the higher-ups to act. Since time immemorial the explanation has been: the king (czar, vozhd, president, chairman, dictator) is unaware of what his bad underlings are doing. Sue made this explicit;* and the Bauerite paper chose precisely this to compliment. Marx points out that Sue is only replacing the old saw, "Ah, if the king only knew!" with the new bourgeois version, "Ah, if the rich only knew!"

Herr Szeliga does not know that Eugene Sue commits an *anachronism* out of courtesy to the French bourgeoisie when he puts the motto of the burghers of Louis XIV's time "*Ah! si le roi le savait!*" in the modified form: "*Ah! si le riche le savait!*" into the mouth of the workingman Morel in the time of the *Charte vérité* [Louis Philippe's constitution]. In England and France at least, that *naive* relation between rich and poor has ceased.\(^{49}\)

2. Rudolph, whose whole aim in life is to "serve the people," is taken at face value by the Critic. "Rudolph, as Herr Szeliga reports, is the *first* servant of humanity's *state,*" writes Marx tauntingly. But in fact this "servant" is the master, for the dichotomy established by Szeliga, as by Sue, is between the active principle (Rudolph) and the passive material (the people).

* Morel tells his wife:

The rich do not see, and cannot know what misery is ... they cannot imagine such misery; how can they understand privations they never felt? ... As I always said, if the rich knew—if the rich only knew ... Unfortunately, they are not aware of half the misery that exists among the poor. . . .

Sue came forward as the man to tell them about "the other France." Rudolph has already given his sage advice: "remember *that to be rich—is to give much.*"\(^{47}\)
On one side is the "divine" (Rudolph), "to which all power and freedom" are attributed, the only active principle. On the other side is the passive "world situation" and the human beings belonging to it.\(^{50}\)

3. It is Sue who presents Rudolph as virtually divine.\(^*\) In the novel, Marx points out, "Rudolph is the \textit{deus ex machina} and the mediator of the world." His servant "sees in his master [Rudolph] the salvation of mankind personified," but then so do Sue and Szeliga. Rudolph, wrestling with the devil, "tries to copy on a small scale the opposite of the devil, \textit{God}. He likes 'to play the role of Providence a little.' " While in the real world the difference between poor and rich is decisive, the ideology of the aristocracy wants to dissolve all differences in the antithesis between "good and evil." "This distinction," adds Marx, "is the last form that the aristocrat gives to his prejudices."\(^{52}\)

4. Rudolph's "passion for \textit{playing the role of Providence} and arranging the world according to his fixed ideas" means that he takes it on himself to deal out justice with the ruthless arbitrariness of a despot.\(^{**}\) Among other things, he has a gang leader's eyes gouged out so that the misguided wretch can learn to pray: Marx keeps coming back to this operation of Rudolph's morality with increasing revulsion at the smug hypocrisy of the concept.\(^{54}\) Of one of Rudolph's murderous frenzies, Marx writes caustically:

"\textit{Good}" Rudolph! Burning with desire for revenge, thirsting for blood, with calm deliberate rage, with a hypocrisy which sophistically excuses every evil impulse, he has all the passions of \textit{evil} for which he gouges out the eyes of others. Only good fortune, money, and social rank save this "\textit{good}" man from \textit{prison}.\(^{55}\)

Money also makes him the Redeemer:

\begin{itemize}
  \item In addition Sue paints the state power as being as benevolent as the good Rudolph himself: policemen are just good fellows doing their duty, prison guards are kind, fatherly types, and so on.\(^{48}\)
  \item There are many passages in the novel in which the objects of his benevolence refer to Rudolph as their Providence, or even God, with a suitable qualifier; Rudolph himself does it twice. Elsewhere we read: "Weary of life, save for doing good, he took a deep liking for playing the part of a minor Providence. . . ." \(^{51}\)
  \item Sue was the original Mickey Spillane. Rudolph thunders: "I judge you and I will punish you!" Or again: "Although the end justifies the means, and scruples should have no weight as regards this scoundrel, sometimes I regret having employed Cecily in this just and revenging reparation." Even: "To your violence which slays I oppose a violence that saves." \(^{53}\) But this last precept applies only to princes, not proletarians.
\end{itemize}
The miraculous means by which Rudolph accomplishes all his acts of redemption and miraculous cures is not his fine words but his ready cash. This is what the moralists are like, says Fourier. You must be a millionaire to be able to emulate these heroes.56

5. One of the most corrupt aspects of Sue's novel is its view of charity, which is recommended to the rich and powerful as a sovereign amusement: for women bored with idleness, more interesting than an adulterous affair; for "a man who unites knowledge, will and power," more intriguing than some stale adventure.* With unerring concord of mind, Sue's Bauerite admirer picks up precisely this turd as testimony to the beauty of Rudolph's soul. Marx quotes Szeliga's "Rudolph draws her attention to the entertaining side of charity," and makes a number of suitable remarks on the exploitation of misery by rich philanthropists, including this:

Rudolph has thereby unconsciously expressed the mystery unveiled long ago that human misery itself, the immeasurable desolation of having to take alms, must serve as a plaything to the aristocracy of money and education to satisfy their self-love, tickle their arrogance and amuse them.

... Thus it seems, therefore, that even charity has long been organized as entertainment.58

Charity is the reverse side of exploitation:

Herr Rudolph indulges in charity and dissipation something like the Caliph of Bagdad in the Arabian Nights. He cannot lead that kind of life without sucking the blood out of his little province in Germany to the last drop like a vampire.59

To be sure, Sue informs his readers that Gerolstein is nothing less than "the Paradise of Germany." The people are so happy and content "that the enlightened solicitude of their grand duke [Rudolph] had

* [Rudolph:] "... if you would amuse yourself, as I do, in occasionally playing the part of an inferior Providence, you would confess that good deeds have sometimes all the piquancy of romance."

"I must confess it has never occurred to me to consider charity from the amusing point of view," said Clémence, smiling in her turn.

"It is a discovery I owe to my horror of wearisome conventionalities... But to return to our amusing benevolence... And really, if your ladyship would become my accomplice in some dark intrigues of this nature, you would see, I repeat, that setting aside the praiseworthiness of the deed, nothing is more exquisite, more engaging, more attractive, and frequently more diverting, than these charitable adventures."57
experienced little trouble in preserving them from the mania of constitutional innovations." 60 All that, and amusement too!

6. In a passing remark, Marx compares this benign blueblood with a social tendency which we will hear more about in later chapters, the tendency discussed in the Communist Manifesto as "feudal socialism": "This great lord is like the members of Young England who also wish to reform the world and perform noble deeds and are subject to similar hysterical hazards." 61 Within three years this tendency, here dismissed with a quip, would become a pressing political problem in Germany. 62

8. THE THESIS ON REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE

While much of the impact of The Holy Family is lost because of its undisciplined diffuseness, we come now to the most concise and compressed statement of germinal ideas that Marx ever set down. The writing of The Holy Family was still under the influence of the Feuerbachian halfway house; by the time it was published in early 1845, Marx was already a stage ahead of it. Some time in the spring of that year, he jotted down eleven points in his notebook to clarify for himself how Feuerbach fell short of a consistently materialist world view. These "Theses on Feuerbach" are naturally most important for the development of Marx's historical and philosophical outlook, which is not our subject; but one, the third thesis, is fundamental to an understanding of the principle of self-emancipation.

It had already been anticipated in an inspired passage which Marx had written in his presocialist days of 1842, indeed in the very first article he had published, dealing with the freedom of the press and democracy—a version of Quis custodiet? or "Who will watch the watchers?"* The crux of the Third Thesis is that it asks the question: Who will educate the educator?

It goes directly to the elitist concept of the role of the educated

* This passage is so important that we repeat it here from Chapter 1. It is Marx's comment on a legislator who had argued in the Diet that man is naturally imperfect and immature and needs educational guidance:

For him true education consists in keeping a person swaddled in a cradle all his life, for as soon as he learns to walk he also learns to fall, and it is only through falling that he learns to walk. But if we all remain children in
bringer of socialism to the uneducated masses. Naturally Marx need not question the matter of fact that it is the educated who have generally raised the idea of socialism before the masses. That is how it may begin; but the point is that it cannot remain merely a one-way relationship.

When Engels published his edited version of the "Theses on Feuerbach" in 1888, he usefully concretized this meaning by introducing an example, Robert Owen, though this reference was not in Marx's original note. It was Owen's type of materialism which one-sidedly emphasized that people are the products of their environmental circumstances and upbringing, and which concluded that to change people for the better, one had to change the environmental circumstances and upbringing. Marx's thesis cuts straight to the heart of the difficulty in this reasoning: who are the people who are going to operate this change? These people apparently stand exempt from the very law they enunciate; for they, who are also the product of their environmental conditioning, are going to act to change the world which conditioned them. Prometheus was able to change people from the outside, because he was himself a god; but Owen's (and Marx's) problem is harder than his.

Who are these educators to be, and how do they come into being? Owen's implied answer is very simple and unenlightening: they are "people like me," who just happen to get the idea, plus others whom I convince with its inexorable logic . . .

Against this, Marx's thesis points out (1) that "it is essential to educate the educator himself," and (2) that until this educator is himself changed (educated), one cannot overcome the division of society between rulers and ruled.

The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing [that men are products of circumstances and upbringing and that therefore changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing] forgets that circumstances are changed by men [themselves], and that it is essential to educate the educator himself. Hence this doctrine must [necessarily have the effect to] divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society. [For example, in Robert Owen.]

swaddling-clothes, who is to swaddle us? If we all lie in a cradle, who is to cradle us? If we are all in jail, who is to be the jail warden? 63

It is in this passage, too, that Marx adds: "Does not education itself also need education?"—thereby anticipating the Third Thesis even more closely.
The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice.*

How then are the educators to be educated, and for that matter, how do the uneducated become educators? How does this whole two-sided process of self-changing take place? Marx's answer is: by revolutionary practice. One learns to revolutionize society even as one revolutionizes oneself; one learns to revolutionize oneself by trying to revolutionize society. For the working class, it is a process in which two sides interpenetrate; a mountain-climber, making his way up a chimney formation, can understand it better than a metaphysician. (We shall return to this basic aspect of revolution in Volume 2.)

The Third Thesis is the philosophic formulation by Marx of the basis of the principle of self-emancipation. It represents perhaps the first time in socialist thought that theory turns around to take a hard look at the theoretician.

The Third Thesis is that formulation of the principle of self-emancipation which links the philosophic background of Marxism with its political course. Marx's political theory develops as a guide to revolutionary practice in the course of which the revolutionary changes society, and the struggle changes the revolutionary and his political theory. We will see this happen more than once.

* If read without the bracketed italics, this is Marx's formulation of 1845. The bracketed italics are some of the editorial explanations introduced by Engels in his 1888 edited version.64
II | THE THEORY OF THE STATE
Society involves relationships among people and groups of people—social relationships—of various sorts. One sort is economic relationships: relations between men in the process of making a living—the kind of relationships that Marx analyzed in *Capital* for a particular socioeconomic system. But if a society is to fulfill its economic needs, it needs another complex of relationships too—relationships required to organize or integrate the operation of the society as a whole.

These relationships include the political as distinct from the economic, but we run into a terminological problem at the outset. The word *political* derives from the Greek *polis*, the ancient city-state; its connotations are already tied up from the beginning with the idea of a *state*. But there were earlier forms of social organization that preceded the rise of the state. In various forms there were tribal communities, primitive societies that existed without any state institutions. In these stateless societies too it was necessary for the operation of the community to be organized, or integrated, as a whole, and not only for specifically economic activities. Thus in these early societies too there was a function which seems to be analogous to the political.

In order to understand the state as an institution of society, we must first understand this function in the early communal societies in which a state had not yet developed and which got along without it. The very idea that a functioning society could ever do without a state is relatively modern and, naturally, still controversial.*

* This, I suppose, is what is meant by the following statement in one of the summary articles in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*: “In part, political science could emerge as a discipline separate from the other social sciences because of the impetus Marx had given to the idea of the difference between state and society, an idea virtually unheard of before his time.”
In the far from Marxian pages of the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, a summary article by A. Southall, "Stateless Society," holds that "the state, which has assumed a monopoly of political coordination, ruling, and making laws and enforcing them eventually with coercion, did not exist in ancient times," and describes the characteristics of stateless societies in a fashion made possible only by the work of Marx and Engels:

The most general and important is the fact that fundamental responsibility for the maintenance of society itself is much more widely dispersed throughout its varied institutions and its whole population, at least, usually, all its male adults. The remarkable spectacle of societies positively maintaining themselves at a high level of integration without any obvious specialized means of enforcement has undoubtedly led to new insight and attention to the fundamental responsibilities of all citizens, which for most people are obscured by the inequity of specialized political institutions. In stateless societies every man grows up with a practical and intuitive sense of his responsibility to maintain constantly throughout his life that part of the fabric of society in which at any time he is involved. Stateless societies are so constituted that the kaleidoscopic succession of concrete social situations provides the stimulus that motivates each individual to act for his own interest or for that of close kin and neighbors with whom he is so totally involved, in a manner which maintains the fabric of society. It is a little like the classical model of laissez-faire economics translated into the political field. But if every man is thus for himself, he is so only within a very tight framework of reciprocal obligation that he cannot avoid absorbing. The lack of specialized roles and the resulting multiplex quality of social networks means that neither economic nor political ends can be exclusively pursued by anyone to the detriment of society, because these ends are intertwined with each other and further channeled by ritual and controlled by the beliefs which ritual expresses.²
1. POLITICAL AND PROTOPOLITICAL AUTHORITY

Marx and Engels provide a fuller notion of what was involved. In the following explanation, not all details are of equal importance; some may change as a result of anthropological research; but the important thing is the over-all conception.

Marx starts with the view that the very first social relationships among people are sexual, and the resulting social group is based on blood relationship. The first human societies arise as extended families; the social relationships that knit the group together are those of kinship. To be sure, this group may also be associated with a given territory, but its basic social structure is not determined by territorial links but by its kinship structure. Engels explained:

According to the materialistic conception, the determining factor in history is, in the last resort, the production and reproduction of immediate life. But this itself is of a twofold character. On the one hand, the production of the means of subsistence, of food, clothing and shelter, and the tools requisite therefor; on the other, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social institutions under which men of a definite historical epoch and of a definite country live are conditioned by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labor, on the one hand, and of the family, on the other. The less the development of labor, and the more limited its volume of production and, therefore, the wealth of society, the more preponderantly does the social order appear to be dominated by ties of sex. However, within this structure of society based on ties of sex, the productivity of labor develops more and more.

Sexual production, "the production and reproduction of immediate life," is anterior to economic production in the usual sense, and at the beginning of human society is more decisive in determining the social structure. The organizing authority that arises in such a tribal community based on kinship ("ties of sex") is not, in the first place, an authority over a certain territory but primarily over a group of related people. The chief of the Iroquois is the head of a people; the emperor of Persia is the ruler of a territory.
Such an organizing authority arises because it is needed to regulate the common affairs of the community for the benefit of all. It may be loose or tight, simple or complex—we can read of an amazing variety of types of social organization in anthropological and historical works. But in any case some organizing authority is needed. We give the following three reasons for the need, and call attention to the fact that these same three reasons will continue to apply later in a different form.

1. The society is in a struggle with nature, and there must be a decision-making authority to carry out activities like hunts, agricultural labors, river works, and so on, as needed.

2. The society may be in a struggle with other communities (war), and a decision-making authority is needed to organize this struggle too.

3. The society consists of individuals, who may get involved in antagonisms and struggles among themselves; such internal disputes have to be settled by an authority, lest they tear the social fabric apart.

Now we encounter another terminological difficulty: there exists no accepted term, Marxist or non-Marxist, for this organizing authority in a communal society without a state. Government will not do: like others, Marx and Engels regularly used the term government, as well as the word political, in connection with a state; Marx even once defined the state as "a politically organized society." It would be confusing to conscript such terms for the name of this prestate authority.* We are therefore forced into the desperate step of inventing a new term for this unbaptized organizing authority in a stateless society: a protogovernment, or protopolitical authority.

What difference does it make whether we are talking about a primitive protopolitical authority in a community which has not yet developed a state, or a more advanced political structure which does amount to a state? The basic difference involves the role of coercion and force in society.

All society implies some kind of coercion (compulsion, constraint,

* Some Marxist literature has used the expedient of calling a prestate authority a government rather than a state; for example, William Paul's The State: the same device has been suggested by non-Marxists, for example, A. J. Nock. Terminologically speaking, these words are already ambidextrous enough. There is, of course, the peculiarly American use of state for one of the fifty. Government is either a popular synonym for state, or it refers to the executive power as distinct from the legislative; even more narrowly, especially in British usage, it refers to a particular cabinet or ministry in power, like administration in the United States. All of these usages of government will be found in Marx and Engels as elsewhere.
and so on), but there are different kinds of coercion and it is exercised in different ways. Nature exercises coercion on us: a tribe that lives mainly by fishing must go to work when the fish are running, on pain of starving. This is a blind coercion, not consciously exercised by men. A social system may impose another kind of blind coercion—for example, when a youth is compelled to leave school and go to work in a dead-end job because of his economic circumstances, not because of some conscious decision by an authority. This is economic coercion. Another blind force of coercion is the moral compulsion exercised by tradition and public opinion, which appears as an internalized feeling about the right thing to do. Although the origin of this compulsion lies outside the individual in the consensus which society establishes as a reflection of its needs, still it takes the form of an inner certainty.

We have specified these blind coercions in order to separate out that type of coercion which is not blind but rather conscious, overt, directly recognizable as a command from outside the individual. The characteristic of blind coercion is that the individual wants to do what he has to do. The characteristic of outside coercion is that the individual acts as he is supposed to act under the threat of force, expressed or implied.

Marx was concerned to point out more than once that the course of social development was historically accompanied by a change in the forms of coercion. One of the first forms of (what we have called) blind coercion, he argues, was already implied in the early rise of money. In the process of money circulation, exchange values are realized; the product is alienated from the direct producer; a system of “general alienation” is given form. Although the separate acts in this process arise out of the conscious aims of individuals, the total result goes beyond the individuals, and

the totality of the process appears as an objective interconnection arising directly from nature. To be sure, it emerges out of the interaction of conscious individuals, but it does not reside in their consciousness, nor as a totality is it subsumed under them. Their own mutual collisions produce an alien social force that stands above them; their reciprocal effects as a process and a power independent of them. . . . The social relation of individuals to each other as an autonomized force above the individuals—whether it is represented to be a natural force, an accident, or in any form you like—is a necessary result of the fact that the starting point is not the free social individual.6
In various societies, the tiller of the land has had to turn over his surplus labor, in whole or in part, to a lord; but this was done in different forms and under different compulsions. When labor rent (for example, corvée labor for the lord) evolves into rent in kind (giving the lord part of the product), then "the direct producer is driven rather by force of circumstances than by direct coercion, through legal enactment rather than the whip, to perform it [his surplus labor] on his own responsibility."  

Marx's interest was centered on the fact that it is under capitalism that the system of blind coercion reaches fullest development:

Under capital, the association of workers is not compelled by direct physical force or by forced labor, corvée labor, slave labor; it is compelled by the fact that the conditions of production are another's property, that they have their own existence as objective association...  

To this effect he quotes an early English economist with some relish:

Legal constraint to labour [wrote the Rev. Joseph Townsend] is attended with too much trouble, violence, and noise, creates ill will, etc., whereas hunger is not only a peaceable, silent, unremitting pressure, but, as the most natural motive to industry and labour, it calls forth the most powerful exertions.

In all of this, Marx discussed mainly the role of direct coercion in the process of production, in economic relations; and even here the difference between direct and blind coercion is very important. But our concern is broader. The more that direct coercion is eliminated from the economic substructure of society, the more it is concentrated in the superstructure, in the state—much as a platoon of gendarmes may be withdrawn from plantation duty to take up ready quarters in a nearby fortress. The state is the institutionalized instrument of direct coercion, and of forcible coercion as necessary, even though it too utilizes less direct forms of coercion as much as possible.
2. THE STATE SEPARATES OUT

Forcible coercion—usually in the form of an implied last resort, not necessarily as an immediate act of force—is already a factor in the primitive stateless community. (In our new terminology, we would call it protopolitical coercion, just as later with the state we would call it political force.) It is not in the least a question of how often force is actually used, as long as the threat that it can and will be used if necessary is a factor in gaining compliance.

The key question, therefore, is not whether compliance with customs or laws is gained with the aid of forcible coercion expressed or implied; the key difference between stateless society and the state lies elsewhere.

Let us say that a tribal council, consisting of all the adults (or male adults), condemns the violator of a taboo or a social transgressor. The judgment is made by the social group as a whole; exactly how this is done depends on how the community is organized for the purpose. Discussing the history of the old German mark (village community organized around common land), Engels notes:

In primitive times, the whole public authority in time of peace was exclusively judicial, and rested in the popular assembly of the hundred, the shire, or of the whole tribe. But this popular tribunal was only the popular tribunal of the mark adapted to cases that did not purely concern the mark, but came within the scope of the public authority.... It was only when the old democratic freedom had been long undermined ... that Charlemagne, in his shire-courts, could introduce judgment by Schöffen, lay assessors, appointed by the king's judge, in place of judgment by the whole popular assembly.¹⁰

The punishment is typically carried out by the community as a whole: for example, ostracism from the society. Obviously there is a kind of coercion here, with the use of physical force usually implied as an ultimate recourse, but that does mean it has to be brought into the normal case.

The important thing is that the coercion is applied by the whole society. It is a function of the community as a whole. There is no special institution separate from the collectivity that exists to imple-
ment it. "... the gentile* constitution had grown out of a society that knew no internal antagonisms, and was adapted only for such a society. It had no coercive power except public opinion." The offense of the individual is an offense against the interests of the social group as a whole; and the social group is a single interest bloc as against the offender. In this case, the antagonism is that of an individual against the society, not connected with the internal antagonisms of one part of a society against another part of the same society.

This primitive type of situation changes drastically when society divides into antagonistic social classes. Then society is no longer a single interest bloc. There are now rival interest groups inside the society—rivals which are structurally rooted, which cannot be abolished by expelling or punishing individuals. These rivals are the social classes.

In the tribal or village community with common ownership of land . . . a fairly equal distribution of products is a matter of course; where considerable inequality of distribution among the members of the community sets in, this is an indication that the community is already beginning to break up.12 That is, the community is beginning to break up into classes. The organizing authority which regulates the common affairs of the social group can now function no longer as the arm of the community as a whole, for the interests of the new classes are irreconcilable. At the same time, new institutions of coercion are necessary; they must be special institutions—specializing in coercion—for now the coercion has to be used by one organic part of society against another. Public opinion will no longer do as the organizer of the old sort of coercion. This class-oriented coercion is more likely than before to be based on physical force more immediately and overtly, whether or not the force has to be used more often.

... the inequality of distribution among the individuals and therefore the opposition between rich and poor becomes more and more pronounced. . . .

But with the difference in distribution, class differences emerge. Society divides into classes; the privileged and the dispossessed, the exploiters and the exploited, the rulers and the

*Gentile: pertaining to a gens (clan or kinship group) in primitive society.
ruled; and the state,* which the primitive groups of communities of the same tribe had at first arrived at only in order to safeguard their common interests (e.g., irrigation in the East) and for protection against external enemies, from this stage onwards acquires just as much the function of maintaining by force the conditions of existence and domination of the ruling class against the subject class.13

Naturally, force must be available to keep the dispossessed in their place, to keep slaves from overthrowing their bondage (again: no matter how infrequently the force has to be used in fact). For this purpose there must be special bodies of armed men. In ancient Greek society, for example, it meant a special body of public bowmen to guard against the slaves.

The power of forcible coercion has now been separated from the general body of society: this is the basic change from the pattern of the primitive community. The state has come into existence.

3. THE STATE IS NOT SIMPLY A CLASS PLOT

Let us underline one aspect of the preceding picture which is important for our further development of state theory. The state does not appear out of the blue, simply in order to fulfill a class-repressive function.** It is not simply invented out of nothing. On the contrary, in the last-cited passage Engels has pointed out that the older public authority acquires a new function, a class function; the state comes into being as the transformation of an institution already playing a certain role. The state's beginning, its prototypical source, lies in indispensable functions of society.

* At this point Engels means what we have called the protopolitical predecessor of the developed state. Formally, this represents an inexactitude in terminology, obviously due to the fact that he has no separate name for this institution and is telescoping the transition; but the thought is entirely clear. We shall see Engels do it again, below.

** Compare the first statements of this idea in The German Ideology—see Chapter 8, p. 190.
Engels stressed this in a letter as follows:

Society gives rise to certain common functions which it cannot dispense with. The persons appointed for this purpose form a new branch of the division of labor within society. This gives them particular interests, distinct, too, from the interests of those who empowered them; they make themselves independent of the latter and—the state is in being. 14

The state, then, arises out of a division of labor in society. It arises, of course, only as a result of the division of society into classes, but its institutional roots are in activities and functions of nonclass society.

This is a process extending over considerable time. Short summary formulations may speak of the state “arising” as if it popped into existence like a band of vigilantes. Nothing could be cruder than this notion, to which Engels paid considerable attention in Anti-Dühring. The rise of the state was a historical process of becoming, just as was the emergence of man himself.

As men originally made their exit from the animal world—in the narrower sense of the term so they made their entry into history: still half animal, brutal, still helpless in face of the forces of nature, still ignorant of their own strength; and consequently as poor as the animals and hardly more productive than they. There prevailed a certain equality in the conditions of existence, and for the heads of families also a kind of equality of social position—at least an absence of social classes—which continued among the primitive agricultural communities of the civilized peoples of a later period.

It is in this process that Engels sees the beginnings of state power, that is, in institutions before the rise of the state:

In each such [primitive] community there were from the beginning certain common interests the safeguarding of which had to be handed over to individuals, true, under the control of the community as a whole: adjudication of disputes; repression of abuse of authority by individuals; control of water supplies, especially in hot countries; and finally, when conditions were still absolutely primitive, religious functions. Such offices are found in aboriginal communities of every period—in the oldest German marks and even today in India. They are naturally endowed with a certain measure of authority and are the beginnings of state power. 15
Just as anthropologists describe how *Man Makes Himself*, so we are dealing here with the historical process which might be called *The State Makes Itself*. Engels is concerned to show that it is in this process that the state makes itself independent of society as a whole:

The productive forces gradually increase; the increasing density of the population creates at one point common interests, at another conflicting interests, between the separate communities, whose grouping into larger units brings about in turn a new division of labor, the setting up of organs to safeguard common interests and combat conflicting interests. These organs which, if only because they represent the common interests of the whole group, hold a special position in relation to each individual community—in certain circumstances even one of opposition—soon make themselves still more independent, partly through heredity of functions, which comes about almost as a matter of course in a world where everything occurs spontaneously, and partly because they become increasingly indispensable owing to the growing number of conflicts with other groups.

It has been too little noted that Engels does not here ascribe the growing independence of these leading organs (the protopolitical authorities) to the growth of class distinctions. On the contrary, this tendency arises spontaneously out of the growing complexity of the community. Even more to the contrary, it is out of this growing independence of the protopolitical organs that Engels sees the rise of a ruling class:

It is not necessary for us to examine here how this independence of social functions in relation to society increased with time until it developed into domination over society; how he who was originally the servant, where conditions were favorable, changed gradually into the lord; how this lord, depending on the conditions, emerged as an Oriental despot or satrap, the dynast of a Greek tribe, chieftain of a Celtic clan, and so on; to what extent he subsequently had recourse to force in the course of this transformation; and how finally the individual rulers united into a ruling class.* Here we are only concerned with establishing the fact that the exercise of a social function was everywhere the basis of political supremacy; and further that political supremacy has existed for any length of time only when it discharged its social functions.

* We will return to this important passage in Chapter 21.
But all this was only one of two ways in which "this process of formation of classes" was taking place, Engels explains. The other, which we need not expound here, was the development of relations of exploitation and domination in production, like slavery. In point of fact, the two processes went on alongside of and interacting with each other:

In the first place, all political power is originally based on an economic, social function, and increases in proportion as the members of society, through the dissolution of the primitive community, become transformed into private producers, and thus become more and more divorced from the administrators of the common functions of society. Secondly, after the political force has made itself independent in relation to society, and has transformed itself from its servant into its master, it can work in two different directions. [That is, it can work either for or against economic development, but this leads into a different question.]

We see, then, that already in the primitive stateless community there are common interests and common functions, economic and social functions of the society as a whole that have to be taken care of by an authority analogous to the political, by a protopolitical authority. Engels refers to this authority as "the political force* that makes itself independent of the community as a whole, with the coming of class divisions, and transforms itself "from its servant into its master." The

* Here we have another case of the terminological inexactitude noted before; actually it is the protopolitical force which makes itself independent and becomes the political institution, the state. It would be quibbling to point this out, were it not that whole marxological theories have been put forward, on this slim basis, asserting the existence of two or three "different theories of the state" in Engels. It must be remembered that the transformation from protogovernment to state entailed a more or less extended period of transitional forms; writing of this transition, Engels uses the expression "the nascent state" in one place. A passage similar to the last cited will also be found in a later work of Engels:

Society had created its own organs to look after its common interests, originally through simple division of labor. But these organs, at whose head was the state power, had in the course of time, in pursuance of their own special interests, transformed themselves from the servants of society into the masters of society.

Clearly Engels is taking account here of transitional forms in the rise of the state. The same is true of a similar passage in his essay Ludwig Feuerbach, where the transitional forms of state power—a power not yet primarily a class instrument but already making itself independent of society—are plainly set down.
protopolitical authority was a servant of the community; the state comes forward as the master of society.

In another part of *Anti-Dübrings* Engels begins with a strong statement of the original need for class divisions from the point of view of free time as an overall social need:

The separation of society into an exploiting and an exploited class, a ruling and an oppressed class, was the necessary consequence of the deficient and restricted development of production in former times. So long as the total social labor only yields a produce which but slightly exceeds that barely necessary for the existence of all; so long, therefore, as labor engages all or almost all the time of the great majority of the members of society—so long, of necessity, this society is divided into classes. Side by side with the great majority, exclusively bond slaves to labor, arises a class freed from directly productive labor, which looks after the general affairs of society: the direction of labor, state business, law, science, art, etc. It is, therefore, the law of division of labor that lies at the basis of the division into classes.

Note that these are “the general affairs of society” even though only a ruling class is yet in a position to perform them.

But this does not prevent this division into classes from being carried out by means of violence and robbery, trickery and fraud. It does not prevent the ruling class, once having the upper hand, from consolidating its power at the expense of the working class, from turning its social leadership into exploitation of the masses. 23

Such “social leadership” was needed before the coming of classes and the state. The erection of the state continues the task of social leadership, but now in a class-distorted fashion. It is not a plot; it is the only way class society knows of carrying out the common functions along with carrying out its own aims.

So long as the really working population were so much occupied with their necessary labor that they had no time left for looking after the common affairs of society—the direction of labor, affairs of state, legal matters, art, science, etc.—so long was it necessary that there should constantly exist a special class, freed from actual labor, to manage these affairs; and this class never failed, for its own advantage, to impose a greater and greater burden of labor on the working masses. 24
4. THE STATE AS SUPERSTRUCTURE

The state, then, comes into existence insofar as the institutions needed to carry out the common functions of the society require, for their continued maintenance, the separation of the power of forcible coercion from the general body of society. It is *this* role of forcible coercion that makes it difficult for the academic establishment to agree on an alternative conception of the state, of what is "political."

The main article on the subject in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (IESS) of 1968 admits that "it is impossible to offer a unified definition of the state that would be satisfactory even to the majority of those seriously concerned with the problem."

Three decades before, the old *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (1937) had admitted outright that it had no definition of political to propose, that is, that it did not know what political science was.

The successor work now exhibits a number of attempts by different hands (under various headings beginning *Political* or *State*). It is clear that an obstacle to agreement is that any defensible definition brings up the specter of Marxism, that is, of a definition basically in terms of institutionalized forcible coercion, which, if accepted, suggests a class theory by raising the question, "coercion of whom by whom?"

One effort to avoid this peril operates with the term *decision-making*. To be sure, the state is a decision-making authority, but not all decision-making is political: hence what is *political* decision-making? This brings the question right back to the beginning. One *IESS* article partially admits the role played by the need to keep clear of Marxism: Early political sociologists, including Marx (writes D. Easton),

saw force and power, especially in the struggle and conflict among groups or classes, as an inherent aspect of political relationships. In the United States it took somewhat longer for this change to gain acceptance, if only because it was frequently associated with unacceptable European social philosophies.

This mainly stimulated efforts to find some formula to accept the approach while rejecting the unacceptable associations. The dubious
results of this effort led Easton to conclude that "the idea of power remains buried under a heavy cloud of ambiguity."

We must add that defining the political in terms of force was by no means originated by Marx; it was common enough before him. An indication of this can be found in the pre-Marxist Engels of early 1844, and no doubt in many other places. What Marx did was establish an objective relationship between the state and the class structure of society.

The state is the institution, or complex of institutions, which bases itself on the availability of forcible coercion by special agencies of society in order to maintain the dominance of a ruling class, preserve existing property relations from basic change, and keep all other classes in subjection.

"In subjection" does not mean cowering under a whip—not necessarily and not usually. More generally it means also: in willing compliance, in passive acquiescence, or in ingrained dependence. The ruling class relies in the first place on its economic pressures:

The possessing classes [wrote Engels] . . . keep the working class in servitude not only by the might of their wealth, by the simple exploitation of labor by capital, but also by the power of the state—by the army, the bureaucracy, the courts.

Direct state measures are, to begin with, an auxiliary method, and in the end an ultima ratio.

Here is a summary which continues a passage from Engels cited above:

... within this structure of society based on ties of sex, the productivity of labor develops more and more; with it, private property and exchange, differences in wealth, the possibility of utilizing the labor power of others, and thereby the basis of class antagonisms: new social elements, which strive in the course of generations to adapt the old structure of society to the new conditions, until, finally, the incompatibility of the two leads to a complete revolution. The old society based on sex groups bursts asunder in the collision of the newly developed social classes; in its place a new society appears, constituted in a state, the lower units of which are no longer sex groups but territorial groups, a society in which the family system is entirely dominated by the property system, and in which the class antagonisms and class
struggles, which make up the content of all hitherto written history, now freely develop.\textsuperscript{30}

And:

The state . . . is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power seemingly standing above society became necessary for the purpose of moderating the conflict, of keeping it within the bounds of "order"; and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state.\textsuperscript{31}

In this sense, politics is concentrated economics: "the power of the state," wrote Marx, is "the concentrated and organized force of society"; in this sense the state is "the summing up of bourgeois society."\textsuperscript{32} The relations it sums up "are economic before everything else."\textsuperscript{33} It is "a reflection, in concentrated form, of the economic needs of the class controlling production," wrote Engels.\textsuperscript{34} The "concentration" metaphor emphasizes the social essence of state power but, as we shall see, cannot do equal justice to all its aspects. Marx suggested another metaphor: the state is "the political superstructure" which rests on the socioeconomic organization of society; the formalist, eyes bent only on the political forms, refuses to become acquainted with the "economic realities" that underlie those forms; but "All real progress in the writing of modern history has been effected by descending from the political surface into the depths of social life."\textsuperscript{*} In modern history, says Engels, "the state—the political order—is the subordinate, and civil society—the realm of economic relations—the decisive element."\textsuperscript{37}

\* The quotations here are from an article by Marx in 1858.\textsuperscript{35} This basis-superstructure metaphor, sometimes treated as a late invention by Engels, was first set down in The German Ideology: "The social organization, evolving directly out of production and commerce, . . . in all ages forms the basis of the state and of the rest of the ideological superstructure. . . ."\textsuperscript{36}
5. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STATE

The new political institution, the state, differs from the primitive (protopolitical) organizing authorities of tribal communities in a number of important respects.

1. The state is a power over a given territory (thereby including the people in the territory), rather than over a kinship group of related people. The equation of a political structure with a given territory or slice of the earth was once an innovation.

The state had to be based on territory because of the rise of private property and the social consequences of this change. Consider the way in which Engels traces this process, in a little detail, in the specific case of Athens. As new economic relations (slavery, exchange of products, money, and so on) disintegrated the old kinship social groups over a period of time, the very members of the kinship groups were scattered over the whole of Attica, instead of concentrating around their communally owned land. In the city of Athens itself, commercial interests mingled them all helter-skelter. New occupations divided the population into new types of interest groups which had no relationship to the old kinship structure. The new slave class was outside the old structure altogether, as were also strangers and foreigners who settled in Athens for the new commercial purposes. Thus the old social structure based on kinship was progressively destroyed, and the new institutions developing to organize the new social relations could work only by taking people by where they lived, not by blood relationships.

Marx makes the further point that a state can scarcely arise as long as family units are (say) scattered singly through a forest area as among the old Germanic tribes. A certain amount of urban concentration is required to form the unity that corresponds to a state. In the old German case, there may indeed be a community formed by such rurally scattered family units connected by kinship ties; but while this community structure may serve to unify them, it does not turn them into such a unity. In Marx's words:

The community therefore appears as a unification, not as a union; as a unification in which the owners of land form independent subjects, not as a unity. Hence the community does not exist in fact as a state, a state entity, as in antiquity, because it does not
exist as a town. In order for the community to come into actual existence, the free landowners must hold an assembly, whereas—for example in Rome—it exists apart from such assemblies in the very existence of the town itself and the officials heading it, etc.\textsuperscript{39}

2. The second characteristic we have already stressed: the creation of specialized institutions and instruments of coercion divorced from the communal whole.

The second is the establishment of a public power which no longer directly coincides with the population organizing itself as an armed force. This special public power is necessary because a self-acting armed organization of the population has become impossible since the cleavage into classes. The slaves also belonged to the population; the 90,000 citizens of Athens formed only a privileged class as against the 365,000 slaves. The people's army of the Athenian democracy was an aristocratic public power against the slaves, whom it kept in check; however, a gendarmerie also became necessary to keep the citizens in check. . . . This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons and institutions of coercion of all kinds, of which gentile [kinship] society knew nothing. It may be very insignificant, almost infinitesimal, in societies where class antagonisms are still undeveloped and in out-of-the-way places as was the case at certain times and in certain regions in the United States of America.\textsuperscript{*} It grows stronger, however, in proportion as class antagonisms within the state become acute, and as adjacent states become larger and more populous. We have only to look at our present-day Europe, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have screwed up the public power to such a pitch that it threatens to devour the whole of society and even the state itself.\textsuperscript{40}

Marx, commenting on the fact that the official title of a Hohenzollern ruler is Kriegsherr, "Lord of War," says it means

that the true prop of their kingly power must be sought for, not in the people, but in a portion of the people, separated from the

\textsuperscript{*} The coming of state power to these regions is a characteristic theme of the Hollywood Western: the man with the badge or the cavalry detachment galloping to the rescue represents state power (the white man's). Part of the Western's fascination for overcivilized people no doubt stems from a primitive situation existing in relatively recent times.
mass, opposed to it, distinguished by certain badges, trained to passive obedience, drilled into a mere instrument of the dynasty which owns it as its property and uses it according to its caprice.  

3. The new state institution, from the very beginning, is more expensive than the old ways of organizing society. It has to be paid for by special contributions from the citizens: taxes.

These were absolutely unknown in gentile society; but we know enough about them today. As civilization advances, these taxes become inadequate; the state makes drafts on the future, contracts loans, public debts.

These are all different means by which the state conscripts the citizens' purse to finance itself. It follows that the old saw, "Nothing is certain but death and taxes," is a product of class society, not of human nature.

4. The new and special functions of the state require a new officialdom on an unprecedented scale, which becomes a bureaucracy—a ruling officialdom. Now it is true that even in the protopolitical authorities of the tribal communities, the division of labor required that certain individuals become functionaries, devoting most of their time to public functions (religious and tribal chieftains, and so on); but this was often a temporary status, it did not necessarily confer ruling power, and the number involved was small. However, the main difference between such functionaries and the typical state bureaucracy lies in something else. The state makes special efforts to separate its bureaucratic personnel from the population as a whole, to erect a special social wall around them, to elevate them above society, to invest them with an aura of unquestionable privilege.

Having public power and the right to levy taxes, the officials now stand, as organs of society, above society. The free, voluntary respect that was accorded to the organs of the gentile constitution does not satisfy them, even if they could gain it; being the vehicles of a power that is becoming alien to society, respect for them must be enforced by means of exceptional laws by virtue of which they enjoy special sanctity and inviolability. The shaggiest police servant in the civilized state has more "authority" than all the organs of gentile (clan) society put together; but the most powerful prince and the greatest statesman, or general, of civiliza-
tion may well envy the humblest gentile chief for the unstrained and undisputed respect that is paid to him. The one stands in the midst of society, the other is forced to attempt to represent something outside and above it.\(^{43}\)

While the status of the bureaucracy in society varies considerably according to time and place, it has never been clearer than today that it is this characteristic of officialdom which is increasingly the mark of exploitative societies. It will receive closer attention in later chapters.

6. THE STATE AS CLASS EXECUTIVE

Engels recognized the class role played by the mystique of "the sanctity of the law" very early, before he was much influenced by Marx, that is, in the pages of his *Condition of the Working Class in England*:

Certainly the law is sacred to the bourgeois, for it is of his own making, put through with his approval and for his protection and benefit. He knows that even if a particular law may injure him as an individual, still the complex of legislation as a whole protects his interests; and that above all the strongest support of his social position is the sanctity of the law and the inviolability of the order established by the active expression of will by one part of society and passive acceptance by the other. It is because the English bourgeois sees his own image in the law, as he does in his God, that he holds it to be holy and that the policeman's club (which is really his own club) holds a power for him that is wonderfully reassuring. But for the worker it certainly does not. The worker knows only too well and from too long experience that the law is a rod that the bourgeois holds over his head, and he does not bother himself about it unless he has to.\(^{44}\)

Marx noted the pattern of sanctification in a discussion which applied immediately to the justification of private property in land but would apply equally to all private property:

... they [jurists, philosophers, and political economists] disguise the original fact of conquest under the cloak of "Natural Right." If conquest constituted a natural right on the part of the few, the many have only to gather sufficient strength in order to acquire
the natural right of reconquering what has been taken from them. In the progress of history the conquerors attempt to give a sort of social sanction to their original title derived from brute force, through the instrumentality of laws imposed by themselves. At last comes the philosopher who declares those laws to imply the universal consent of society.  

Engels sums up the general analysis as follows:

Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule,* the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus, the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slave owners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labor by capital.  

The best-known summary statement is in the Communist Manifesto. This is not directed generally to the nature of the state, but specifically to the situation where

... the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.  

And at the end of Part II of the Manifesto: "Political power, properly so called, is [**] the organized power of one class for oppressing another."  

* Note the qualification "as a rule": immediately following this section as quoted, Engels goes on to discuss exceptions to the rule; we will take this up in a later chapter. A similar qualification occurs in his Origin of the Family: "The cohesive force of civilized society is the state, which in all typical periods is exclusively the state of the ruling class. . . ."  

** The standard Moore-Engels translation inserts the word merely at this point; it is not in the German original. Like the but (nur) in the preceding citation ("The executive of the modern state is but a committee . . ."), the word is an intensive.
There is a common paraphrase of this, sometimes given (mistakenly) as an actual quotation from Marx, namely "The state is the executive committee of the ruling class." Similar summary sentences will be found elsewhere in Marx and Engels. 51

The most useful short statement of the role of the state is the one suggested by the Manifesto formulation: the state is the institution "for managing the common affairs" of the ruling class. For Marx, there is no doubt that its basic task ("above all," as Engels says) is to "hold down and exploit the oppressed class." But whenever necessary they make clear that this is not its only task, not its only role, despite the occurrence of emphatic words like merely, nothing but, and so on in short aphoristic formulations.

7. SUBSIDIARY TASKS OF THE STATE

This state, which manages the common affairs of the ruling class, has other tasks too. Three other tasks, in fact, and it is not necessary to go far to find them. They are analogues of the same three tasks we listed a few pages back as characteristic of any organizing authority in a society, even in a stateless community. Translated into state terms, these subsidiary tasks may be described as follows:

1. There are certain functions which any government must perform in order to keep the society going, even if we assume they are of no special advantage to the ruling class. Sanitation departments prevent epidemics; policemen find lost babies; help is given to areas struck by natural disasters like hurricanes or earthquakes: These may take on the appearance of nonclass functions even in a class-bound state.

2. The state developed from the beginning on a national or imperial basis; it exists within territorial boundaries. As a national state, it manages the common affairs of the ruling class of that particular state as against the rival ruling classes of other national states. Entrenched behind national boundaries, the separate states vie for trade, raw materials, investment, commercial advantage, and so on. Behind each boundary, one of the tasks of the state is to safeguard and advance the interests of its own ruling class against all rivals.

3. The ruling class itself is not a monolithic block; it is shot through with criss-crossing interest blocs, as well as ordinary individual competitive antagonisms. Particularly under capitalism—which begins as dog-
eat-dog competition—one of the tasks of the state is to mediate, reconcile, in some way settle the internecine disputes and conflicts within the ruling class. This does not imply that the state institutions act as impartial Solomons even in intracapitalist terms: for there is a hierarchy of economic power as well as political influence. But some kind of settlement of intraclass disputes there must be, in order to avoid tearing the whole social fabric apart in an unregulated melee.

What is the relationship between the basic task of the state ("holding down and exploiting the oppressed class") and the three subsidiary tasks which we have described? There are two differences to be noted.

1. The most obvious difference is that, from Marx's standpoint, the state's task of class domination is not only basic but its specific reason for existence. The other three are tasks which the state has taken over from its preceding protopolitical institutions; it is not these tasks which bring the state into existence.

Operationally, this difference has a profound consequence for the historical reactions of the ruling class; for experience shows that in practice the ruling class does subordinate the three subsidiary tasks to the first (basic) task, where there is a clash. It will forget internal class differences to make common cause against a threat from below, and it will conspire with the national enemy if its own working class threatens its rear. As Marx noted that the Prussians were aiding the French Versailles government in crushing the Paris Commune, he added:

It was only the old story. The upper classes always united to keep down the working class. In the eleventh century there was a war between some French knights and Norman knights, and the peasants rose in insurrection; the knights immediately forgot their differences and coalesced to crush the movement of the peasants.52

About the same time, he entered in his notebook:

The Paris-Journal, the most ignoble of the Versailles papers, says: "the peace has been signed.—With our enemies? No, with the Prussians. And, however great our hatred may be of those who ruined us [Prussians], we must say that it cannot equal the horror with which we are filled by those who dishonor us [Parisians]."53

In domestic affairs, wrote Marx, the same bourgeois liberals who condemn government intervention are the first to demand it if the target is the working class:
These same "gallant" free-traders, renowned for their indefatigability in denouncing government interference, these apostles of the bourgeois doctrine of laissez-faire, who profess to leave everything and everybody to the struggles of individual interest, are always the first to appeal to the interference of Government as soon as the individual interests of the working-man come into conflict with their own class-interests. In such moments of collision they look with open admiration at the Continental States, where despotic governments, though, indeed, not allowing the bourgeoisie to rule, at least prevent the working-men from resisting. 54

2. The second difference is that the three subsidiary tasks, unlike the basic task, may convey the appearance of being nonclass in character, as if simply actuated by the need of society or nation as a whole, rather than by the self-interest of the dominant class. On this ground it has been common to attack the Marxist "exaggeration" which views the state as primarily a class instrument. This is not the place to argue the question, but only to establish what Marx's viewpoint is.

It should be clear from what has already been explained that there is no question about one thing: the state really does have nonclass tasks, and it carries them out. But it carries them out inevitably in class-distorted ways, for class ends, with class consequences.

8. THE CLASS NATURE OF THE STATE

The position has nothing to do with denying that there are all kinds of nonclass aspects to society. What is important is understanding that the class character of a society permeates every aspect of the society, including these.

One illustration: it is certainly in the interest of society as a whole that epidemics be prevented; hence sanitation can be regarded as a nonclass task of government. But in historical fact the ruling powers embraced city-wide sanitation only when it was impressed on them that plagues originating among the poor also killed the rich. Marx noted in Capital that "the mere fear of contagious diseases which do not spare even 'respectability,' brought into existence from 1847 to 1864 no less than ten Acts of Parliament on sanitation," and "the frightened bour-
geois" in the big cities took municipal measures. Engels describes what happened as science proved that such ravaging diseases as cholera and smallpox incubated their germs in the pestilential conditions of the poor districts before spreading to the other side of the tracks:

As soon as this fact had been scientifically established the philanthropic bourgeois became inflamed with a noble spirit of competition in their solicitude for the health of their workers. Societies were founded, books were written, proposals drawn up, laws debated and passed, in order to stop up the sources of the ever-recurring epidemics. The housing conditions of the workers were investigated and attempts made to remedy the most crying evils.

The capitalist state exerts itself to do the workers good, and its professors can now easily prove that the class bias of the state is grossly exaggerated. But to this day the class character of sanitation can be observed with the naked eye by comparing any workers’ district with any rich residential district. The dominant economic interests certainly will not allow conditions so bad as to breed plagues:

Nevertheless, the capitalist order of society reproduces again and again the evils to be remedied, and does so with such inevitable necessity that even in England the remedying of them has hardly advanced a single step.

The next remedial step is “urban renewal” or slum clearance, in the name of such obviously nonclass aspirations as “civic improvement.” This pattern was already an old story to Marx, who pointed out in Capital:

“Improvements” of towns, accompanying the increase of wealth, by the demolition of badly built quarters, the erection of palaces for banks, warehouses, &c., the widening of streets for business traffic, for the carriages of luxury [automobile freeways], and for the introduction of tramways, &c. [rapid-transit projects], drive away the poor into even worse and more crowded hiding places.

Engels pointed to the Bonapartist prefect of Paris, Haussmann, as the model for

the practice, which has now become general, of making breaches in the working-class quarters of our big cities, particularly in those which are centrally situated, irrespective of whether this
practice is occasioned by considerations of public health and beautification or by the demand for big centrally located business premises or by traffic requirements, such as the laying down of railways, streets, etc. No matter how different the reasons may be, the result is everywhere the same: the most scandalous alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-glorification by the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but—they appear again at once somewhere else, and often in the immediate neighborhood.\(^{58}\)

In sum: the class nature of the state is attested not by the fact that every act is necessarily, equally, and exclusively in the direct interest of the ruling class only, but by the fact that all other interests are regularly \textit{subordinated} to the interests of the ruling class, that the acts of the state are decisively shaped by what the ruling class and its representatives conceive its interests to be, and take place only within the framework of those interests. Along these lines Engels makes a comparison:

As all the driving forces of the actions of any individual person must pass through his brain, and transform themselves into motives of his will in order to set him into action, so also all the needs of civil society—no matter which class happens to be the ruling one—must pass through the will of the state in order to secure general validity in the form of laws. . . . If we inquire into this we discover that in modern history the will of the state is, on the whole, determined by the changing needs of civil society, by the supremacy of this or that class, in the last resort, by the development of the productive forces and relations of exchange.\(^{59}\)

The needs of society, no matter how class-neutral in origin or intention, cannot be met without passing through the political (and other) institutions set up by a class-conditioned society; and it is in the course of being processed through these channels that they are shaped, sifted, skewed, molded, modeled, and modulated to fit within the framework established by the ruling interests and ideas. This is how the class nature of the state and the society asserts itself, even without malevolent purposes or sinister plots.
While the essence of the state is class domination based on means of forcible coercion, there is much more to the state than an essence.

"The state presents itself to us as the first ideological power over man," wrote Engels. Ideological? Is a body of armed men an ideological power? But it must be understood that the state is not merely a body of armed men; if it were, it would be a much simpler institution: simpler to understand and simpler to overthrow. Its complexities are due to the fact that, for its own sake, it has to keep the body of armed men in the background as much as possible, and to put in the foreground its devices for the ideological (mental, moral, and spiritual) control of class antagonisms.

A state which maintains itself exclusively by the naked application of forcible suppression is both precarious and expensive. The state seeks stability and cheapness by finding working alternatives to the constant use of force. While it cannot eliminate force as its underlying sanction, it strives to reduce the use of force to (a) an auxiliary method of control in the short run, and (b) a last resort in the long run—at least, for as long a run as possible.

This holds true in general for the most despotic state as for the most democratic. Experience has thrown up countless methods, devices and stratagems whereby the state gains at least temporary compliance, acquiescence, and dependence by the bulk of the people without the overt use of force.

A catalogue of these force-substitute methods belongs elsewhere, even a catalogue of those that crop up in the writings of Marx and Engels, especially their journalistic writings. Some are more important than others; some operate on a larger social scale than others; some are
useful in short-run situations, some in the longer run. The more important ones are: the inculcation of inertia and apathy; moral subjugation; falsification of information; concessions and reforms; division of the ruled into more and less favored groups, from Janissaries to scapegoats; cooptation—winning over or buying out potential opposition leadership, including assimilation into the ruling class; direct and indirect corruption; and nationalism, as a means of directing social hostilities outside the state. Most of them are very old stories, historically speaking, merely taking new forms under different social systems. For present purposes the point is to see their relationship to the basic role of the state.

Some of these methods will be considered elsewhere, for their significance goes beyond the present subject.* But examples may be useful here.

1. SUBSTITUTES FOR FORCE: SOME EXAMPLES

1. Moral means. Very often Marx and Engels were concerned not so much to expose the conservatizing (pro-state) impact of these methods as to show their limitations as a barrier to radicalization. Thus Engels:

Now, if ever, the people must be kept in order by moral means, and the first and foremost of all moral means of action upon the masses is and remains—religion. Hence the parsons’ majorities on the school boards, hence the increasing self-taxation of the bourgeoisie for the support of all sorts of revivalism, from ritualism to the Salvation Army...

However, I am afraid neither the religious stolidity of the British, nor the post festum conversion of the Continental bourgeoisie will stem the rising proletarian tide. Tradition is a great retarding force, is the vis inertiae [force of inertia] of history, but, being merely passive, is sure to be broken down; and thus religion will be no lasting safeguard to capitalist society.2

* For example, religion (which bears on several of the above methods), nationalism, concessions and reforms, and division and scapegoats (including the formation of élite strata in the lower classes, such as a “labor aristocracy,” and discrimination against women and racial minorities).
2. *Falsification* as a state method was not necessarily merely the result of ad hoc wickedness (concealment of this or that fact) and, by the same token, was more pervasive than might be supposed:

By its eternal compromises, gradual, peaceful political development such as exists in England brings about a contradictory state of affairs. Because of the superior advantages it affords, this state can within certain limits be tolerated in practice, but its logical incongruities are a sore trial to the reasoning mind. Hence the need felt by all "state-sustaining" [pro-state] parties for theoretical camouflage, even justification, which, naturally, are feasible only by means of sophisms, distortions and, finally, underhand tricks. Thus a literature is being reared in the sphere of politics which repeats all the wretched hypocrisy and mendacity of theological apologetics and transplants the theological intellectual vices to secular soil. Thus the soil of specifically Liberal hypocrisy is manured, sown, and cultivated by the Conservatives themselves.

Capitalist technology has raised the possibility of systematic falsification by the mass media to a brand-new level, Marx remarked (apropos the slander campaign against the International):

Up to now it was believed that the development of the Christian myths under the Roman empire had been possible only because printing had not yet been invented. Just the contrary. The daily press and the telegraph, which in a trice spread their disclosures over the whole earth, fabricate more myths (which the bourgeois cattle believe and disseminate) in one day than could formerly have been turned out in a century.

Whole sections of history, especially of revolutionary periods, are dropped down the Memory Hole, in order not to contaminate the young. Engels commented after reading a couple of books on the period of Bonaparte's coup d'état:

It necessarily happens after every victorious reaction that the causes of the revolution and counterrevolution are totally forgotten; in Germany the younger generation knows absolutely nothing about 1848 except the lamentations of the *Kreuzzeitung* [reactionary organ], and the echoing howls of all the other papers from 1849 to 1852; history suddenly comes to an end there in 1847.
3. Flagrant cases of class discrimination by state organs involve not simply ordinary hypocrisy but the internalization of a class morality. When large-scale corruption among railway companies was exposed in the English courts, Marx reported:

"The learned Judge remarked that "anything more flagrant or more gross could scarcely be conceived, and the way in which the plan had been carried out was still more gross." With this reflection he dismissed the guilty parties, as is usual among the bourgeoisie, while a poor devil of a proletarian would have been sure to be transported for a theft beyond five pounds.

It is curious to observe the British public in its fluctuating indignation now against the morality of mill lords, and now against the pit-owners, now against the little dealers in adulterated drugs, and then against the railwaymen [owners] who have supplanted the obsolete highwaymen; in short, against the morality of every particular class of capitalists. Taking the whole, it would seem that capital possesses a peculiar morality of its own, a kind of superior law of a raison d'état, while ordinary morals are a thing supposed to be good for the poor people."

There was, of course, no lack of cases testifying to the class prejudices of courts and magistrates, and Marx gave them attention especially in his journalistic articles. In another case he pointed out that magistrates commonly intervened against strikes "in the most prejudiced and most unfavorable manner for the workingman" not because they were themselves necessarily manufacturers or businessmen, but especially because they "are at least intimately connected with, and dependent on, the commercial interest."

4. Marx and Engels tended to look on political racism in the same light, as a class-repressive device stimulated and manipulated from above, to make use of volatile material below. The first German movement of political anti-Semitism (Christian Social movement), which began in 1878 and reached its first high in the course of 1881, was a case in point. Comrades in Germany sent Engels a packet of the papers and literature burgeoning out of the movement led by Stoecker, the court chaplain. While recognizing the force of anti-Jewish sentiments among the German people, Engels stressed that in origin and role the movement as such was an instrument shaped from above to keep the lower classes in subjection.
You will have received the anti-Jewish writings back in good order [replied Engels].... I have never read anything so stupid and childish. The only importance this movement has is what every movement launched from above has in Germany, given the cowardice of the bourgeoisie: electoral maneuvering, in order to obtain conservative votes. As soon as the elections are over or even earlier when it has overshot the mark set for the higher positions (as is true now in Pomerania), it will altogether collapse by command from on top like a stuck pig's bladder, "to be seen no more." Such movements cannot be treated with sufficient contempt, and I am glad that the Sozialdemokrat did that. By the bye, C. H[irsch] writes me... from Berlin: "The anti-Semitic movement is purely arranged from above, indeed practically set up on order. I have gone into the most wretched places, and nobody minded my nose; in the buses and on the railway, nowhere did I get to hear a word against the Jews. The semi-official newspapers, which disseminate the Jew-baiting articles, have very few readers. The Germans have a natural antipathy toward the Jews, but the hatred of the regime that I have found among the workers and the progressive petty-bourgeois and philistines is far stronger."8

While the actual picture was, as usual, more complicated than represented in Engels' view from afar,* his estimate of the origin and role of the Stoecker movement was essentially accurate for this period.

The divisive role of racism directed against black workers, as well as discrimination against other ethnic minorities, is reserved for a later volume. We note here, however, a pregnant remark by Engels about the U.S. Constitution, formally the most liberal of the bourgeois constitutions then adopted.

*The complications are well summarized by Massing,* together with an analysis of the movement which largely confirms the socialists' view of its class character and relation to state elements. Massing makes clear it got little support from the working class and that its mass base came from the Mittelstand, the social strata between the workers and the bourgeoisie. Stoecker's movement peaked by 1884 and declined; racial anti-Semitism flowered in the next decade. Engels' views on the anti-Semitic movement of the 1890s will be mentioned in a later chapter. Seeing the social role of racism as a tool wielded from above does not necessarily contradict recognition of its sources in the culture itself, ingrained in the people below. As Marx remarked apropos of Gobineau's theory of white supremacy, "to such people it is always a source of satisfaction to have somebody they think themselves entitled to mépriser [despise]."10
The developing bourgeoisie, explains Engels, which demanded liberty and equality for itself as against feudal fetters, also had to come out for liberty and equality for the masses of people who were supposed to support its struggle:

And it is significant of the specifically bourgeois character of these human rights that the American Constitution, the first to recognize the rights of man, in the same breath confirms the slavery of the colored races existing in America: class privileges are proscribed, race privileges sanctioned.  

This is a highly condensed thought. If class privileges were not institutionalized in the Constitution, the same result had to be got at in other ways. The race privileges written into the Constitution, immediately in the interests of the slave-owning states, were congenial to a ruling-class society, which always needed forms adapted to "divide and rule." The bourgeois character of the human rights proclaimed by the Founding Fathers was manifested by the fact that they were applied to bourgeois society, with its polar-class structure of employers and workers, but not to the human beings who were enslaved outside of this bourgeois class structure.

5. Cooptation. The capacity of a ruling class to assimilate new elements was regarded by Marx as an index to its continuing strength, since this ability siphoned off potentially dissident elements. It is a bulwark of state stability, beginning with the strengthening of the capitalist class itself. Marx makes this point in an unexpected context: the credit system makes it possible for new men with energy to become capitalists—a circumstance "greatly admired by apologists of the capitalist system."

Although this circumstance continually brings an unwelcome number of new soldiers of fortune into the field and into competition with the already existing individual capitalists, it also reinforces the supremacy of capital itself, expands its base and enables it to recruit ever new forces for itself out of the substratum of society. In a similar way, the circumstance that the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages formed its hierarchy out of the best brains in the land, regardless of their estate, birth or fortune, was one of the principal means of consolidating ecclesiastical rule and suppressing the laity. The more a ruling class is able to assimilate the foremost minds of a ruled class, the more stable and dangerous becomes its rule.
6. Corruption. In the modern bourgeois democracy, as in previous societies where the rights of citizens were openly proportional to their wealth, it is still true that wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely. On the one hand, in the form of the direct corruption of officials, of which America provides the classical example; on the other hand, in the form of an alliance between government and Stock Exchange, which becomes the easier to achieve the more public debt increases and the more joint-stock companies concentrate in their hands not only transport but also production itself, using the stock exchange as their center.  

So Engels, in more than one place. Marx had the same to say about the United States as well as about England. Recent investigations, he wrote, confirm “the saying . . . that the real Constitution of the British House of Commons might be summed up in the word Corruption.” But in this corruption he did not see mere evil-doing. The capacity to corrupt is the modern way of making rights proportional to wealth:

The traditional bribery of British elections, what else was it, but another form, as brutal as it was popular, in which the relative strength of the contending parties showed itself? Their respective means of influence and of dominion, which on other occasions they used in a normal way, were here enacted for a few days in an abnormal and more or less burlesque manner.

In any case, bourgeois politics is inseparable from the manipulation of huge masses of money. Engels seized an occasion to hammer this home. After the Panama scandal in France, and the news of Bismarck’s Guelphic Fund in Germany, a bank scandal in Italy (“little Panama” or Panamino) revealed the wholesale bribery of government leaders and deputies on an enormous scale.

And what is the moral of the story? That Panama and Panamino and the Guelphic Fund show that the whole of present-day bourgeois politics—the pleasant squabbling of the bourgeois parties among themselves as well as their collective resistance against the pressure of the working class—cannot be carried on without a colossal mass of money; that these masses of money are associated with aims that must not be publicly admitted; and that the governments see themselves more and more compelled by the greediness of the bourgeois to get hold of the wherewithal for
these untold aims by untold means. "We take money where we find it," said Bismarck, who must know. And "where we find it" we have just seen. 18

Lying at the root of the system of corruption is a characteristic of civilized society which takes us a bit out of our field but deserves mention. Marx affords glimpses of it. Corruptibility in general no doubt has its sources in human nature, but a specific type of corruptibility arises out of a money system. Marx argues that the exchangeability of everything with money and money with everything, this characteristic of money as generalized wealth, translates historically into "universal venality, corruption. General prostitution makes its appearance as a necessary phase in the development of the social character of personal talents, faculties, abilities, activities." The passionate pursuit of riches—not simply to gain particular objects or goods, but enrichment in general—becomes possible only with a money system.

Money is therefore not only the object but equally the wellspring of the rage for riches. Greed is possible even without money; [but] the rage for riches is itself the product of a definite social development—not natural as opposed to historical. Hence the ancients' laments about money as the root of all evil. 19

"Can one escape dirt in bourgeois intercourse or trade?" Marx asked. No, he answered, this is "its natural habitat." 19a

2. ECONOMIC ROOTS OF BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

The examples above are all relevant to methods of state domination which (in different ways) operate in any class-exploitative society, regardless of the governmental forms. Indeed, such methods are especially important in despotic states, simply because these do not have the methods of democratic manipulation at their disposal. The coming of bourgeois-democratic forms of government provided the ruling class, now the bourgeoisie, with indirect means of class domination which are very versatile and economical.

Developing capitalism gives rise to democratic institutions as a consequence of its inherent economic drives, which then take a political form. The essential economic basis is the formal, or apparent, egalitarianism of the capitalist relation:
The exchange of commodities of itself implies no other relations of dependence than those which result from its own nature. On this assumption, labor-power can appear upon the market as a commodity only if, and so far as, its possessor, the individual whose labor-power it is, offers it for sale, or sells it, as a commodity. In order that he may be able to do this, he must have it at his disposal, must be the untrammeled owner of his capacity for labor, i.e., of his person. He and the owner of money meet in the market, and deal with each other as on the basis of equal rights, with this difference alone, that one is buyer, the other seller; both therefore equal in the eyes of the law.  

The laborer must therefore be free in the double sense, that as a free man he can dispose of his labor-power as his own commodity, and that on the other hand he has no other commodity for sale, is short of everything necessary for the realization of his labor-power. . . . Free laborers, in the double sense that neither they themselves form part and parcel of the means of production, as in the case of slaves, bondsmen, &c., nor do the means of production belong to them, as in the case of peasant-proprietors; they are, therefore, free from, unencumbered by, any means of production of their own.  

While a slave has value (exchange value), a free worker has none—it is only his labor power that has value. "The fact that he has no value, that he is stripped of all value," says Marx, "is the presupposition for capital and the precondition for free labor in general." The worker is juridically free because he is valueless, economically speaking; and this is also why the capitalist is equally free—to scrap him as necessary, more freely than he can scrap his machines.  

The commodity relationship is "a born leveler." This relationship in the buying and selling of labor power, then, appears to be "a very Eden of the innate rights of man."  

There alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property, and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, say of labor-power, are constrained only by their own free will. They contract as free agents, and the agreement they come to is but the form in which they give legal expression to their common will. Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent.
This formal equalitarianism of the capitalist-proletarian relationship is, to be sure, only "the surface of bourgeois society, obliterating the deeper operations from which it arises." Both sides are persons vis-à-vis one another. Formally their relationship is the free and equal one of persons engaged in exchange in general. The fact that this form is a mere semblance, and a deceptive semblance, emerges as we look at the relations outside the juridical relation. . . . [The free worker] sells a particular expenditure of energy to a particular capitalist, whom he confronts independently as an individual. It is clear that this is not his relationship to the existence of capital as capital, i.e., to the capitalist class. However, as far as the actual individual person is concerned, he is thus allowed a wide field of choice and discretion, and therefore of formal freedom.

The reality is quite different from the semblance; as the contradictions of the system develop, "freedom and equality . . . shift into their opposites at times," and the same equality and freedom, when realized, "turn out to be inequality and unfreedom." For what is "free" under the free competition of capitalism? Not the individual; it is capital that is free. Free development is possible only within the narrow framework set by the dominance of capital.*

This kind of individual freedom is therefore at the same time the most complete abolition of all individual freedom and the complete subjugation of individuality to social conditions which take the form of objective forces. . . .

* The relevant passages, in this case from the Gründrisse manuscript, go as follows: Competition, writes Marx, has been foolishly represented as the absolute form of existence of free individuality in the sphere of production and exchange. Nothing can be falser. . . . It is not the individuals that are set free in free competition, but rather capital. . . . The dominance of capital is the presupposition for free competition, just as the Roman imperial despotism was the presupposition for the free Roman 'civil law.'

When capitalism begins to curb free competition, continues Marx, it heralds its own dissolution. Hence, for one thing, the ineptness of regarding free competition as the final development of human freedom, and negation of free competition as equivalent to negation of individual freedom and of social production based on individual freedom. It is nothing more than free development on a narrowly limited basis, on the basis of the dominance of capital.

This is followed by the next sentence quoted above.
The "freedom" of free trade has exactly the same content. Marx had pointed this out in 1848:

To sum up, what is free trade under the present condition of society? It is freedom of capital.

He [the worker] will see that capital become free will make him no less a slave than capital trammelled by customs duties.

Gentlemen! Do not allow yourselves to be deluded by the abstract word freedom. Whose freedom? It is not the freedom of one individual in relation to another, but the freedom of capital to crush the worker.\(^{30}\)

The "free" laborer sells himself under the coercion not of law but of the blind forces of the system:

It takes centuries ere the "free" laborer, thanks to the development of capitalist production, agrees, i.e., is compelled by social conditions, to sell the whole of his active life, his very capacity for work, for the price of the necessaries of life, his birthright for a mess of pottage.\(^{31}\)

There was a historical road which led from the economic claim of freedom and equality to the political struggle to make this come true. In *Anti-Dühring* Engels starts with the exposition of the foregoing ideas in *Capital*.\(^ {32}\) Then:

The demand for liberation from feudal fetters and the establishment of equality of rights by the abolition of feudal inequalities was bound soon to assume wider dimensions, once the economic advance of society had placed it on the order of the day. If it was raised in the interests of industry and trade, it was also necessary to demand the same equality of rights for the great mass of the peasantry who, in every degree of bondage, from total serfdom onwards, were compelled to give the greater part of their labor-time to their gracious feudal lord without compensation and in addition to render innumerable other dues to him and to the state. On the other hand, it was inevitable that a demand should also be made for the abolition of the feudal privileges, of the freedom from taxation of the nobility, of the political privileges of the separate estates. And as people were no longer living in a world empire such as the Roman Empire had been, but in a system of independent states dealing with each other on an equal footing and at approximately the same level of bourgeois development, it was a matter of course that the demand for equality
should assume a general character reaching out beyond the individual state, that freedom and equality should be proclaimed *human rights*.

The rise of the bourgeoisie brought with it the development of its shadow, the proletariat:

And in the same way bourgeois demands for equality were accompanied by proletarian demands for equality. From the moment when the bourgeois demand for the abolition of class *privileges* was put forward, alongside it appeared the proletarian demand for the abolition of the *classes themselves*—at first in religious form, leaning towards primitive Christianity, and later drawing support from the bourgeois equalitarian theories themselves. The proletarians took the bourgeoisie at its word: equality must not be merely apparent, must not apply merely to the sphere of the state, but must also be real, must also be extended to the social, economic sphere.

From the French Revolution on, the bourgeoisie put civil equality in the forefront, the proletariat social and economic equality:

The demand for equality in the mouth of the proletariat has therefore a double meaning. It is either—as was the case especially at the very start, for example in the Peasant War—the spontaneous reaction against the crying social inequalities; . . . as such it is simply an expression of the revolutionary instinct, and finds its justification in that and in that only. Or, on the other hand, this demand has arisen as a reaction against the bourgeois demand for equality, drawing more or less correct and more far-reaching demands from this bourgeois demand, and serving as an agitational means in order to stir up the workers against the capitalists with the aid of the capitalists' own assertions; and in this case it stands or falls with bourgeois equality itself. In both cases the real content of the proletarian demand for equality is the demand for the *abolition of classes.*

In this way, "the notion of human equality has already acquired the fixity of a popular prejudice" (as Marx put it), starting with the pretense of equality built into capitalism and going on to the political struggles for equality awakened by bourgeois aspirations.
3. LIBERALIZATION AND CONSTITUTIONALISM

The workers' struggles for the freedom and equality which the bourgeoisie had proclaimed had to take the form of political struggles, not merely ad hoc struggles at the point of production, insofar as the state was involved; and the state necessarily became involved every time the workers started moving as a class, if not before. Capitalism as a social system needed workers who were juridically free—free to sell their labor power to the capitalist, man to man, one to one, in all "equality"—but as soon as workers began organizing to exert collective pressures on the capitalist, they impaired the only freedom the capitalist recognized. Just as freedom of competition (in this case, freedom for all workers to compete among themselves for the available jobs) was damaged by workers' organization, so also was the principle of pure equality; for if even a dozen workers ganged up against one lone capitalist, was it not unequal? One could then argue the merits of the different interpretations of freedom and equality, with appropriate citations and arguments from the Bible, Rousseau, Plato, or other revered authorities; but since the interpretations were rooted not in mere ideologies but in class interests, they were irreconcilable in practice. The social questions at issue could be resolved only by the exertion of power, and the central reservoir of power in society lies in the state power.

The social question (the common label for the workers' aspirations and struggles for a better life) had to be fought out, sooner or later, on a large scale or small, in terms of control or influence over the state. Control, in the full-blown sense of dominance in the state, was of course an ultimate conclusion, which might or might not be consciously set: this bears on the level of consciousness which the political struggle reaches. But whatever the consciousness, the political struggle means that the classes below (that is, below the ruling classes) are striving to exert influence or pressure on the political power represented by the state.

The political forms of the struggle are, therefore, the means; the ends are the social (including economic) aspirations of the movement from below. It cannot be otherwise, no matter what the formal ideology states, since the state is normally not an end in itself but a means of ensuring class (social) power.
The mass pressure from below for channels of influence over the decisions of the state power breaks through in various forms, historically speaking. Let us distinguish two of them—liberalization and constitutionalism—from democratization as such.

**Liberalization**

This refers not to *liberalism* in its two modern senses but to the oscillation toward a "soft" internal policy instead of a "hard" one on the part of a despotic government which does not thereby give up its power to decide on one or the other.

There is no diffusion of political power necessarily involved; none institutionalized. Concessions (liberalizations) are handed down from above and can be retracted the same way. The concept often involves a distinction between good and bad rulers, or between the good ruler and his bad advisors. The good ruler *permits* previously impermissible activities, *tolerates* dissent within wider boundaries, deigns to oppress his subjects less; in short, takes a more liberal or tolerant line toward the employment of powers which are themselves not in question.

We have already seen that this was the political question confronting the young Marx at twenty-two, when the accession of Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1840 was expected to mean a more liberalized monarchy.⁳⁵ Here, as in other cases, the events showed how the role of the pattern was to ensure that aspirations for political change were channeled into hope in reforms from above.

The uses of liberalization, as a means of introducing an element of flexibility or "play" especially into formally rigid despotic regimes, were especially plain to Engels in the case of autocratic Russia. Particularly in the 1870s Russia seemed to be on the eve of an upheaval, as its problems multiplied. The pattern that invited the liberalization solution was characterized, on the one hand, by "an Oriental despotism whose arbitrariness we in the West simply cannot imagine," and on the other hand, by the fact that this despotism "from day to day comes into more glaring contradiction with the views of the enlightened classes and in particular with those of the rapidly developing bourgeoisie of the capital." In this situation, the autocracy,

in the person of its present bearer, has lost its head, one day making concessions to liberalism and the next, frightened, cancel-
ing them again and thus bringing itself more and more into disrepute.

Liberalization tends to become oscillatory because this kind of concession to mass pressure from below always points beyond itself. In the present case, there was

a growing recognition among the enlightened strata of the nation concentrated in the capital that this position is untenable, that a revolution is impending, and the illusion that it will be possible to guide this revolution into a smooth, constitutional channel.\(^{36}\)

Three years later, still on the Russian autocracy, Engels wrote a classic description of the pattern of liberalization:

"During the first years of Alexander's reign, the old imperial despotism had been somewhat relaxed; the press had been allowed more freedom, trial by jury established, and representative bodies, elected by the nobility, the citizens of the towns, and the peasants respectively, had been permitted to take some share in local and provincial administration. Even with the Poles some political flirtation had been carried on. But the public had misunderstood the benevolent intentions of the government. The press became too outspoken. The juries actually acquitted political prisoners which [sic] the government had expected them to convict against evidence. The local and provincial assemblies, one and all, declared that the government, by its act of emancipation [of the serfs], had ruined the country, and that things could not go on in that way any longer. A national assembly was even hinted at as the only means of getting out of troubles fast becoming insupportable. And finally, the Poles refused to be bamboozled with fine words, and broke out into a rebellion which it took all the forces of the empire, and all the brutality of the Russian generals, to quell in torrents of blood. Then the government turned round again. Stern repression once more became the order of the day. The press was muzzled, the political prisoners were handed over to special courts, consisting of judges packed [sic] for the purpose, the local and provincial assemblies were ignored.

Again, Engels describes how liberalization, and oscillations from liberalization, brought other consequences in train. He continues:

But it was too late. The government, having once shown signs of fear, had lost its prestige. The belief in its stability, and in its
power of absolutely crushing all internal resistance, had gone. The germ of a future public opinion had sprung up. The forces could not be brought back to the former implicit obedience to government dictation. Discussion of public matters, if only in private circles, had become a habit among the educated classes. And finally, the government, with all its desire to return to the unbridled despotism of the reign of Nicholas, still pretended to keep up, before the eyes of Europe, the appearances of the liberalism initiated by Alexander. The consequence was a system of vacillation and hesitation, of concessions made to-day and retracted to-morrow, to be again half-conceded and half-retracted in turns, a policy changing from hour to hour, bringing home to everybody the intrinsic weakness, the want of insight and of will, on the part of a government which was nothing unless it was possessed of a will and of the means to enforce it. What was more natural than that every day should increase the contempt felt for a government which, long since known to be powerless for good and obeyed only through fear, now proved that it doubted of its power of maintaining its own existence, that it had at least as much fear of the people as the people had of it?  

In both of the passages we have just quoted, it is clear that the first danger of liberalization is that it sharpens the people's appetite for the next obvious step: the legal institutionalization of the concessions, especially constitutionalism; and this in turn points to democratization.

About twenty years before, still in connection with Russia, Engels had described another aspect of the liberalization pattern: its use to balance class against class, for a temporary objective. Alexander II, aiming to put through some sort of emancipation of the serfs in order to shore up the long-range interests of the autocracy, naturally fell afoul of the social strata on which he directly based his rule: "the nobility and that very bureaucracy which he intended to reform against its own will, and which at the same time was to serve as the instrument of his designs." How could he counterbalance the antagonistic pressure of these two ruling strata?

To support him [explains Engels], he had nothing but the traditionary passive obedience of that inert mass of Russian serfs and merchants which had hitherto been excluded from the right even of thinking about their political condition. To make their support available, he was compelled to create a kind of public opinion, and at least the shadow of a press. Accordingly, the
censorship was relaxed, and civil, well-intentioned and well-behaved discussion was invited; even slight and polite criticisms of the acts of public officers were permitted. The degree of liberty of debate now [1858] existing in Russia would seem ridiculously small in any country of Europe except France [under Bonaparte]; but still, to people who knew the Russia of Nicholas, the step in advance appears enormous, and, combined with the difficulties necessarily arising from the emancipation of the serfs, this awakening to political life of the more educated classes of Russia is full of good omens.

In this connection, Engels thinks back to the Europe before 1848, when there was a political revival of bourgeois-democratic opposition. The year 1846 "was also distinguished by a number of reforming princes, who, two years afterward, were carried away helplessly by the rush of the revolutionary torrent which they had let loose." 38

Liberalization, as one side of the hard-soft oscillation, is typically a recourse of autocracies and authoritarian regimes; since there is only one organized political center, at the summit of the state, only it can oscillate. But in bourgeois democracies, the hard-soft oscillation can be acted out as a division of labor by different parties of the establishment. This points to the connection between the liberalization phase of autocracies and the liberal wing of democracies.

Marx discussed this especially in terms of the English party system. Writing in mid-nineteenth century, when the Tory-Whig division was breaking up in the process of giving way to the oncoming Conservative-Liberal duality, Marx posed the question: what had been the historical difference between Tories and Whigs? Both were clearly controlled by the aristocracy, the Tories by the "squirearchy," the Whigs by the "great families." Yet it was the latter, whose nucleus was "the oldest, richest, and most arrogant portion of English landed property," that radiated the liberal aura.

Marx saw the traditional Tory party (leaving aside here its subsequent remodeling) as the benighted, backward-looking, reactionary or troglodyte sector of the aristocracy, blinkered by short-sighted interest; and the Whigs as the "enlightened" sector—that is, those who understood that the aristocracy could still hang on to the helm of the state and keep the bourgeoisie out of governmental power only by itself appearing as the representative of bourgeois interests to the extent necessary to keep the bourgeoisie docile. Thus the Whigs could take over when there was danger of the bourgeois hotheads getting out of
Part II: The Theory of the State

hand, for example, backing a party of their own against both wings of the aristocracy.*

The Whigs, the oligarchs, are enlightened and have never hesitated to cast off prejudices which stand in the way of their hereditary tenure of state office. The Whigs have always prevented any movement within the middle classes by offering their friendship; the Tories have always driven the mass of the people into the arms of the middle classes with their friendship, having already placed the middle classes at the disposal of the Whigs. . . . If one reviews the whole of English history since the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, one finds that all the laws directed against the mass of the people have been initiated by the Whigs. . . . But Whig reaction has always been in harmony with the middle classes. Tory reaction has been directed even more against the middle classes than against the mass of the people. Hence the liberal reputation of the Whigs.40

In the later version, the bipartisan oscillation took the working class as its client, or target.

In sum: liberalization is a reflection, a distorted reflection, of popular pressures from below; but it is not a form in which these pressures express themselves—it is, rather, a form for containing these pressures. If that effort is unsuccessful, then, from historical hindsight, a stage of liberalization may appear as a step in the direction of a subsequent democratization. But precisely because it is a form for containing pressures rather than expressing them, liberalization is typically the objective result not of a movement which sets liberalization as its goal, but of a movement which threatens the state power itself. For unless such a threat is operative, the state power will not consider liberalization as a lesser evil or a temporary holding action.

What follows is an apparently paradoxical principle of politics: a movement which is merely for liberalization can never attain its goal without going beyond itself. We will see this pattern apply in other types of cases too.

Constitutionalism

If the liberalizing despot offers no guarantee of political rights, the

* This question will be pursued somewhat more fully, and from a different angle, in Chapter 14. The summary of Marx's view above is from an article published in 1852.39
answer must be sought in laws; but as we have seen, the liberalizer may also offer liberalized laws, which are as uncertain as their source. The answer is the demand for a constitution, which, to be meaningful, must be formally above the governing power, not subject to change by its laws or decrees.

Even in 1840, when the young Marx was first involved in the hopes for a liberalized monarchy under Friedrich Wilhelm IV, the real hope was that the new king would eventually grant a constitution—that is, wax so liberal as to voluntarily give up his absolute powers. Though this illusion was quickly destroyed, the bourgeois democrats' aspiration still remained a constitution—any kind of constitution, to begin with. As editor of the democratic Rheinische Zeitung in 1842, Marx wrote what every good democrat believed:

In general I do not believe that persons should be guarantees against laws; rather I believe that laws must be guarantees against persons. . . . But no one, not even the best legislator, ought to put his own person above his law. 41

A government of laws, not men, is, to be sure, an elementary principle of freedom; for the bourgeois-democratic constitutionalists it was an end-aim in itself, rather than merely a step toward a more basic democratization. This was the counterposition in the revolutionary period of 1848–1849. The "Marx party" around the Neue Rheinische Zeitung fought for a constitution, but refused to be satisfied with a caricature of a constitution which, furthermore, was "octroyed" by the king—that is, handed down from above, hence retractable from above. On the other hand, the constitutional liberals in the National Assembly were too flabby to fight for the constitution they desired. When it did come to an armed struggle in the 1849 German campaign for a Reich Constitution, Engels took up the gun too.

A constitutional (bourgeois-liberal) government would raise the social struggle to the next higher level. Thus Marx said on the eve of 1848 that "One declares oneself an enemy of the constitutional regime without thereby declaring oneself a friend of the old regime," 42 for the struggle against the former could be carried on all the more clearly once the latter was wiped off the agenda.

But there are constitutions and constitutions. Constitutionalism of any sort is only an elementary step toward democratization of political life, and democracy in turn is a goal not only in constitutional terms but also outside the framework of constitutional forms.
In Part I we saw how the development of Marx's political views intertwined a number of key problems. Prominent among them was the problem of democracy in all its shifting meanings. This will continue to be true throughout the ensuing chapters, for democracy is not a single problem but a complex of problems that permeates many other subjects.

Indeed, in a general way, Marx's socialism (communism) as a political program may be most quickly defined, from the Marxist standpoint, as the complete democratization of society, not merely of political forms.* But the democratic movement of the nineteenth century began by putting the struggle for advanced political forms in the forefront; and so did Marx, in a different programmatic context. For Marx, the fight for democratic forms of government—democratization in the state—was a leading edge of the socialist effort; not its be-all and end-all but an integral part of it all.

Throughout the history of the socialist and communist movements, one of the persistent problems has been establishing the relation, in theory and practice, between the struggle for socialism and for democracy (or democratic rights), between socialist issues and democratic

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* As a liberal critic of Marx, A. D. Lindsay, put it from his own viewpoint: the Liberal, if to be a Liberal is to believe in democracy, must explain why he will not extend democracy to the government of the collective labourer and become a socialist. Socialism is for Marx essentially the democratization of the collective labourer. Because it was that, he regarded it as inevitable; for a society in which "the notion of human equality has already acquired the fixity of a popular prejudice," and in which the prevailing form of production is social and involves government, is already in principle committed to it.
issues. Every distinctive socialist current or school has had its own characteristic answer to this problem. On one extreme end of the spectrum is the view (held consciously in theory or expressed in practice) that puts the advocacy of democratic forms in the forefront, for their own sake, and subjoins the advocacy of socialistic ideas as an appurtenance. (From the Marxist standpoint, this is merely the leftmost wing of bourgeois-democratic liberalism extruding into the socialist spectrum.) On the other extreme is the type of radical ideology that counterposes socialistic ideas—in the sense of anticapitalist views—against concern with democratic struggles, considering the latter as unimportant or harmful. Every conceivable mixture of the two approaches has cropped up too, but they all form a single family insofar as they are mixtures.

Marx's approach is qualitatively different from this sort of eclecticism, and does not attempt to establish a sliding scale of concern with the two sides of the duality. For him, the task of theory is to integrate the two objectively. The characteristic answer to the problem emerging from Marx's theory was already heralded in his notebook critique of Hegel's philosophy of right, where he sought to show that "true democracy" requires a new social content—socialism; and it will be rounded off with his analysis of the Paris Commune, which showed that a state with a new social content entailed truly democratic forms. Marx's theory moves in the direction of defining consistent democracy in socialist terms, and consistent socialism in democratic terms. The task of theory, then, is not to adjudicate a clash between the two considerations (a hopeless job once the problem is seen in that light), but rather to grasp the social dynamics of the situation under which the apparent contradiction between the two is resolved.

Marx did not simply work this out within his skull; progress toward a solution came only in the course of the first historical experience which he went through in which this problem was concretely posed. This was the period of the 1848-1849 revolution, when democratic demands and socialist aims seemed to be at sword's point. One of the results was his so-called theory of permanent revolution: we will follow this process in some detail in the next volume, and the problem will remain with us throughout.

The present chapter makes only a beginning by examining some of the more elementary aspects of the question.
1. AGAINST “THE OLD THESIS”

From the start there was the problem of self-styled radicals who held the same attitude of hostility and contempt for democratic forms that emanated from the old regime, though presumably from an opposite direction. This is an aspect of the almost unanimous antidemocracy of pre-Marxist socialism. 3 When Marx referred to it in *The German Ideology*, he already called it contemptuously “the old thesis”: “The old thesis, which has often been put forward both by revolutionaries and reactionaries, that in a democracy individuals only exercise their sovereignty for a moment, and then at once retreat from their rule...” 4 (The polemic here is against the anarchoid Stirner.) This was only one favorite antidemocratic argument among many, one which flourishes today as lustily as two centuries ago. Marx gave them all short shrift, in the apparent belief (wrong, as it turned out) that they were simply vestiges of the past and had no future.*

This rejection of anything connected with bourgeois democracy would later become associated mainly with ultraleft radicalism, but its beginnings were another matter. Engels described a case in a letter to Marx from Paris, where he was trying to work with one K. L. Bernays, an editor of the Paris *Vorwärts*, the German émigré paper. Bernays insists on writing antibourgeois articles for a Berlin paper which is antibourgeois from a reactionary (absolutist) standpoint.

He writes in the *Berliner Zeitungs-Halle* and rejoices like a child to see his *soi-disant* communist expectorations against the bourgeois printed there. Naturally the editors and the censorship let

* An example: Among the backward-looking antidemocrats that Marx ran into was the maverick David Urquhart, against whom Marx warned in an article:

There is another clique of “wise men” emerging in England who are discontented with the Government and the ruling classes as much as with the Chartists. What do the Chartists want? they exclaim. They want to increase and extend the omnipotence of Parliament by elevating it to people’s power. They are not breaking up parliamentarism but are raising it to a higher power. The right thing to do is to break up the representative system! A wise man from the East, *David Urquhart*, heads that clique. 5

Marx goes on to explain that Urquhart wants to turn the clock back on civilization, to return to the old Anglo-Saxon conditions, “or, better still, to the Oriental state,” to localism, to economic conditions prior to the modern division of labor and concentrated capital. The subject of social tendencies hostile to both capitalism and the proletariat is reserved for separate consideration.
stand whatever is simply against the bourgeois and strike out the few allusions that could be offensive to themselves too. He rails against the jury system, "bourgeois freedom of the press," the representative system, etc. I explain to him that this means working literally *pour le roi de Prusse* and indirectly against our party. . . . I make clear that the *Zeitungs-Halle* is in the pay of the government. . . .

"Working *pour le roi de Prusse* [for the king of Prussia]" meant, in French idiom, working for nothing; but Engels argued that Bernays was unwittingly working for the Prussian regime literally, since publishing attacks on democratic institutions in absolutist Prussia only helped the regime discredit the democratic movement. But, continued Engels, Bernays, agush with sentimentality, could understand none of this; he could not comprehend, he said, an approach that went easy on people he had always hated, namely the bourgeoisie. Engels added:

I have read umpteen of these Paris-dateline articles [by Bernays]; they are *on ne peut plus* [to the fullest extent possible] in the interest of the government and in the style of True-Socialism.

Marx's and Engels' approach to the question of democratic forms (rights, liberties, institutions, and so on) was completely different. The reason a type like Bernays could not comprehend their approach was that his socialism, such as it was, was merely anticapitalist and not proproletarian; it was not a theory about a class movement but simply a predilection for a certain social reorganization. It had nothing to do with putting power in the hands of the masses of people, but rather looked to any men of good will who wanted to make the changes envisaged. For such a man, popular control over government could be a danger, since the stupid masses might well be more hostile to his schemes than enlightened souls.

*Popular control over government:* in the middle of the nineteenth century it was much clearer than it is today that the problem of democracy was the effective establishment of full popular control over government, for the simple reason that no government (except perhaps the American) pretended that this happy state of affairs already existed. It had not yet become necessary or fashionable to redefine democracy out of existence; it was therefore quite common, in those benighted days, for enemies of popular sovereignty to attack the
democratic idea openly and forthrightly, instead of embracing it in a crushing vise. For the democratic extremist, popular control meant *unlimited* popular control, the elimination of all juridical, structural, and socioeconomic restraints on or distortions of popular control from below. For Marx, this is why popular control pointed to socialism.

But in a country which had not yet had its 1789, like Germany, the extension of popular control still had to pass through its bourgeois phase; under semifeudal absolutism, the bourgeoisie was a part of the popular masses too, even if a limited and privileged part. For Marx, the problem resolved itself into this: how to pass through this phase—through and *out*—in such a way as to shift power to the underlying working strata of the population as expeditiously as possible. This is what will define the problem of the "permanent revolution."

At any rate, from the standpoint of this theoretical approach Bernays' inability to see more than his hatred of the bourgeois system did not mean that he hated the bourgeoisie more than Marx; it was a reflection of his nonclass point of view. Marx did not have to weigh hatred of the bourgeoisie against the advantages of bourgeois democracy—an impossible calculus. It was rather a matter of making a class analysis of the elements of bourgeois democracy: sorting out what was specifically bourgeois (for example, property qualifications for voting) from what furthered the widest extension of popular control.*

In this chapter we will be concerned with some aspects of democratic *forms* in government—the state forms of democracy—leaving more basic problems for later treatment.

2. FOR REVOLUTION AND DEMOCRACY

The revolutions of 1848-1849 temporarily established bourgeois-democratic governments in both France and Germany, the two coun-

* In this explanation we have used democracy and democratic in their modern sense; but in mid-nineteenth century, especially on the Continent before 1848, the democratic forms involved were more commonly labeled "liberties," specific freedoms (freedom of press, expression, and so on), specific rights (right of organization or association), "popular" institutions, including popular sovereignty, and so on. The variable meaning of the word democracy was discussed in Chapter 3.
tries with which Marx was mainly concerned. These governments were bourgeois and more or less democratic as compared with the previous regimes; they therefore raised innumerable concrete problems of what political forms should clothe democratization. In the case of Germany, Marx's and Engels' articles in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (NRZ) had to deal with many problems day by day, not merely in historical hindsight; hence they took up smaller-scale questions than are usually found in their synoptic analyses of the events in France.

The overall criterion is: What will maximize the influence exercised from below, by the masses in movement, on the political forces above? These political forces were two above all: the monarchist regime and its government, which was still the executive, though now on the defensive; and the representatives of the people in the assemblies established by the revolutionary upsurge. The latter represented the potentiality of popular sovereignty, that is, democratic control by the people. But when the National Assembly, elected from the various German states, met in Frankfurt on May 18, it showed that the bourgeois-democratic delegates shrank from a clash with the monarchy. In the first issue of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, on June 1, Engels summarized the situation:

Since two weeks ago, Germany has a national constituent assembly which is the product of a vote by the whole German people.

The German people had won its sovereignty in the streets of almost all the big and little cities of the country, especially on the barricades of Vienna and Berlin. It had exercised this sovereignty in the elections for the National Assembly.

The first act of the National Assembly had to be to proclaim this sovereignty of the German people loudly and publicly.

Its second act had to be to work out a German constitution on the basis of the sovereignty of the people, and to get rid of everything in the actually existing state of affairs in Germany which contradicts the principle of the sovereignty of the people.

All during its session it had to take the necessary measures to thwart all efforts by the reaction, to maintain the revolutionary grounds on which it stands, to secure the revolution's conquest, the sovereignty of the people, against all attacks.

The German National Assembly has now already held a dozen sessions and has done nothing of all this.

Instead, continued Engels, the authorities still violate the rights of citizens with impunity, while the Assembly pays more attention to its dinner hours than to its democratic tasks.8

As the year wore on, even the Frankfurt left, the consciously liberal wing, showed what little stomach it had for a fight with the real state power headed by the Crown. In a later article on the assembly's deliberations, Engels quotes the liberal deputy Ruge* as an example of empty rhetoric: "We do not want to quarrel, gentlemen," Ruge told the Assembly, "over whether we aim at a democratic monarchy, a democratized monarchy [!] or a pure democracy; on the whole we want the same thing, liberty, popular liberty, the rule of the people!" (The emphasis and interpolated exclamation are by Engels.) With much disgust Engels comments that this speaks volumes about a so-called left which says it wants the same thing as the right, and "which forgets everything as soon as it hears a couple of hollow catchwords like popular liberty and rule of the people." 10

As the government tried "to cheat the revolution of its democratic fruits,"11 the NRZ was the loudest voice raised in Germany. In July the government suppressed the club movement in two cities; Engels warned:

You believe you have finished with the police state? Delusion!—You believe you possess the right of free assembly, freedom of the press, arming of the people, and other fine slogans that were shouted from the March barricades? Delusion, nothing but delusion!12

As the government was in process of chopping off the "democratic fruits" of the revolution, a militia bill was proposed which would restrict the rights of its citizen members to nearly nothing. Marx asked: What does this mean for the citizen militiaman?

The worthy man has gotten arms and uniform on the condition of renouncing above all his prime political rights, the right to organize, etc. His task of protecting "constitutional liberty" will be fulfilled in accordance with the "spirit of his destiny" when he

* This is the same Arnold Ruge who, five years before, had been Marx's coeditor of the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, complaining that the German people were hopelessly apathetic and could never make a revolution (see Chapter 6). He was prominent among those who helped to fulfill his prophecy. By the 1870s he wound up on the pension rolls of the far-from-apathetic Bismarck.9
blindly executes the orders of the authorities, when he exchanges the customary civil liberty that was tolerated even under the absolute monarchy for the passive, will-less and self-less obedience of the soldier. A fine school in which to bring up the republicans of the future! . . . What has our citizen been made into? A thing somewhere between a Prussian gendarme and an English constable. . . . Instead of disbanding the army into the people, wasn't it an original idea to disband the people into the army?

It is truly a bizarre spectacle, this transformation of constitutional phrases into Prussian realities. 13

The NRZ carried on other campaigns for democratic rights against government pressure, including the Frankfurt left's program for "immediate establishment, proclamation, and guarantee of the fundamental rights of the German people against all possible attacks by the individual governments [of the German states]." It criticized the Assembly liberals for being too vague on the issue of direct suffrage versus indirect suffrage, and denounced all antidemocratic forms of elections. 14

For Marx and Engels, the right of assembly also meant the right of the people to exercise pressure against their "own" representatives. This came into question when the right-wing press denounced the pressure put on the Prussian Assembly in Berlin by the presence of thousands at its deliberations. Marx wrote:

The right of the democratic mass of the people to exert a moral influence on the attitude of the constituent assembly is an old revolutionary right of the people which, since the English and French revolutions, could not be dispensed with in any period of stormy action. It is to this right that history owes almost all energetic steps taken by such assemblies. If . . . the fainthearted and philistine friends of "freedom of deliberations" wail against it, the only basis they have is that they don't want any energetic decisions taken anyway.

This alleged "freedom of deliberations" is infringed, argued Marx, on the one side by the pressures from the existing state and its army, courts, and so on. And likewise "The 'freedom of deliberations' is infringed by freedom of the press, by freedom of assembly and speech, by the right of the people to bear arms" on the other side, since these too exercise unwanted pressure on the representatives. Between the two
species of intimidation, the representatives have only this choice: "Intimidation by the unarmed people or intimidation by the armed soldiery: let the Assembly choose."  

In March 1849 the Crown was emboldened to put forward a brace of new bills to throttle democratic rights. They provide an early handbook of devices to stifle democracy by indirection; and Marx’s denunciation ticked them off down to seemingly trivial details. Here is a partial list of what especially excited his indignation:

- Twenty-four-hour advance notice was required for meetings. "Thus," wrote Marx, "meetings called quickly when important events suddenly take place are suppressed—and such meetings are precisely the most important ones."

- Charging admission to defray the cost of a meeting was banned (thereby making it harder for workers to finance their activity) and nonmembers were guaranteed a quarter of the seats (to enable police agents to create disturbances, explained Marx).

- Police got the right to dissolve a meeting immediately on any pretext.

- The red-tape weapon: clubs "have such a mass of advance notices and formalities to fill out with the local authorities that for this reason alone their existence is made half-impossible."

- Out-of-doors meetings required advance approval by the police.

- Political posters were banned.

- Jail was decreed for a number of new crimes of simple speech: attacks on "the foundations of bourgeois society based on property or the family"; incitement to "hatred" among citizens; motivating "hatred or contempt against institutions of the state or government" by "untrue" statements; lèse majesté, including offenses against the "respect" due to royalty and princes; even "true" statements if used as "intentional" insults against members of the government or armed forces; even "insults or slanders" made in privacy.  

Marx summed this pattern up: "We are to become Prussians at all costs—Prussians after the heart of His Most Gracious Majesty, replete with the Prussian civil code, aristocratic arrogance, bureaucratic tyranny, the rule of the saber, floggings, censorship, and obedience to orders."
3. FREE PRESS AND CLASS STRUGGLE

The difference between hollow rhetoric about liberty and a real revolutionary democratic struggle could only be spelled out in terms of concrete issues. One of the most elementary and basic was the issue that had been the first subject of Marx's political pen, freedom of the press. From the first number of the NRZ, Marx and Engels made this a major battle cry.  

The government, wrote Marx, is trying to apply the penal code provisions against so-called slander in order to prevent any criticism of the regime. Indeed, if a paper protests that the government is curbing freedom of the press, that is punishable as a slander even if it is true.* This application of the penal code means

the real, definitive finish-blow to the 19th of March [the revolution], to the clubs, and to freedom of the press! What is a club without freedom of speech? And what is freedom of speech with Sections 367, 368, 370 of the Penal Code? And what is the 19th of March without clubs and freedom of speech?  

As this already indicates, freedom of the press could hardly be separated from freedom of expression in all its forms. The whole existence of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung was a battle for survival against government suppression. Haled into court, Marx, Engels, and others of the group were acquitted by a Cologne jury, after defense speeches that were mainly political expositions; but when the counter-revolution gained confidence, the paper was suppressed by simple decree. In the court case—as Engels wrote much later—they attacked "the monstrous notion that anyone can place himself outside the common law by maintaining an opinion. This is the pure police state. . . ."  

As the NRZ began its third week, Engels asked what the revolution

* Marx was also acquainted with the government device of allegedly suppressing only "false" statements by the press. This became prominent under the Bonaparte dictatorship in France, which claimed to be for freedom of the press to tell the truth but not its freedom to tell lies. In an 1858 article Marx derisively quoted the Bonapartist press: "The duty of the press is to enlighten the public, and not deceive it," and demonstrated that this was only a façade for the principle that the duty of the press is to obey the government's orders on how to deceive the public.
had won, besides bringing the big bourgeoisie to governmental power: "It gave the people the weapon of freedom of the press without security bonds, the right of organization,* and partly at least also the material weapon, the musket," he answered. Marx and Engels saw freedom of the press as a barometer of governmental arbitrariness, among other things. When the Hansemann ministry submitted an interim law to regulate the press, that is, to muzzle criticism, Marx wrote that "in short, we again meet the most classic monuments to the Napoleonic despotism over the press," and

From the day this law goes into effect, government officials can with impunity commit any arbitrary act, any tyranny, any illegality; they can calmly administer or permit floggings, or make arrests, or hold without trial; the only effective control, the press, is rendered ineffectual. On the day this law goes into effect, the bureaucracy can hold a celebration: it becomes more powerful and unrestrained, stronger than it was before March.

When the Crown unleashed a new attack on freedom of the press in March 1849, Marx's paper published an important statement by Engels on the relation of democratic freedoms to the class struggle. It explained why the government found itself compelled to suppress freedom of the press:

The existing government and the constitutional monarchy in general cannot maintain themselves nowadays in civilized countries if the press is free. Freedom of the press, the free competition of opinions—this means giving free rein to the class struggle in the field of the press. And the [Law and] Order that they crave so much—this means precisely stifling the class struggle and muzzling the oppressed class. This is why the party of Quiet and Order must abolish the free competition of opinions in the press; it must assure itself as much as possible of the monopoly of the marketplace, by press laws, interdictions, etc.; particularly must it directly suppress, wherever possible, the cost-free literature of the wall posters and giveaway leaflets.

In the marketplace of freely competing opinions, argued Engels, the oppressors will lose; therefore they must establish their own monopoly to replace free competition. (It follows, contrariwise, that suppression of the free press is a confession of political bankruptcy.)

* Literally, the right of association; so throughout.
As the above passage indicates, Engels made a special point of a freedom not often spotlighted: the revolutionary and class meaning of the wall poster as a channel of communication with the masses. The liberals who opposed the poster ban, reported Engels, shied away from making a forthright defense of this "street literature," and of the right of workers to this cost-free forum. But the authorities considered the poster form of communication as inherently inflammatory in the urban situation where it spoke to a concentrated proletariat:

The posters [explained Engels] are a principal means of affecting the proletariat; the proletariat is revolutionary by virtue of its total situation; the proletariat—the oppressed class under the constitutional regime as well as under the absolutist regime—is only too ready to take up arms once again; it is precisely from the side of the proletarians that the main danger threatens; and therefore away with everything that could keep revolutionary passion alive in the proletariat!

And what contributes more to keeping revolutionary passion alive among the workers than precisely the posters, which transform every street corner into a big newspaper in which the workers passing by find the events of the day recorded and interpreted and the various viewpoints presented and debated, where they simultaneously meet people of all classes and opinions brought together and can discuss the posters with them; in short, where they possess a newspaper and a club in one, and all this without it costing them a penny. 25

In the marketplace of opinions, posters were the working class's special medium, hence a special anathema to "the dictatorship of the saber" that Engels saw behind the new Crown measures.

4. THE MAXIMIZATION OF DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

But should a government permit activities, even such as are sanctified by democratic rights, which may result in its own overthrow? Marx's and Engels' answer was: If the exercise of the people's rights endangers the government, then so much the worse for the government. Governments have a habit of believing that activities dangerous to them are infringements on liberty—namely, their own liberty to exist. Marx
did not believe that the people were called on to sacrifice their own rights in order to relieve the government's problem:

The "Ministry of Action" [Hansemann ministry] seems to espouse peculiar oriental-mystical notions, a kind of Moloch cult. In order to protect the "constitutional liberty" of presidents, burgomasters, police chiefs [a long list of government officials follows here] ... in order to protect the "constitutional liberty" of this élite of the nation, all the rest of the nation must let its constitutional liberties, up to and including personal liberty, die a bloody death as a sacrifice on the altar of the fatherland. Pends-toi, Figaro! Tu n'aurais pas inventé cela!*

The next day's NRZ had a similar comment by Engels on another issue. A motion by the left liberal deputy Jacoby had proposed that the Assembly's decisions have the force of law without anyone else's consent: a crucial issue of the revolution. Deputy Berg had denounced this as the attempt by a parliamentary minority to win outside support, an attempt whose consequences "must lead to civil war." But, replied Engels, the "outsiders" who must not be appealed to—who were they? "The voters, that is, the people who make the legislative body."

In a word: Herr Berg's principle would lead to the abolition of all political agitation. Agitation is nothing more than the application of representatives' immunity, freedom of the press, right to organize—that is, the liberties now juridically in existence in Prussia. Whether these liberties do or do not lead to civil war is not our concern; it is enough that they exist, and we shall see where it "leads" if the attack on them continues.

A week later, the question came up again, on an even more fateful issue. Local Democratic Associations were being suppressed by the governments, first in Stuttgart and Heidelberg, now in Baden; this made a mockery of the Assembly's phrases about the right to organize.

The basic condition [wrote Engels] of the free right of organization is that no association or society can be dissolved or prohibited by the police, that this can take place only as a result of a judicial verdict establishing the illegality of the association or of its acts and aims and punishing the authors of these acts.

What was the government's ground?

* This catchline, adapted from Beaumarchais, amounts to a sarcastic "What a brilliant idea!"
The motivations given for this new act of police violence are extremely edifying. The associations wanted to affiliate to the organization of Democratic Associations for all Germany, set up by the Democratic Congress at Frankfurt. This congress "set a democratic republic as its goal" (as if that is forbidden!) "and the means envisaged to attain this goal flow, among other things, from the sympathy expressed in those resolutions in favor of the agitators" (since when is "sympathy" an illegal "means"?)...

According to Herr Mathy [liberal Baden politician], the associations in Baden are therefore responsible for the resolutions of the Central Committee [of the Democratic Associations] even if they have not put them into practice.

Mathy had argued further that it "seems inadmissible and pernicious for the foundation of the constitution to be undermined and thus the whole state structure shaken by the associations' power." Engels commented:

The right to organize, Herr Mathy, exists precisely so that one can "undermine" the constitution with impunity—in legal form, of course. And if the associations' power is greater than that of the state, so much the worse for the state! 29

Another vital issue on which the NRZ hit hard was a corollary of the sovereignty of the people, namely the sovereignty of the Assembly elected by the people, as against the power of the government set up by the Crown. The revolution had given rise to two lines of power which were diverging, wrote Engels:

The results of the revolution were, on one hand, the arming of the people, the right of organization, the de facto achievement of popular sovereignty; on the other, the maintenance of the monarchy and the Camphausen–Hansemann ministry, that is, the government of the representatives of the big bourgeoisie.

The revolution thus had two series of results which necessarily had to diverge. The people had been victorious, they had won freedoms of a decisively democratic nature; but the immediate ruling power passed not into their hands but into the big bourgeoisie's.

In short, the revolution was not completed. 30

Marx's and Engels' line was strongly for all power to the Assembly as the representation of popular sovereignty, as against the Assembly majority's goal of a deal with the Crown. The Jacoby motion, previously mentioned, that the Assembly's decisions should have the force
of law without further ado, was a *sine qua non*. It would be incredible to other peoples, wrote Engels, that the German assembly had to debate a motion asserting that it is sovereign with respect to the government. “But we are in the land of the oak and linden, and so we should not be easily astonished by anything.” The Assembly was “irresolute, flabby, and lackadaisical.”

Marx presented the revolutionary-democratic proposal in terms of the concentration of both legislative and governmental (executive) power in the hands of the people’s elected representatives. The Radical wing of the Assembly, he wrote, was calling for a governmental executive “elected for a period determined by the National Assembly and responsible to it.” But that was not enough. This executive power must be selected out of the ranks of the Assembly itself, as was demanded by the left-wingers among the Radicals. Since the National Assembly was a constituent body—that is, no constitution as yet existed—there could be no government except the Assembly itself: “it is the National Assembly itself that must govern.” Above all, it must take the initiative away from the governments of the German states:

A national constituent assembly must above all be an activist, revolutionary-activist assembly. The assembly in Frankfurt does parliamentary school-exercises and lets the governments act. Supposing that this learned council succeeds after the maturest deliberations in figuring out the best agenda and the best constitution, what were the good of the best agenda and the best constitution if in the meantime the governments put the bayonet on the agenda?

This course was driven home as the *NRZ* analyzed the Assembly debates. If the Assembly declined to take over all the powers of the state, if in particular it was even deprived of the right to exercise control over the executive through its commissions of inquiry, then this amounted to “a renunciation of the sovereignty of the people.” The issue of the deputies’ immunity from arrest by the government was one very concrete aspect of the question of sovereignty: the *NRZ* campaigned for full and unabridged immunity with no loopholes.

But in fact, instead of the Assembly’s taking over executive power, it was the governmental power that used every means to strengthen itself. Marx used the Militia Bill as an example: the idea of a popular militia was converted into a plan for a bureaucratic force.
Prussian perspicacity has nosed out that every new constitutional institution offers a most interesting occasion for new penal laws, new regulations, new disciplinary measures, new surveillance, new chicanery, and a new bureaucracy.\textsuperscript{37}

This reflects a leitmotiv of Marx's attitude toward the problems of democratization: minimization of the executive power, the state bureaucracy—maximization of the weight in the governmental structure of the representative system. And not only in the period of revolution.

5. ANALYSIS OF A CONSTITUTION

It was in the decade following the defeat of the 1848-1849 revolutions that Marx wrote most extensively on specific problems of constitutional democratic forms. What emerged particularly was this principle: one of the chief marks of a truly democratic constitution was the degree to which it limited and restrained the independent scope of the executive power.

This follows naturally from the view that democracy is genuine insofar as it means popular control from below. Let us see how the point is made in a number of rather detailed criticisms which Marx made of particular constitutions.

The first such constitutional analysis by Marx, written in 1851, dealt with "The Constitution of the French Republic Adopted November 4, 1848."\textsuperscript{*} The main fraud in this constitution, repeatedly pointed out by Marx, is that it leaves room for its alleged democratic guarantees to be nullified by subsequent laws put through by the governmental power.

Here is his first example of the type of provision which pretends to establish a democratic right but vitiates itself by allowing for "exceptions made by law":

\textsuperscript{*} This article was written by Marx for Ernest Jones's paper as part of a series on "The Constitutions of Europe." It is therefore very specifically concerned with the exact provisions of the document, thus providing a supplement to the broader political analysis of this constitution which Marx had written the year before, in his Class Struggles in France.\textsuperscript{38} A year later, Marx, reviewing the same history in The Eighteenth Brumaire, included the constitutional points too, as discussed below.
"Sec. 3. The residence of every one on French territory is inviolable—and it is not allowed to enter it otherwise than in the forms prescribed by law."

Observe here and throughout that the French constitution guarantees liberty, but always with the proviso of exceptions made by law, or which may STILL BE MADE! Another provision ensures freedom of association, opinion, press, and so on, but adds, "The enjoyment of these rights has no other limit, than the equal rights of others, and the public safety." Marx points to the last phrase as the joker: "That the limitation made by the public safety, takes away the enjoyment of the right altogether, is clearly shewn by the following facts...." Marx then cites what actually happened in France.

Again, the constitution says "The right of tuition is free." Marx comments: "Here the old joke is repeated. 'Tuition is free,' but 'under the conditions fixed by law,' and these are precisely the conditions that take away the freedom altogether." And so on. Marx sums up the character of this constitution:

... from beginning to end it is a mass of fine words, hiding a most treacherous design. From its very wording, it is rendered impossible to violate it, for every one of its provisions contains its own antithesis—utterly nullifies itself. For instance: "the vote is direct and universal,"—"excepting those cases which the law shall determine."

The repeated formula is that this or that freedom shall be determined by an "organic law" to be adopted—"and these 'organic laws' 'determine' the promised freedom by destroying it." The following year Marx incorporated the substance of this review of the French constitutional device in his Eighteenth Brumaire. After making the point and giving some examples, Marx writes that the "organic laws" regulated all the liberties granted "in such manner that the bourgeoisie in its enjoyment of them finds itself unhindered by the equal rights of the other classes." For anything that contravenes its own safety is obviously not "in the interest of public safety."

In the sequel, both sides accordingly appeal with complete justice to the Constitution: the friends of order, who abrogated all these liberties, as well as the democrats, who demanded all of them. For each paragraph of the Constitution contains its own anti-
thesis, its own Upper and Lower House, namely, liberty in the general phrase, abrogation of liberty in the marginal note. Thus, so long as the name of freedom was respected and only its actual realization prevented, of course in a legal way, the constitutional existence of liberty remained intact, inviolate, however mortal the blows dealt to its existence in actual life.\textsuperscript{42}

In the 1851 article, Marx also included a powerful denunciation of another device by which the government bureaucracy exercised de facto control over the liberties of the individual regardless of constitutional or other facades. This device is the internal passport and "labor book."

\textsuperscript{66} The excess of despotism reached in France will be apparent by the following regulations as to working men.

Every working man is supplied with a book by the police—the first page of which contains his name, age, birthplace, trade or calling, and a description of his person. He is therein obliged to enter the name of the master for whom he works, and the reasons why he leaves him. But this is not all: the book is placed in the master's hands, and deposited by him in the bureau of the police with the character of the man by the master. When a workman leaves his employment, he must go and fetch this book from the police office; and is not allowed to obtain another situation without producing it. Thus the workman's bread is utterly dependent on the police. But this again, is not all: this book serves the purpose of a passport. If he is obnoxious, the police write "bon pour retourner chez lui" in it, and the workman is obliged to return to his parish! No comment is needed on this terrific revelation! Let the reader picture to himself its full working, and trace it to its actual consequences. No serfdom of the feudal ages—no pariahdom of India has its parallel. What wonder if the French people pant for the hour of insurrection. What wonder if their indignation takes the aspect of a storm.\textsuperscript{43}

Twenty years later Marx denounced the use of the same system by the Versailles government; one of his counts against the police state methods of the Thiers regime was "The reintroduction of passports for traveling from one place to another."\textsuperscript{44} In both cases the French government used the internal passport system for population control in the wake of a revolutionary upsurge.
6. MINIMIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE POWER

In 1853 Marx analyzed the provisions in the new draft constitutions for Schleswig and Holstein, noting their undemocratic character. In addition, he notes that one of the "most remarkable paragraphs... deprives the courts of law of their ancient right of canceling administrative decrees...." 45

Such provisions are bad because it is the "power of the bureaucracy" which has to be kept down: this is also spelled out in Marx's analysis, written in 1858, of the Prussian constitution of 1850. Once again he sees constitutional rights nullified by the freedom of action accorded to the executive power:

"The question of ministerial responsibility possesses in Prussia, as it did in the France of Louis Philippe, an exceptional importance, because it means, in fact, the responsibility of bureaucracy. The ministers are the chiefs of that omnipotent, all-intermeddling parasite body, and to them alone, according to article 106 of the Constitution, have the subaltern members of the administration to look, without taking upon themselves to inquire into the legality of their ordinances, or incurring any responsibility by executing them. Thus, the power of the bureaucracy, and by the bureaucracy, of the executive, has been maintained intact, while the constitutional "Rights of the Prussians" have been reduced to a dead letter." 46

The Prussian reality, writes Marx, shows the gulf between constitutional theory and actual practice:

"Every step of yours, simple locomotion even, is tampered with by the omnipotent action of bureaucracy, this second providence of genuine Prussian growth. You can neither live nor die, nor marry, nor write letters, nor think, nor print, nor take to business, nor teach, nor be taught, nor get up a meeting, nor build a manufactory, nor emigrate, nor do any thing without "obrigkeits-liche Erlaubnis"—permission on the part of the authorities. As to the liberty of science or religion, or abolition of patrimonial jurisdiction, or suppression of caste privileges, or the doing away with entails and primogeniture, it is all mere bosh."
Marx explains why this is so in the same way as he explained the self-vitiation of the French constitution of 1848: all the liberties are granted only within “the limits of the law,” which in this case means the absolutist law predating the constitution.

Thus there exists a deadly antagonism between the law of the Constitution and the constitution of the law, the latter reducing, in fact, the former to mere moonshine. On the other hand, the Charter in the most decisive points refers to organic laws... They [the organic laws now adopted] have done away with guaranties even existing at the worst times of the absolute monarchy, with the independence, for instance, of the Judges of the executive Government. Not content with these combined dissolvents, the old and the new-fangled laws, the Charter preserves to the King the right of suspending it in all its political bearings, whenever he may think proper.47

This is the second time that we have seen Marx upholding the independence of the courts against the executive power. It is clear, however, that this is only one aspect of his advocacy of every possible means of minimizing the autonomous power of the executive. In 1859 Marx wrote an analysis of the Hessian constitution of 1831 which praised it as “the most liberal fundamental law ever proclaimed in Europe,” except for its undemocratic method of electing representatives. Naturally, this praise was relative to the times; but what stirred this enthusiastic description?

“...There is no other Constitution which restrains the powers of the executive within limits so narrow, makes the Administration more dependent on the Legislature, and confides such a supreme control to the judicial benches.”48

The article spells out the detailed reasons for this tribute, including the fact that “the Courts of law, empowered to decide definitively upon all the acts of the Executive, were rendered omnipotent.” The courts also have the final say “in all questions of bureaucratic discipline.” The representatives can remove any minister declared guilty of misinterpreting its resolutions; the Prince’s “right of grace” is shorn, and also his control over members of the administration. “The Representative Chamber selects out of its members a permanent committee, forming a sort of Areopagus, watching and controlling the Government, and impeaching the officials for violation of the Constitution, no
exception being granted on behalf of orders received by subalterns from their superiors in rank. In this way, the members of the bureaucracy were emancipated from the Crown." Military officers are similarly bound to the Constitution, not to the Crown. "The representation, consisting of one single Chamber, possesses the right of stopping all taxes, imposts and duties, on every conflict with the executive." Later, mentions Marx, the revolution of 1848-1849 democratized the election forms and made two other improvements. Both of the latter were likewise directed against the power of the executive: "by putting the nomination of the members of the Supreme Court into the hands of the legislature, and, lastly, by taking out of the hands of the Prince the supreme control of the army, and making it over to the Minister of War, a personage responsible to the representatives of the people."

In the same article Marx points to another democratic feature of this constitution: "Communal councillors, nominated by popular election, had to administer not only the local, but also the general police." Over a decade later, Marx pointed to the Paris Commune's system of community control of the police as a democratic achievement. In general, Marx's views on the minimization, or thorough subordination, of the executive power reached fullest expression in his analysis of the Paris Commune, which will be taken up in a later volume.

7. SAFETY VALVES FOR THE BOURGEOISIE

Comments on various aspects of democratic rights are, of course, scattered through the later writings of Marx and Engels, though not the subject of any systematic work. Examples of aspects not yet mentioned may have some interest:

1. Freedom of opinion. Discussing the Bonapartization of France in 1851, even before the coup d'état, Marx commented that the very last straw was the 1850 law that restored censorship of the drama. "Thus freedom of opinion was banished from its last literary refuge." 

2. Restrictions on voter eligibility. In the same connection—the antidemocratic swing in France after the 1848 defeat—Marx noted two infringements dealing with voting limitations. The law of May 31, 1850, not only excluded political offenders "but it actually established domi-
ciliary restrictions, by which TWO-THIRDS of the French people are incapable of voting!" A little further there is a related point: "By the law of August 7, 1848, all those who cannot read and write are erased from the jury list, thus disqualifying two-thirds of the adult population!" 51

In his article on the Schleswig and Holstein constitutions, Marx also noted a related question: among the undemocratic restrictions is the provision "making the right of election dependent on the holding of landed property, and limiting its exercise by the condition of 'domicile' in the respective electoral districts." 52 In his already mentioned article on the Prussian constitution of 1850, he remarked that although it allows payment of deputies and voting rights from the age of twenty-five, "The electoral rights, however, and the machinery of election, have been managed in such a way as to exclude not only the bulk of the people, but to subject the privileged remnant to the most unbridled bureaucratic interference. There are two degrees of election." 53

3. Gerrymandering. The "unbridled bureaucratic interference" in the Prussian electoral system included more than the complicated system of grouping voters by the amount of tax paid, and so on.

As if this complicated process of filtering was not sufficient, the bureaucracy has, moreover, the right to divide, combine, change, separate and recompose the electoral districts at pleasure. Thus, for instance, if there exists a town suspected of liberal sympathies, it may be swamped by reactionary country votes, the Minister, by simple ordinance, blending the liberal town with the reactionary country into the same electoral district.

Marx concludes: "Such are the fetters which shackle the electoral movement, and which, only in the great cities, can exceptionally be broken through." 54

4. Unicameralism. In general, Marx was for a single representative assembly, not the bicameral system devised to check the exuberance of popular sovereignty. In his article on the Hessian constitution, he noted approvingly that "The representation, consisting of one single chamber, possesses the right of stopping all taxes, imposts and duties, on every conflict with the executive." 55

5. Right to demonstrate. The following case in point has a special interest. In 1872 a Hyde Park demonstration was organized by Irish
members of the International, to demand a general amnesty. But at the last session of Parliament the government had put through a law regulating public meetings in parks: it required two days' prior notification to the police, including the speakers' names. Engels wrote:

This regulation carefully kept hidden from the London press destroyed with one stroke of the pen one of the most precious rights of London's working people—the right to hold meetings in parks when and how they please. To submit to this regulation would be to sacrifice one of the people's rights.

The Irish, who represent the most revolutionary element of the population, were not men to display such weakness. The committee unanimously decided to act as if it did not know of the existence of this regulation and to hold their meeting in defiance of the Government's decree.\textsuperscript{56}

The police decided not to intervene after all.

6. \textit{The informer system.} The use of informers, spies, and stool pigeons (\textit{mouchards} in French and also in Marx and Engels most of the time) was, of course, the common instrument of the governments and a constant plague in the radical and labor movements. Here, however, is an important variant.

The Austrian commander in Milan, after suppressing an insurrection, decreed that anyone who failed to denounce another's illegal act was himself guilty. Marx reported this bitterly:

\textit{Whoever will not become a spy and informer for the Hapsburg shall be liable to become the lawful prey of the Croats [Austrian troops]. In a word, Radetsky proclaims a new system of whole-sale plunder.\textsuperscript{57}}

7. \textit{Freedom in wartime.} After the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, Bebel and Liebknecht were arrested by the Bismarck government on charges of high treason,

\textit{simply because they dared to fulfil their duties as German national representatives, \textit{viz.} to protest in the Reichstag against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, vote against new war subsidies, express their sympathy with the French Republic, and denounce the attempt at the conversion of Germany into one Prussian barrack.}

So Marx, in a protest published in the London press. His letters also
described the governmental repression of other antiwar socialists, and added:

The few independent German journals existing outside Prussia are forbidden admission into the Hohenzollern estates. German workmen’s meetings in favour of a peace honourable for France are daily dispersed by the police. According to the official Prussian doctrine . . . every German “trying to counteract the prospective aims of the Prussian warfare in France,” is guilty of high treason.58

He compares the liberty existing in France (where the Empire had just been overthrown—it is the interlude between Sedan and the Paris Commune):

The French soil is infested by about a million German invaders. Yet the French Government can safely dispense with that Prussian method of “rendering possible the free expression of opinion.” Look at this picture and at that!59

In truth, the French republican government could hardly do otherwise; it had come into being through a mass upsurge in the streets after Sedan, and a revolution loomed before it. Revolutionary pressures ensured its democratic distinction from Prussianism.

In England, pressure against freedom in wartime was political. During the Crimean war, John Bright accused the government of undermining “the Parliamentary system of this country” by its intolerance of criticism. Marx commented:

“IT may be asked of what use this system is? Domestic questions must not be agitated because the country is at war. Because the country is at war, war must not be discussed. Then why remains Parliament? Old [William] Cobbett has revealed the secret. As a safety-valve for the effervescing passions of the country.”60

It could be put more generally: for bourgeois democracy, not only a parliament but the whole structure of democratic rights and institutions was, in good part, “a safety valve for the effervescing passions of the country.” Or, as we put it in another connection in the previous chapter, it was used as a means of containing popular pressures, not expressing them.
8. THE "DEMOCRATIC SWINDLE"

As in the case of most political problems, it is not possible to extract from Marx's and Engels' writings a systematic account of what Marx called "the democratic swindle"—the methods whereby the bourgeoisie utilized (used and abused) democratic forms for the purpose of stabilizing its socioeconomic rule; besides the present and preceding chapters, aspects of the subject will emerge subsequently. But a couple of basic points may be made here.

The "democratic swindle" was a swindle not insofar as it was democratic but, on the contrary, insofar as it utilized democratic forms to frustrate genuine democratic control from below. The phrase itself comes from a reference by Marx to the country which, he well understood, was the most democratic in constitutional form at this time: the United States. It was, indeed, "the model country of the democratic swindle" not because it was less democratic than others but for precisely the opposite reason. It is to be distinguished from the case of demagogic Bonapartism, with "its real despotism and its mock democratism." The fact that the United States had developed the formal structure of the constitutional republic in the most democratic forms meant that its bourgeoisie likewise had to develop to its highest point the art of keeping the expression of popular opinion within channels satisfactory to its class interests.

In Marx's time there was no problem about putting the finger on the main method of this enterprise: the system of rank political corruption mentioned in the preceding chapter. As long as it was possible to work it, within the cadre of a country that was expanding economically and geographically, social explosions could be avoided. The expense was worthwhile to gain "a safety valve for the effervescing passions of the country."

The expense of buying up public opinion, however, should not be confused with the expensiveness on a social scale of a democratic structure as against an authoritarian one. Other things being equal, a democratic state form is cheaper to operate than a despotism; as long as it is possible, it is a bargain for a ruling class interested in keeping down overhead costs. This is true not only in terms of hard cash outlay (necessary for any swollen state apparatus) but also in terms of intan-
gibles, such as the willing interest of the mass of the population in cooperating in their own exploitation. Marx pointed to the difference in his polemic against the liberal Heinzen:

The monarchy involves great expense. No doubt. Just take a look at government finances in North America and compare them with what our thirty-eight duodecimo fatherlands [the German states] have to pay for being administered and kept under discipline! 

In England the main representatives of the bourgeoisie in politics aim ideally at bargain-rate government, and therefore

...to these champions of the British Bourgeoisie, to the men of the Manchester School, every institution of Old England appears in the light of a piece of machinery as costly as it is useless, and which fulfills no other purpose but to prevent the nation from producing the greatest possible quantity at the least possible expense, and to exchange its product in freedom. Necessarily, their last word is the Bourgeois Republic, in which free competition rules supreme in all spheres of life; in which there remains altogether that minimum only of government which is indispensable for the administration, internally and externally, of the common class interest and business of the Bourgeoisie; and where this minimum of government is as soberly, as economically organized as possible. Such a party, in other countries, would be called democratic.

Time and again Marx or Engels analyzed bourgeois-democratic politics as an exercise in convincing a maximum of the people that they were participating in state power, by means of a minimum of concessions to democratic forms. On the eve of the 1848 revolution—the preceding November, to be exact—Engels took up the programmatic manifesto issued by Lamartine, the poet-politician who headed the moderate republican party.

...What, then, is the meaning of the political measures proposed by M. de Lamartine? To give the government into the hands of the inferior bourgeoisie, but under the semblance of giving it to the whole people (this, and nothing else, is the meaning of his universal suffrage, with his double system of elections).

The century saw a plethora of clever electoral systems devised to insert a manipulative factor into the forms of a more or less universal
suffrage, beginning with the American constitution. As Engels indicated in the case of Lamartine, the mechanisms were calibrated to achieve a single type of effect: *How far down in the social scale, in the hands of what class or class stratum, was political power expected to reside?* This was the link between the class struggle and often technical-sounding questions of constitutional forms; that is, between a political program in the narrow sense and a social program. A movement that aimed to place political power in the hands of the working-class masses could afford to press for complete democratization with no twists.

9. **TOWARD THE SOCIALIZATION OF DEMOCRACY**

Lamartine, wrote Engels, might be able to inspire poets and philosophers with enthusiasm for “his system of graduated election, poor rate, and philanthropic charity,” but not the people.

The principles, indeed, of social and political regeneration have been found fifty years ago. Universal suffrage, direct election, paid representation—these are the essential conditions of political sovereignty. . . . What we want, is not English middle-class expediency, but quite a new system of social economy, to realize the right and satisfy the wants of all.66

This was published in a Chartist paper and written for the eyes of Chartist workers, who were indeed already battling for what was then the political program of the democratic extremists. But Engels' friends in the left wing of Chartism, Harney and Jones above all, were fighting for “the Charter and Something Else,” that is, for the extension of the democratic idea to a social program. Harney himself had written Engels his opinion that “henceforth mere Chartism will not do; ultra-democracy, social as well as political, will be the object of our propaganda.”67 This, of course, had been what Engels had also urged since his arrival in England. As we have seen,68 he began by counterposing communism against democracy, in the wake of Proudhon and Weitling. By 1844 he had corrected this to advocating going over from mere political democracy to a more basic social transformation.

In an 1844 article that Engels wrote for a German paper in Paris, he
analyzed the constitutional forms of British democracy in this spirit.* Conceding that "England is undoubtedly the freest, that is, the least unfree country in the world, North America not excepted," he undertook an examination of the methods and forms of the political system "on purely empirical lines," to show how the structure is designed toward "making concessions merely in order to preserve this derelict structure as long as possible," and maintaining the rule of the middle class in partnership with the progressive-minded aristocracy.69 Since the representative chamber, the House of Commons, wielded all power (he thought), it followed that "England should be a pure democracy, if only the democratic element itself were really democratic." It is the latter condition that he subjects to detailed analysis, measuring constitutional and formal pretensions against the empirical facts of class power. His conclusion is that "The Englishman is not free because of the law, but despite the law, if he can be considered free at all,"70 for it is the constant threat from below that ensures the recognition of democratic rights in practice.

It is, he argues, likewise the struggle of classes that will move matters still further:

The struggle is already on. The constitution has been shaken in its foundations. How things will turn out in the near future can be seen from what has been said. The new alien elements in the constitution are of a democratic nature; public opinion too, as time will show, develops in accordance with the democratic side; England's near future is democracy.

But what a democracy! Not that of the French Revolution, whose antithesis was the monarchy and feudalism, but that democracy whose antithesis is the middle class and property. This is evident from the entire preceding development. The middle class and property are in power; the poor man is bereft of rights, oppressed and sweated; the constitution disowns him, the law maltreats him; the struggle of democracy against the aristocracy in England is the struggle of the poor against the rich. The democracy which England is heading for is a social democracy.

But mere democracy is unable to remedy social evils. Democratic equality is a chimera, the struggle of the poor against the

* This was before Engels teamed up with Marx, and while he was still denouncing "all state forms" in principle, in anarchoid language which can be found in the same article. The contradiction is striking.
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rich cannot be fought on the ground of democracy or politics in general. Hence this stage too is only a transition, the last purely political measure that still is to be tried and from which a new element must immediately develop, a principle transcending everything political.

This principle is the principle of socialism. 71

"Mere democracy" is merely political democracy, democracy that stops with governmental forms and does not extend to the social question, to the democratization of socioeconomic life.

In sum: Marx and Engels always saw the two sides of the complex of democratic institutions and rights which arose under bourgeois democracy. The two sides corresponded to the two classes which fought it out within this framework. One side was the utilization of democratic forms as a cheap and versatile means of keeping the exploited masses from shaking the system, of providing the illusion of participation in the state while the economic sway of the ruling class ensured the real centers of power. This was the side of the "democratic swindle." The other side was the struggle to give the democratic forms a new social (class) content, above all by pushing them to the democratic extreme of popular control from below, which in turn entailed extending the application of democratic forms out of the merely political sphere into the organization of the whole society.

In any case, the key was popular control from below. This phrase was best translated by Marx in a comment on a slippery slogan, the Lassalleian catchword of a "free state." Taking it literally, Marx replied that we do not want a state that is free, but rather a state that is completely subordinate to society.

Free state—what is this?

It is by no means the aim of the workers, who have got rid of the narrow mentality of humble subjects, to set the state free. In the [Bismarckian] German Empire the "state" is almost as "free" as in Russia. Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it, and today, too, the forms of state are more or less free to the extent that they restrict the "freedom of the state." 72

This proposes a basic test for, and measure of, freedom in the sense of popular control from below, and it applies equally before and after the social revolution.
It follows from the preceding chapter that in Marx's view democratic forms are both an instrument and a danger for the bourgeoisie. They shift from one to the other depending on the course of social struggles taking place under those state forms.

Whenever democratic forms become inconvenient for ruling-class hegemony, making the state institutions of the status quo precarious, there is a tendency for the ruling class to sanction a shift to more authoritarian and despotic forms. The film of bourgeois development unwinds in a reverse direction: the freedoms that the liberal bourgeoisie once demanded are cut back; popular institutions are doctored so as to interpose a maximum of impediments between the institutions and popular pressures from below. Democracy so-called becomes less and less a "massy" institution (to use the Bauerite term which Marx made so much of in The Holy Family) and more and more a complex of sifting-screens to filter out popular elements and substitute devices of control from above; until, finally, if the term democracy is retained at all, popular elements are redefined out of it, and it is converted into a technical term for an authoritarianism purporting to serve the people whether they wish to be served up or not.

Structurally, the most prominent feature of this transmogrification is likewise a return to a prebourgeois pattern, though in new forms: the tendency toward a shift back to the dominance of the executive and its bureaucracy.

This tendency has two interrelated sides, which stimulate each other: (1) the autonomy of the executive within the state, with respect to the other departments of the state; and (2) the autonomy of the
state with respect to the rest of society, including the ruling class.*

This process first came under Marx's close scrutiny as a result of the political developments initiated by the victory of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte in France, leading to the establishment of the Second Empire, with Bonaparte crowned as Napoleon III. This original "Bona-partism" forms the subject of the next chapter. In this chapter we present some preliminary considerations which will facilitate an understanding of what is to come.

1. HYPERTROPHY OF THE EXECUTIVE

If, as we saw in the previous chapter, Marx laid great stress on combating the sway of the executive governmental apparatus in society, and minimizing its power, he was led to this emphasis by the ever-present tendency of the executive to extend its authority over all other organs of society, and to enlarge itself.

The tendency toward the hypertrophy of the bureaucracy was not discovered by the humorist Parkinson but was already a platitude in Marx's day, and for Marx. In an article on "The Government of India," Marx expatiated on the proliferation of the English bureaucratic apparatus in a particular case. We omit here his preliminary description of how the seven veils of the governmental structure supposedly governing India were intertwined with the financiers of the East India Company, how both were dominated by money-grubbing corruption, and how the company's Court of Directors was itself "nothing but a succursale to [a

* We use the word autonomy here because we have already used independence in Chapter 11 for a different idea, which must be kept distinct. In discussing the origin of the state, we followed Engels and spoke of the fact that the prestate institutions (protopolitical authorities) became independent, or apparently independent, of society as a whole; they escaped from the control of society as a whole precisely in order to come under the control of a section of society only.1 This independence of the state vis-à-vis society was equivalent to its dependence on the ruling-class section of society. It is in this sense that Engels wrote, "Hardly come into being, this organ [the state power] makes itself independent vis-à-vis society; and, indeed, the more so, the more it becomes the organ of a particular class, the more it directly enforces the supremacy of that class."2 But now we will be concerned with a different phenomenon: the degree to which the state is capable of cutting loose from, or loosening its dependence on, every other section of society including those that are or have been dominant economically.
branch of] the English moneyocracy." But not even the directors were competent to carry on the actual work of governing:

"Who, then, govern in fact under the name of the Direction? A large staff of irresponsible secretaries, examiners, and clerks at the India House, of whom ... only one individual has ever been in India, and he only by accident. Apart from the trade in patronage, it is therefore a mere fiction to speak of the politics, the principles, and the system of the Court of Directors. The real Court of Directors and the real Home Government, &c., of India are the permanent and irresponsible bureaucracy, "the creatures of the desk and the creatures of favor" residing in Leadenhall St. [location of the company]. We have thus a Corporation ruling over an immense Empire, not formed, as in Venice, by eminent patricians, but by old obstinate clerks, and the like odd fellows.

This bureaucratization of the state in a civil service later became, for Webbian Fabianism, the revelation of a new socialist road to power; for Marx, it is evidence of how the bureaucratized state machine takes on a life of its own, alien to the people. One result is the well-known propensity to produce paper: the East India Company naturally had a system of reports by its managers, but

When the factories grew into an Empire, the commercial items into ship loads of correspondence and documents, the Leadenhall clerks went on in their system, which made the Directors and the Board their dependents; and they succeeded in transforming the Indian Government into one immense writing machine.

Another result was sheer time-killing inefficiency and swollen expenditures. For another, Marx quotes Burke, a meeting of minds that deserves to be recorded here:

The close and abject spirit of this bureaucracy deserves to be stigmatised in the celebrated words of Burke:

"This tribe of vulgar politicians are the lowest of our species. There is no trade so vile and mechanical as Government in their hands. Virtue is not their habit. They are out of themselves in any course of conduct recommended only by conscience and glory. A large, liberal and prospective view of the interests of States passes with them for romance; and the principles that recommend it, for the wanderings of disordered imagination. The calculators compute them out of everything grand and elevated. Littleness in object and in means to them appears soundness and sobriety."
And besides the costly upkeep of the bureaucratic establishment,

The oligarchy involves India in wars, in order to find employment for their younger sons; the moneyocracy consigns it to the highest bidder; and a subordinate Bureaucracy paralyse its administration and perpetuate its abuses as the vital condition of their own perpetuation.

2. AUTONOMIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE

But more important, if less entertaining, than bureaucratic proliferation was the threat of bureaucratic encroachment on popular representation, that is, of the dominance of the executive power over the legislative.*

Marx and Engels formed their political ideas in a milieu which saw the executive as the paramount enemy, for the executive meant the absolute monarchy and its bureaucracy, whereas the popular assembly, or the fight for it, represented the potentialities of the future control from below, which meant democracy. But having gained this insight with the help of Prussian conditions, they found no reason to make any essential change under conditions of bourgeois democracy. We saw in the previous chapter that their view was, as it were, "all power to the popular representation" as against the executive authority, and that, in terms of forms, they implemented this by advocating that the executive agency be derived directly out of the membership of the representative assembly and immediately subject to its control.

This position they maintained not only against the opposite extreme of "all power to the executive" (bureaucratic absolutism) but also against the liberal juste milieu of the "separation of powers" doctrine made famous by Montesquieu and taken up by most bourgeois-democratic constitutionalists. The contemporary function of this doctrine was plain enough. To the old regime and its ruling class, whose

* To be sure, at bottom the first is often an aspect of the second; for as the bureaucracy swells, more and more of the real business of the state is concealed in its interstices, instead of being subject to legislative control and popular scrutiny. This only underlines that it is the second threat which is basic from the Marxist standpoint. From the bourgeois standpoint it is the expensiveness of bureaucratization which is objectionable in itself; the antipopular effect is seen as a more tolerable evil or a positive boon.
grasp on the state power was still eager though failing, it said: "Compromise, please; we are not asking for everything, we will share power with you." The first significance of the separation of powers was the dividing up of state power between classes.

This was the point made by Marx in *The German Ideology*. In the important passage which begins with the proposition that "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas," the first example given is this:

> For instance, in an age and in a country where royal power, aristocracy and bourgeoisie are contending for mastery and where, therefore, mastery is shared, the doctrine of the separation of powers proves to be the dominant idea and is expressed as an "eternal law." 

It was this kind of deal (*Vereinbarung*) between the Crown and the bourgeoisie that the Frankfurt National Assembly sought in the 1848 revolution, a goal that Marx made the central target of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*’s denunciations against the fainthearted liberals who refused to demand all power for the people’s representatives. Here the separation of powers, with its accompanying checks and balances, would have meant that the old regime kept its base in the governmental machinery and bureaucracy while the bourgeoisie gained a bridgehead in the form of a representative assembly; in this separation of powers, the former would wield the executive power, that is, the real power, while the latter would be separated from power as a legislative talking-shop.

The issue came up explicitly when Interior Minister Kühlwetter argued that the Assembly had no right to set up an investigatory commission with real powers, because of the separation of powers doctrine. In reply, Engels pointed out that the minister could hardly appeal to a constitutional principle which did not exist as yet, since there was no constitution. But beyond this debating level, his article implied a view of the doctrine more superficial than Marx’s:

> The separation of powers, which Herr Kühlwetter and other great political philosophers regard with the deepest reverence as a sacred and inviolable principle, is at bottom nothing but the mundane division of labor in industry applied to the mechanism of the state for the purpose of simplification and control. Like all other sacred, eternal, and inviolable principles, it is applied only to the extent conformable to existing circumstances.
This approach agrees with Marx's in regarding the separation of powers as a doctrine with limited historical applicability, but otherwise it is quite different. If the separation of powers is a form of the division of labor, then the necessity for it is technical, not class-ideological. Its only drawback is that it has to give way to immediate revolutionary considerations: "the revolutionary provisional situation consists precisely in the fact that the separation of powers is provisionally abolished, that the legislative authority temporarily usurps the executive power or the executive authority the legislative power."\(^7\)

However, this reply to Kühlwetter, written one day for a daily newspaper in the midst of hectic times, is mainly interesting as an example of the difficulty of thinking through state theory in a hurry. It was Marx's view that the abolition of the separation of powers, far from being a temporary or provisional expedient, was a basic necessity of a truly democratic government. He reiterated this view in his 1851 article on the French constitution, after quoting its statement that "the division of powers is the primary condition of a free government."

Here we have the old constitutional folly. The condition of a "free government" is not the division but the unity of power. The machinery of government cannot be too simple. It is always the craft of knaves to make it complicated and mysterious.\(^8\)

This viewpoint is put more strongly in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, which again attacks the constitution's built-in cleavage between the legislative power and the executive power, as a device to free the executive from effective popular control.

Marx points accusingly at "The play of the constitutional powers, as Guizot termed the parliamentary squabble between the legislative and executive power" in the constitution. "On one side are 750 representatives of the people, elected by universal suffrage," forming "a National Assembly that enjoys legislative omnipotence" in theory. "On the other side is the President, with all the attributes of royal power ... with all the resources of the executive in his hands ... all posts ... officials and officers ... the armed forces," and so on. Moreover, each legislator is elected by this or that splinter of the people, whereas the President is elected directly from the people as a whole: "he is the elect of the nation and the act of his election is the trump that the sovereign people plays once every four years," says Marx ironically. Thus "the Constitution here abrogates itself once more by having the President elected by
all Frenchmen through direct suffrage.” For this means the President is not responsible to the elected representatives of the people but to a metaphysical “national spirit”—the one which takes on a body only one day every four years. In effect, then, “the Constitution assigns actual power to the President,” to the executive power which holds the state machine in its own hands while the National Assembly talks.9

The “unity of power,” in Marx’s view, had to reside in the representative assembly, which would directly control both the legislative and executive powers, the latter being derived from its own body rather than constitutionally established as a separate body confronting it. When the Paris Commune took this course, Marx hailed it as one of the forms of government needed by a workers’ republic: the representative assembly called the Commune “was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time.”10 The judiciary, whose complete independence from the executive had been hailed by Marx in the 1850s,11 “were to be divested [by the Commune] of that sham independence which had but served to mask their abject subserviency to all succeeding governments,” and were to become truly independent by being made “elective, responsible, and revocable.”12 It should be noted, then, that the judicial function was not to be subordinated to the representative assembly; in this respect Marx did recognize a separation of powers in a certain form, if that term is insisted on.

It was, then, not the separation of powers in the abstract that constituted the main danger, but rather the over-large and independent role which this doctrine assigned to the executive and its bureaucracy. Voilà l’ennemi!

However, the degree to which the bureaucracy assumes an independent and even sacrosanct position may vary under different national conditions. During the revolution of 1848–1849 Marx had occasion to attack the Prussian legal system before a jury; he argued that even the “Napoleonic despotism” that emerged from the French Revolution was “poles apart from the patriarchal-schoolmasterish despotism of Prussian law,” in this respect. The French variety gave special status to an official only while executing his official duties, but

Prussian despotism, on the contrary, confronts me with an official who is a superior, sanctified being. His character as an official is interwoven into him like consecration in a Catholic priest. The Prussian official always remains a priest for the Prussian layman, that is, the nonofficial. Offending such a priest—even one who is
not exercising his post, who is away from home, who has retired into private life—remains a religious profanation, a desecration. The higher the official, the more serious the profanation. The highest offense against the state-priest is therefore against the king, lèse-majesté. . . .

The "state-priest" pattern represents a higher degree of bureaucratic autonomization, of the elevation of the bureaucracy as a stratum out of and above civil society.

3. THE STATE AS CALIBAN

Insofar as the autonomization of the executive goes forward, insofar as the executive frees itself from vestigial control by a representative assembly, it also becomes freer to assert its autonomy from any other arm of society; and conversely, insofar as the state moves toward autonomy in society at large, it will also tend to exalt and fortify the executive as the organ of autonomization. For in spite of what is taught in civics classes, the executive is not just another department of the government: it is typically the operative heart of the state, directly controlling the repressive forces of political power.

But does not the Marxian formula in the Communist Manifesto assert that the state is but the executive committee of the ruling class, or, more accurately, that "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie"?* If so, can one speak of the autonomy of the state from the "whole bourgeoisie," or in general, its autonomy from the ruling class or classes of society? And in that case, what does this autonomy mean? How far can it go?

This is precisely the question that Marx grappled with in his analysis

* For the but or merely, see the comment in Chapter 11, p. 257 fn. There is a revealing point to be made by noting that this sentence, as quoted above, is Engels' edited version of 1888 (the Moore-Engels standard English translation). The original German did not refer specifically to the executive of the state; it said: "The modern state-power is but a committee [Ausschuss] which manages the common affairs of the whole bourgeois class." By his change Engels put the emphasis on the executive: it is the executive which forms the "managing committee" while other state agencies are its arms.
of Bonapartism and allied phenomena. The reader must be warned that
we are entering an area which is a favorite habitat of that mechanical or
fossilized Marxism which has approximately the same relation to Marx
himself as the Nicene Creed has to the Sermon on the Mount.

Our account of the rise of the state in Chapter 11 already shows that
Marx and Engels did not make the state out to be merely an extrusion
of the ruling class, its tool, puppet, or reflection in some simplistic,
passive sense. Not merely, and certainly not simply, for the actuality
can be complex indeed, as Marx's study of Bonapartism showed.
Rather, the state arises from and expresses a real overall need for the
organization of society—a need which exists no matter what is the
particular class structure. But as long as there is a ruling class in
socioeconomic relations, it will utilize this need to shape and control
the state along its own class lines.

The metaphor of tool, reflection, and so on may well be of use as a
suggestive figure of speech, a first approximation, a pedagogical simpli­
fication, or a legitimate "forceful overstatement" or interpretative
exaggeration.* But it is perhaps more enlightening to think of the
state, in many cases, as the Caliban to the ruling class's Prospero.
Caliban is "in service" to his master, as his slave, but nonetheless has his
own independent aspirations, which he can give rein depending on
Prospero's condition. He can look forward to tearing himself free from
servitude, and meanwhile mouth insults against the power he submits
to: "I must obey: his art is of such power...." But still he mutters to
himself: "A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!" And the bourgeoisie
is equally suspicious and apprehensive of its "slave." Prospero introduces

... Caliban, my slave, who never
Yields us kind answer.

* As Marx wrote in an early article: "The state and the organization of society
are not, from the political standpoint, two different things. The state is the
organization of society." This was written before The German Ideology, hence
before Marx integrated this thought with a class theory of the state; but the idea
was not abandoned, it was incorporated.

** I am referring here to Richard Hofstadter's approval of "the soundness of
[F. J.] Turner's instincts" in understanding that "if a new or heterodox idea is
worth anything at all it is worth a forceful overstatement, and that this is one of
the conditions of its being taken seriously"; and his agreement, touching both
Turner and Charles Beard, that "a certain measure of exaggeration, especially
among writers who have a new and heterodox thesis, is almost a necessity of
interpretative historical argumentation...."
The ruling class "cannot miss" (cannot do without) its "slave," and the latter is bent to its profit. This is all the relationship that is necessary "as a rule" (to use Engels' qualification).

A relationship of this type, one of bilateral tension, is characteristic not only of the state but of all the superstructural elements of society, in Marx's mature view of historical dynamics. All these elements tend to take on a life of their own; that is, to manifest a certain amount of autonomy. With respect to the state "as a rule," the fullest exposition of this relationship was given by Engels in a letter right after a passage which we have already quoted in Chapter 11. 18

And now things proceed in a way similar to that in commodity trade and later in money trade: the new independent power [the state], while having in the main to follow the movement of production, reacts in its turn, by virtue of its inherent relative independence—that is, the relative independence once transferred to it and gradually further developed—upon the conditions and course of production. It is the interaction of two unequal forces: on the one hand, the economic movement, on the other, the new political power, which strives for as much independence as possible, and which, having once been established, is endowed with a movement of its own. On the whole, the economic movement gets its way, but it has also to suffer reactions from the political movement which it itself established and endowed with relative independence,* from the movement of the state power, on the one hand, and of the opposition simultaneously engendered, on the other. 21

* This, indeed, is exactly Prospero's complaint against Caliban: "I pitied thee, took pains to make thee speak. . . ." and so on; to which Caliban replies, like any grateful politician: "You taught me language; and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse: the red plague rid you, / For learning me your language!" 19 There is much else that is relevant in this same letter of Engels', as well as others of his letters on the theory of historical materialism, 20 but we remind the reader that this question of historical theory is assumed to be antecedent to our discussion.
All this applies to "normal times," that is, periods of relatively stable social relations, historical events "as a rule." What never exists is the woodenheaded ideal of a constant one-to-one correspondence from moment to moment between the basic socioeconomic relations of society and the attendant political and ideological superstructure: otherwise any simpleton could be an infallible social analyst once he had memorized a few "Marxist" formulas.

When we leave normal times and deal with periods of rapid social change (whether revolutionary or retrogressive), we are bound to expect even greater dislocations between the changing socioeconomic base and the political-ideological superstructure. It is virtually a defining characteristic of such periods that all social relations become upset, volatile, fluid. Formulas that worked "as a rule" in stable times now become more variable approximations; it is necessary to go behind the formulas to keep close watch on the concrete patterns of change. What this means will be exhibited in the next chapter in connection with Marx's work *The Eighteenth Brumaire*.

4. THE POLITICAL INAPITUDE OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS

So much for a general theoretical consideration, at this point. But this much applies across the board to historical change at large. The phenomenon of state autonomization arises also because of a specific characteristic peculiar to the capitalist class:

*Of all the ruling classes known to history, the membership of the capitalist class is least well adapted, and tends to be most averse, to taking direct charge of the operation of the state apparatus.* The key word is: direct. It is least suitable as a governing class, if we use this term in its British sense to denote not a socioeconomic ruling class but only the social circles from which the state machine tends to derive its personnel.

This characteristic of the bourgeoisie is not altogether new to our discussion. It is the political side of some features of the system that we have already had occasion to mention.

1. There is the fact that capitalism enjoys the deepest separation between its economic and political institutions. As early as 1843 Marx
was plainly struck by the change that had taken place from feudalism, where economic and political rule were systematically *fused* in the same personnel. 22 As for the ancient slave states: a Roman patrician, to be sure, *could* retire to his estates and ignore political life if he chose, but normally membership in this ruling class entailed a felt obligation to participate in political life as well as an automatic status in the political system.

The capitalist class is different in this respect, basically because its mode of exploitation depends characteristically on the processes of the market, not on politics, which is ancillary and supportive. The capitalist needs a state that will give political backing to his economic activities, a Caliban that "serves in offices that profit us." But in his own activity *as a capitalist* he is concerned with nonpolitical preoccupations. In his capacity as a capitalist, he wants to make money, not run the government himself. He needs "free workers," as Marx explained, because he is not their lord, but only their boss; that is, his relationship of mastership is not directly political but economic.

It is this side of capitalism, transmuted into a one-sided ideology, that appears first as the laissez-faire illusion—"the best government is the least government"—and even reaches the rarefied extreme of "bourgeois anarchism." To be sure, *laissez-faire* never meant that the state's relationship to economics was to leave it alone; it merely meant that the state should remain as unobtrusive and unintruding as possible, also as inexpensive as possible, while the Invisible Hand of the market took care of the main operation; just as the campaign rhetoric of Republican candidates in the United States about "keeping government out of business" still reflects a very powerful aspect of the social psychology of the capitalist class, rooted in the nature of the system itself, which hangs on long after it is functionally obsolete.

2. Another characteristic of the capitalist class reinforces this tendency. Historically the capitalist class does not develop as a class of idlers but rather of very busy and hard-working men, working hard at exploiting the productive labor of others. "The industrial capitalist is a worker, compared to the money-capitalist, but a worker in the sense of capitalist, *i.e.* an exploiter of the labor of others," noted Marx.* The contrast

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* Marx does not neglect to point out, naturally, that there is a difference between his work as a manager (which could be done by a salaried superintendent) and his work as a profit-making enterpriser (capitalist), arguing that "cooperative factories furnish proof" that he is redundant in the latter capacity just as he is replaceable in the former. 23
between the landowning nobility as an idle ruling class and the rising bourgeoisie as a productive class runs all through social thought in the transitional epoch of the bourgeois revolution, and is found very extensively in the non-Marxist socialist movements, from Saint-Simonism through Fabianism.

This very old and deep-rooted distinction between the "idlers" and the "producers" (the latter embracing both bourgeoisie and proletariat) reflects the peculiarity of capitalism which we are spotlighting. The capitalist class likes to boast of its closer involvement with the productive process and its greater detachment from the "political game," as justification for its existence. The exceptions which literally prove the rule are, in the United States, some long-established bourgeois families which have accumulated their wealth in previous generations and whose scions adopt "public service"—direct participation in state management—as a high-minded alternative to pure parasitism.

3. Still another built-in characteristic of capitalism, previously mentioned, minimizes the functioning of capitalists themselves as state administrators or managers. No other ruling class is so profusely criss-crossed internally with competing and conflicting interest groups, each at the other's throat—the dog-eat-dog pattern. Competing national groups (countries) are split by regional group interests, different industrial interests, antagonisms within an industry, rivalry between producers of consumers' and producers' goods, light and heavy industry, and so on, aside from religious, political, and other ideological differences. Internally, capitalism is a snake-pit. By comparison, the incessant feuding of medieval barons was a marshmallow-throwing contest, just as the doughty deeds of medieval warriors were tea-party gallantries compared with the conditions of modern war.

This exuberance of internal hostilities makes it more difficult for any individual capitalist to be trusted as executor for the class as a whole. For example: especially in critical times, concessions may have to be made to the class enemy below, the working classes. At whose expense? whose interests are to be shaved for the sacrifice? If an economic depression drives small businesses to the wall, how enthusiastic will representatives of big business become about saving them? If there are anti-imperialist threats against our capital abroad, how important is it to capitalist interests as a whole to save the investments of one corporation in Chile or Guatemala? So it goes.

All of these considerations underline the question, important for any
ruling class: who—which elements—can best be trusted with the direct levers of political power? Historically, a common answer has been: the most successful members of the ruling class. This answer works far less well for capitalism than for previous social systems. The special characteristics of capitalism put a premium on finding political leaders who can take, and stick to, an overall and farsighted view of the interests and needs of the system as a whole, rather than the shortsighted, close-up-blurred vision characteristic of the busy profit-seeker.

5. CONSEQUENCES FOR THE STATE

The consequences for the political history and patterns of capitalist society have been considerable.

1. To begin with, there arises a need for what is aptly called the professional politician. The bourgeoisie, individually and collectively, is accustomed to hiring whatever specialist services it needs, for a number of tasks: managers, engineers, professors, publicists, tax lawyers, journalists, etc. The professional politician is the specialist required to manage its common affairs through the state under the complications of bourgeois democracy.

It would be misleading and unjust to suggest that this is necessarily a cynical arrangement; on the contrary, professional politicians who are merely ward-heeler types are likely to remain small fry. The society needs "statesmen" who are above petty larceny; they will be all the more effective insofar as they are sincere and even idealistic, provided they possess the right sort of ideals.

It is natural for these specialists to be "mouthpiece" types—hence the high incidence of lawyers.* It is useful for them to be trained ideologists—hence professorial and journalist mouthpieces are not unknown in the field, depending on national traditions and the times, though they may be more prominent in the administrative corridors of the state. But the professional politician may be an upward-climbing spinoff from any class (like bullfighters in Spain) as long as he is

* Marx was struck by the increase in the number of lawyers elected to Parliament in 1852. "The House of Commons will count above a hundred lawyers in its ranks, and this number of jurisconsults is perhaps no favorable augury...." 24
amenable to the service required, that is, to operate within the ring of interests set by the system. His is still one of the few trades where a self-made man can rise to the top, from log cabin to logrolling.

2. Effective political service, however, requires something more than the complaisant pliability of spirit known as political pragmatism. The system needs statesmen who qualify precisely by holding a farsighted, overall vision of its interests; and it resents them for the same reason. This has been the crux of a great many political conflicts.

It is difficult enough for an aspirant to the mantle of statesmanship to decide for himself what is really in the best long-range interests of "society," that is, capitalist society. The second difficulty is: imposing this solution on a ruling class which, taken individually, is inherently nearsighted about its own class interests. It has been quite common for measures absolutely essential to the health and safety of the system to be put over on the capitalist class itself only against the vicious opposition of many or even most practicing capitalists themselves, or in less acute cases, only after violent internecine struggles among interest groups within the class. This pattern, sometimes regarded as a confutation of the Marxist theory of the state, follows from the specific nature of the capitalist class, as we have seen.

It is the professional function of the bourgeois statesman to take the Long, High View of the system as distinct from the approach of the myopic money-grubber. Some of the differences cutting through the capitalist class have a direct bearing on ability to do this. For example, far-flung monopoly capital naturally has a broader, more encompassing viewpoint than, say, a small-town shopkeeper. Sheer size can make the difference. Similarly, capital that is nation-wide in operation is more likely to take a hawk's-eye view than regional or local capital. The same applies to capital that is diversified through different branches. Time is another dimension that influences viewpoint. The first generation of capitalist wealth tends to be the most nearsighted. Succeeding generations may form a simulated aristocracy, dividing between degeneracy or parasitism on the one hand, and "dedication to public service" on the other. There is also a more general sense in which a ruling class matures with experience and time. During most of its existence, American capitalism has been relatively raw and inelegant as compared with its British counterpart, as far as class relations are concerned.

3. We have not yet mentioned one of the most important of the internal strains of the system: the tendency toward the concentration
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and centralization of economic power, which entails monopoly profits for a top stratum at the expense of the lower echelons of the class. This is not simply just another one of the criss-crossing internal conflicts that we have already remarked; it acts unidirectionally to focalize social power itself in the top strata.

What happens to the proposition that the state manages the common affairs of the ruling class if, as power concentrates, the affairs become less and less common? One of the consequences of the relative autonomy of the state is to permit the dominant sectors within the capitalist class to secure the main levers of power. The state, it would seem, becomes less the executive committee of the ruling class as a whole, and more the executive committee of monopoly capital. Its social base narrows.

Yet, in reality, the state still remains the "committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" in spite of and through this development. Under conditions of advanced capitalism, the interests of the top strata really are the basic interests of the capitalist class as a whole, not in the sense that the fruits of dominance are even-handedly and fairly distributed, but in the sense that capitalism cannot continue at all on any other basis. This is a sense, however true, that is not likely to cheer a small businessman who is forced into bankruptcy by monopoly conditions; but then, after all, the man who is left out of a lifeboat because he would overload it may also have a minority view of the issue. The interests of the capitalist class as such are still loyally represented, since these interests lie first and foremost in the preservation of the system, and not in the preservation of this or that sector of the system.

4. One of the most paradoxical consequences for the political leadership of modern capitalism arises directly out of the inaptitude of the bourgeoisie as a governing class. In more than one country, when capitalism has faced its most critical problems, the most farsighted and socially sophisticated political leadership has come to the rescue from elements outside the capitalist class itself. Outstanding examples, to which Marx and Engels paid particular attention, come from Germany and Britain.* Let us turn to them.

*The American reader is invited to consider the case, outside our present purview, of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was brought up in the social milieu which is the nearest thing in the United States to a hereditary landed gentry, namely the old patroon families of the Hudson valley, and whom history counterposed to Herbert Hoover, a self-made capitalist, the most blinkered kind in existence.
6. THE AUTONOMIZED STATE IN GERMANY

In Germany, after bourgeois democracy funkied its chance in 1848 while the imperatives of modernization demanded the forced development of capitalist industry, the job was done by a political leader, Bismarck, whose outlook and Junker class ties were distinctly pre-bourgeois, scornful and suspicious of the bourgeois spirit. With “blood and iron” Bismarck forced Germany through the meatgrinder of modernization—which, economically speaking, meant bourgeoisification—without any need to be tender of this or that section of the bourgeoisie itself. He did the job that capitalism could not do for itself.

Bismarck was able to do this because he was an outsider. German capitalism was raised to maturity with a whip. As Engels noted:

Neither the Junkers nor the bourgeoisie possessed even average energy. The Junkers had proved this in the past sixty years, during which the state had constantly done what was best for them despite the opposition of these Don Quixotes.  

Bismarck, seeking to save as much as possible for an obsolete class—his own, the Junkers—which was standing in the way of modernization, had to act in the face of constant opposition from the main body of that same class. For modernization was also in the basic interest of the Junkers and not only of the bourgeoisie, since it was a necessity for the state and society in which they retained a dwindling share of power and pelf. If modernization meant bourgeoisification, this was a fact of life that could not be changed by class will; and so “a man like Bismarck was indeed dependent on a policy of maneuvering between the various classes.”

How did the outsider pull this off against the opposition of his own class and without allowing the bourgeoisie itself to take the reins of state power? The basic tactic was to balance class against class, the Junkers against the bourgeoisie, as long as possible; then to threaten proletarian discontent against the bourgeoisie; and thus to play them against each other, imposing the autonomized state’s solution on all and thereby gaining time to demonstrate to the bourgeoisie that its interests were in good hands and to the Junkers that they had no better alternative. (More about this in Chapter 16.) It was the Junker Bismarck who “gave” the workers a system of universal suffrage—one
of the most paradoxical events in political history—in order to set them up as a political counterweight to the liberal bourgeoisie in a period when he could hope that the boon would not get out of hand.

The autonomy exhibited by this exploit of the Bismarckian state was strictly relative. For its success was conditioned on the fact that its policy was really in the basic interests of the ruling classes, and that this fact could be demonstrated before too long. It is quite different, therefore, from the absolute autonomy which would permit a state to pursue its own interests, as it saw them, even in long-term contradiction with those of economically dominant classes.

The pattern necessarily involved an element of uneasy tension, of countervailing pulls—so Engels emphasized in a letter to the German party leader Bebel. In 1892 he noted signs of oppositional organization among the liberal bourgeoisie, and commented:

Capitalist society, which has not yet formally subordinated the state to itself, has to leave the actual government to a monarchic-bureaucratic-Junker hereditary caste and has to content itself with the fact that by and large its own interests are finally decisive after all. This society, in view of its situation in Germany, wobbles between two trends: on the one hand, alliance of all official and property-owning strata of society as against the proletariat.... On the other hand, there is a trend which keeps continually placing the old conflict on the order of the day—the old conflict, which was not fought out because of cowardice, between the monarchy with its absolutist reminiscences, the landed aristocracy, and the bureaucracy which thinks itself elevated above all parties, and, counterposed to all of these, the industrial bourgeoisie, whose material interests are harmed daily and hourly by these outlived elements. Which of these two trends has the upper hand at any moment is determined by accidental personal, local, &c factors. 27

And there was one more condition behind Bismarck's strategy. While the mentality of the Junkers, and of Bismarck himself, was subjectively antibourgeois, they had this in common with the bourgeoisie they scorned: they constituted a property-holding, labor-exploiting, possessing class. And in the course of the bourgeoisification of society, this prebourgeois owning and exploiting class was capable of being partly assimilated to the economic patterns of bourgeois accumulation and even bourgeois habits. This was a course in which the Germans had been preceded and outdone by the English aristocracy.
There was an occasion on which Engels was led to note the similarities between Bismarck's and the bourgeois mentality. This was in 1867 when a letter from Marx informed him of a veiled bid by an agent of Bismarck's to buy him up. Engels commented in reply:

It is indicative of the mentality and mental horizon of the fellow [Bismarck] that he judges everyone by himself. The bourgeoisie may well admire the great men of today: it sees itself mirrored in them. All the qualities contributing to the successes of Bonaparte and Bismarck are businessmen's qualities: pursuit of a definite goal by biding one's time and making tentative moves till the right moment is found; diplomatic maneuvering with a back door always open; bargaining and haggling; swallowing insults if self-interest demands it; the business of "now let's not be thieves"; in short, the businessman all over. Gottfried Ermen [the other partner in the Ermen & Engels firm] in his own way is just as great a statesman as Bismarck, and if you follow up these great men's tricks, you always wind up on Manchester exchange. Bismarck thinks: if only I keep after Marx, some day I will finally hit on the right moment and then we will do business together. Pure Gottfried Ermen.

The Bismarckian state, then, was managed by an alien class element (from the bourgeoisie's viewpoint), but it was not so alien as to be unappreciative of what an exploitative society needed in the interest of property.

7. THE CASE OF THE ENGLISH BOURGEOISIE

The country in which this pattern had been pioneered was England. Marx discussed it several times in the 1850s.*

He began by posing the question of the class nature of the Whig party. They "form a fraction of the large landed property of Great Britain," indeed "the oldest, richest, and most arrogant portion."

* Already in early 1848 Engels had noted that in England the ruling sections of the bourgeoisie "have left the nominal rule to their dependent debtors, the aristocrats," but he thought this nominal rule was only an "appearance" and that even this appearance would be done away with very soon. Marx's later articles showed a greater awareness that a certain sharing of power still existed between bourgeoisie and aristocracy.
What, then, distinguishes them from the Tories? The Whigs are the *aristocratic representatives* of the bourgeoisie, of the industrial and commercial middle class. Under the condition that the *bourgeoisie* should abandon to them, to an oligarchy of aristocratic families, the monopoly of government and the exclusive possession of office, they make to the middle class, and assist it in conquering, all those concessions, which in the course of social and political development have shown themselves to have become *unavoidable* and *undelayable*. Neither more nor less. . . . The interests and principles which they represent besides, from time to time, do not belong to the Whigs; they are forced upon them by the development of the industrial and commercial class, the *bourgeoisie*.  

But the Whigs do not play this role in order to serve the bourgeoisie, nor even primarily because, by allying with the "Bankocracy" or "Millocracy" to defeat the Tories, they also secure to themselves "the governmental part of the victory." Like their similars later,* they are still serving their own class in their own way; for example

after 1846 they confined their Free Trade measures so far as was necessary, in order to save to the landed aristocracy the greatest possible amount of privileges. Each time they had taken the movement in hand in order to prevent its forward march, and to recover their own posts at the same time.

It follows that they can exist in this role only as long as the aristocracy retains enough power in the society to make their mediation useful.

* The reference is to the analogous role later played, in England, by the Liberal Party with relation to the working class as constituency, or by the Democratic Party in the United States today—parties definable, in Marx's words, as the *bourgeois representatives* of the working class, who "make to the [working] class, and assist it in conquering, all those concessions, which in the course of social and political development have shown themselves to have become unavoidable and undelayable." This relationship still gives rise to confusing political types and ambiguous personages, just as Marx wrote of the Whigs:

It is evident what a distastefully heterogeneous mixture the character of the British Whigs must turn out to be: Feudalists, who are at the same time Malthusians, money-mongers with feudal prejudices, aristocrats without point of honour, Bourgeois without industrial activity, finality-men with progressive phrases, progressists with fanatical Conservatism, traffickers in homeopathic fractions of reforms, fosterers of family-nepotism, Grand Masters of corruption, hypocrites of religion, Tartuffes of politics.
... from the moment when the Tories are definitively overthrown, British history has no longer any room for the Whigs. The aristocracy once destroyed, what is the use of an aristocratic representation of the Bourgeoisie against this aristocracy? 33

When, the following year, a coalition government took shape, Marx interpreted it along the same lines:

"In a word, the entire Aristocracy agree, that the Government has to be conducted for the benefit, and according to the interests of the middle-class, but they are determined that the Bourgeoisie are not to be themselves the governors of this affair; and for this object all that the old Oligarchy possess of talent, influence and authority are combined, in a last effort, into one Administration, which has for its task to keep the Bourgeoisie, as long as possible, from the direct enjoyment of governing the nation. The coalized Aristocracy of England, intend with regard to the Bourgeoisie, to act on the same principle upon which Napoleon I. professed to act in reference to the people: "Tout pour le peuple, rien par le peuple." 34

On the Napoleonic principle, "Everything for the people, nothing by the people," the aristocratic governing class, "the class that rule officially," struck a compromise with the class that rule nonofficially, a compromise

"by which the general governing power is abandoned to some sections of the middle class, on condition that the whole of the real Government, the Executive in all its details, even to the executive department of the legislative power—or that is, the actual law-making in the two Houses of Parliament—is secured to the landed aristocracy. . . ." 35

Already in 1855 Marx saw this compromise as superannuated, and in 1858 he thought he saw his 1852 prediction about the fate of the Whigs coming true:

"The fact is that the two ruling oligarchic parties of England were long ago transformed into mere factions, without any distinctive principles. . . . Till now, the Tories have been aristocrats ruling in the name of the aristocracy, and the Whig aristocrats ruling in the name of the middle class; but the middle class having assumed to rule in their own name, the business of the Whigs is gone. In order to keep the Whigs out of office, the Tories will
yield to the encroachments of the middle-class party until they have worried out Whig patience and convinced these oligarchs that, in order to save the interests of their order, they must merge in the conservative ranks and forsake their traditionary pretensions to represent the liberal interest or form a power of their own. Absorption of the Whig faction into the Tory faction, and their common metamorphosis into the party of the aristocracy, as opposed to the new middle-class party, acting under its own chiefs, under its own banners, with its own watchwords—such is the consummation we are now witnessing in England.  

Nor was 1858 actually the end of the English aristocracy, or elements of it, in the role of governing surrogates for the bourgeoisie. So late into the nineteenth century did the bourgeoisie display its backwardness in politically managing its own system.*


In the latter part of the nineteenth century, thought Engels, the English bourgeoisie did finally exhibit "a certain talent for upholding its position as leading class at least to some degree," but in 1889 he was led to comment that this seemed to be changing. The bourgeoisie once again showed it could not easily act as a class on behalf of its class interests—only this time it had to be bailed out not from above (by the aristocracy) but from below (by the working class). His article cited two recent events.

One involved London's antiquated port system, whose absurdity "threatens to stifle the living conditions of all of London," the rest of the bourgeoisie included.

* A by-product of this discussion should be realization of how absurd Marx would have considered the latter-day pseudo-Marxist notion of "one class—one party." The articles quoted in the preceding section, as well as others, provide massive evidence that the one-to-one correspondence of classes and parties is not only not a rule but is in fact unusual. Further material will be found in the next chapter, from The Eighteenth Brumaire. Under varying historical circumstances, a given political party may be based on more than one class, and a given class may be represented by more than one party. In the latter case, a party may reflect or stem from a sector of the class, an ideology or political orientation within the class, or simply a clique; or it may itself degenerate into a mere coterie or clique. And these do not exhaust the possible complications. The party lineup may
Then the dock workers' strike breaks out. It is not the bourgeoisie being robbed by the dock companies that rebels, it is the workers exploited by them, the poorest of the poor, the lowest layer of the East End proletarians, who fling down the gauntlet to the dock magnates.\footnote{39}

The fact that the challenge to the dock companies was "indirectly also in the interests of the bourgeois class" brought public sympathy for the strike and money contributions; "the workers fought the battle to the end" and stirred public opinion to the point where modernization of the dock system was made inevitable.

This job should have been done by the bourgeoisie long ago. It was unable or unwilling to do it. Now the workers have taken it in hand and now it will be done. In other words, in this case the bourgeoisie has renounced its own part in favor of the workers.

In Lancashire, a speculators' ring sought to corner cotton and hoist prices. The cotton spinners could retaliate only by combining to curtail their consumption of the raw material by large-scale shutdowns. But no common action could be achieved as the individual interests of the cotton spinners were at sixes and sevens. How could all cotton mills be shut down? A wage cut could do it by causing a strike or lockout, in which case all the millowners would discover their class solidarity; but it happened that a wage cut was not feasible. The alternative was "a step which is unique in the history of modern industry":

The mill-owners, through their central committee, "semi-officially" approach the Central Committee of the Workers' Trade Unions with the request that the organized workers should, in the common interest, \textit{force} the obstinate mill-owners to shut down by organizing strikes. Messrs. mill-owners, admitting their own inability to take concerted action, ask the formerly so much hated workers' trade unions, kindly to use coercion against them,

simplify down to match the class lineup insofar as the class struggle polarizes the society. When the ruling English parties moved toward coalition in 1853, as mentioned above, Marx wondered aloud as follows:

Is not the very fact of such a "coalition" the most explicit indication that the time has arrived when the actually grown-up and yet partially unrepresented fundamental classes of modern society, the industrial bourgeoisie and the working class, are about to vindicate to themselves the position of the only political parties in the nation?\footnote{38}

Once again the time coefficient was ahead of itself: the situation envisioned did not take place in England, even approximately, until most of a century later.
the mill-owners, so that the mill-owners, induced by bitter necessity, should finally act in concert, as a class, in the interests of their own class. They have to be forced to do so by the workers, for they themselves are unable to bring this about!

In twenty-four hours the mere threat of a strike smashed the ring.

Thus, here too, in the most modern of all modern large-scale industries, the bourgeoisie proves to be as incapable of defending its own class interests, as it is in medieval London. And what is more, it frankly admits it, and by turning to the organized workers with the request that they should defend a major class interest of the mill-owners themselves, it not only abdicates, but recognizes in the organized working class its successor, who is called upon to rule and is quite capable of doing so. 40

The moral to be drawn goes beyond Engels' propagandistic conclusion. For one thing, by showing that its class interests could be preserved only by some outside force of coercion, the bourgeoisie invited more candidates for the role of savior than merely the labor movement; and for another, this pattern helps to explain why it took the Social-Democracy to preserve the system during the convulsions that followed the first world war. But more immediately, there is another lesson: it is a distinct advantage to the bourgeoisie if its own state—the state which assures its interests—is not simply its tool, if indeed this state enjoys sufficient autonomy from the ruling class so that, if need be, the former can even exert coercion on the latter.

This is the conclusion that Marx drew from the experience of the English factory acts, prototypes of bourgeois labor legislation and welfarism. The capitalist state has to correct for the shortsightedness of the capitalists themselves:

These acts curb the passion of capital for a limitless draining of labor-power, by forcibly limiting the working-day by state regulations, made by a state that is ruled by capitalist and landlord. Apart from the working-class movement that daily grows more threatening, the limiting of factory labor was dictated by the same necessity which spread guano over the English fields. The same blind eagerness for plunder that in the one case exhausted the soil, had, in the other, torn up by the roots the living force of the nation. Periodical epidemics speak on this point as clearly as the diminishing military standard in Germany and France. 41
The Lancashire example was double-barreled: as Engels mentioned, the same results could have obtained, not by deliberate arrangement with the labor movement, but in genuine fear of it. In actuality, both were involved anyway: the deliberate arrangement was only by the more farsighted leadership of the millocracy; it was the fear that whipped the body of the class in line. Historically the bourgeoisie showed itself ever ready to cede the helm of government to alien hands whenever that was necessary to protect it from the danger from below. “In the 1830s,” remarked Marx, “the [English] bourgeoisie preferred the renewal of the compromise with the landed aristocracy to a compromise with the mass of the English people.” Of the German bourgeoisie Engels wrote: “it does not know how to rule, it is powerless and incapable of anything. It can do only one thing: savagely attack the workers as soon as they begin to stir.”

It is a peculiarity of the bourgeoisie, in contrast to all former ruling classes, that there is a turning-point in its development after which every further expansion of its agencies of power, hence primarily of its capital, only tends to make it more and more unfit for political rule. “Behind the big bourgeois stand the proletarians.” . . . From that moment on, it loses the strength required for exclusive political rule; it looks around for allies with whom to share its power, or to whom to cede the whole of its rule, as circumstances may require.

For all of these reasons, state autonomization represents a valuable element of flexibility in the state structure. If the bourgeoisie were capable of keeping the state on a short leash, and always did so, that state would have strangled long ago. On the other hand, while the state needs a long leash, this tends to make capitalists uneasy, especially when the state strains at the leash.

This aspect, like others we have mentioned, gives rise to ambiguous personages in politics. The element of autonomous flexibility was well represented by Disraeli in Marx’s time, as he had occasion to note:

“Whatever be our opinion of the man, who is said to despise the aristocracy, to hate the bourgeoisie, and not to like the people, he is unquestionably the ablest member of the present Parliament, while the flexibility of his character enables him the better to accommodate himself to the changing wants of society.”
The role that Disraeli played was conditioned on the degree to which he personally stood apart from the classes: his outsider aspect.

9. CAN THE BOURGEOISIE DO IT?

Could the bourgeoisie ever take the governing power really into its own hands as a class? Engels, who paid a good deal of attention to the question, could not avoid shuttling between a negative and a positive answer, over the decades. The reason for the uncertainty is plain: On the one hand, could the bourgeoisie be so different from previous ruling classes? Wasn't it, rather, merely retarded, but on the way nevertheless? On the other hand, the facts of current history continued to enforce a negative conclusion.

Let us illustrate this zigzag in three scenes.

1. In 1866 Bismarck's universal-suffrage coup, and the bourgeoisie's meek acceptance of it, swung Engels over to one side:

   It is becoming clearer and clearer to me that the bourgeoisie doesn't have the stuff to rule directly itself, and that therefore, where there is no oligarchy as there is here in England to take over, for good pay, the managing of state and society in the interest of the bourgeoisie, a Bonapartist semi-dictatorship is the normal form; it carries out the big material interests of the bourgeoisie even against the bourgeoisie, but deprives the bourgeoisie of any share in the ruling power itself. On the other hand, this dictatorship is itself, in turn, compelled to reluctantly adopt these material interests of the bourgeoisie.46

   But this symbiotic relationship between the socioeconomic ruling class and its autonomized state (which holds the power of government, that is, the immediate reins of the state apparatus) is not confined to the case of Bonapartism; we have seen that it holds true in less extreme form also.

2. In 1889, writing to Laura Lafargue (Marx's daughter), Engels thought that the elections just held in France would at last bring about a totally bourgeois government. The rightist danger apparently ended, politics shifted toward the bourgeois liberal end of the spectrum.
Now, for the first time, you will get a real government of the entire bourgeoisie. In 1849/51, the rue de Poitiers [political club] under Thiers, too, formed a government of the whole bourgeois class, but that was by the truce between two opposing monarchical factions, and by its very nature passager [short-lived]. Now you will get one based upon the despair to upset the republic, upon its recognition as an unavoidable pis-aller [last resort], and therefore a bourgeois government which has the stuff to last until its final smash-up.

At last, he thought, the various warring sectors of the bourgeoisie would “act as a bourgeoisie une et indivisible” (the phrase echoes the “unitary and indivisible republic” slogan). Later the same month he explained that this did not necessarily entail party coalition governments. Rather, “the impending rule of the French bourgeoisie as a class” meant that

you have the real conditions of the rule of the whole bourgeois class, of parliamentarism in full blossom: two parties struggling for the majority and taking in turns the parts of Ins and Outs, of government and opposition. Here, in England, you have the rule of the whole bourgeois class; but that does not mean that Conservatives and Radicals coalesce; on the contrary, they relieve each other.

But in these two letters Engels’ discussion, focused on the removal of the danger from the right, does not take account of the bourgeoisie’s fear from the left. Would not this make “the rule of the whole bourgeois class” a transitory one also in the Third Republic?

3. In 1892, in his English introduction to Socialism Utopian and Scientific, a more rounded discussion pointed once again to an essentially negative conclusion. This discussion occurs in the context of the bourgeoisie’s fear of working-class revolt:

It seems a law of historical development that the bourgeoisie can in no European country get hold of political power—at least for any length of time—in the same exclusive way in which the feudal aristocracy kept hold of it during the Middle Ages. Even in France, where feudalism was completely extinguished, the bourgeoisie, as a whole, has held full possession of the Government for very short periods only. . . . It is only now, in the Third Republic, that the bourgeoisie as a whole have kept possession of the helm for more than twenty years;* and they are already showing lively
signs of decadence. A durable reign of the bourgeoisie has been possible only in countries like America, where feudalism was unknown, and society at the very beginning started from a bourgeois basis. . . .

In England, the bourgeoisie never held undivided sway. Even the victory of 1832 left the landed aristocracy in almost exclusive possession of all the leading Government offices. . . . The English bourgeoisie are, up to the present day, so deeply penetrated by a sense of their social inferiority that they keep up, at their own expense and that of the nation, an ornamental caste of drones. . . .

The industrial and commercial middle class had, therefore, not yet succeeded in driving the landed aristocracy completely from political power when another competitor, the working class, appeared on the stage.\(^50\)

It is the threat from below, from the working class, that represents the potentialities of the future, hence reinforces the inaptitude of the bourgeoisie to take direct control of the state machine and the consequent tendency toward state autonomization.

But autonomization can take many forms, and extend to different degrees. The experience that was decisive for Marx's thinking on this subject took place in France: it was what Engels (in his 1866 remark cited above) had called "the normal form"—Bonapartism.

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\(*\) This reckoning is obviously at odds with Engels' 1889 letter; the difference is a matter of estimation—estimation of the degree to which the whole bourgeoisie participated in the governing power at one time or another. For that matter, further on in this passage, the reference to England also reflects a different estimate from that in the second 1889 letter. The important thing for present purposes is not the specific estimation of just when, if ever, a bourgeoisie wields "undivided sway," but the theoretical considerations behind the problem.
REFERENCE NOTES

Titles are given in abbreviated form; full titles and publication data are provided in the Bibliography. Book and article titles are not distinguished in form. Page numbers apply to the edition cited in the Bibliography. Volume and page are usually separated by a colon: for example, 3:148 means Volume 3, page 148.

Some frequently used abbreviations are:

E = Engels
Ltr = Letter
M = Marx
ME = Marx and Engels
M/E = Marx or Engels
MEGA = Marx and Engels, Gesamtausgabe
ME:SC = Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence (2nd ed., 1965)
MEW = Marx and Engels, Werke
NRZ = Neue Rheinische Zeitung
NRZ Revue = Neue Rheinische Zeitung, Politisch-Ökonomische Revue
Rev. after = Revised after the original text
Rev. from = Revised from an extant translation
RZ = Rheinische Zeitung
Tr. = Translation, translated in

The first source cited is the actual source of the quotation or statement; it is sometimes followed by a [bracketed] reference that cites an extant translation if the first reference is to the original, or vice versa. This second reference is given for the reader’s convenience only; when it is to “Tr.” with no title, it refers to the translation cited in the Bibliography.
FOREWORD

1. There are extensive bibliographies on this subject in several places, e.g., McLellan: *M Bef. Mxism.*; Mészáros: *M's Th. Alien.* A book that should not be overlooked is Lowy: *Th. Rev. Jeune M.*


5. M: Grundrisse, 204.

6. Ch. 20, p. 507.

7. M: Pov. Philo., 154; compare also the point made on 41-42.

8. Bukharin: *Hist. Mat.*, 278, also 276. This type of definition was repeated in e.g., Hook: *Twds. Und. K. M.*, 229.


12. For ex., see the material and references in Ch. 22, §2.


14. For "God protect me . . ." see qu., Ch. 1, p. 40. For 1850, ME: G. Kinkel, MEW 7:299.


16. See Acton: *What M Really Said*, 112, for his closest approach, but he has Lenin in view.


23. An example of this feat is Hodges: *E's Contrib.*


1. THE DEMOCRATIC EXTREMIST


4. See Ch. 11, p. 237 fn.
5. As claimed in McGovern: *Yg. M on State*, 440-441, 443-444, 465. The opposite exaggeration is conveyed by Marcuse: *Reason & Rev.*, 173, 213: "the state is separate from society" *tout court*.

6. *ME*: Ger. Ideol. (64), 47-48, rev. after MEW 3:36. For the same point, see M's intro. to the Grundrisse, first two pages; the translation in M: Contrib. Pol. Econ. (70), 189-190, loses this point by replacing *civil society* with *bourgeois society*.


10. E: Third Member of Alliance, NRZ 4 May 1849, MEW 6:470.

11. For this period, see Ch. 22.


16. *Reminisc. ME* (Kovalevsky), 289; Cornu: *K.M. et F.E.*, 1:19, 26, 88. The law professor, Eduard Gans, had published a book in 1836 which discussed Saint-Simonism at some length; see Gans: *Rückblicke*, 91-103; Marx became a student in his department in October of the same year.


20. Ibid., 36-37, 64.


23. Ibid., 34.

24. Ibid., 38.

25. Ibid., 41.

26. Ibid., 77.


28. Ibid., 25.


30. [This ref. note deleted.]


32. Ibid., 68.

33. Ibid., 75.

34. Ibid., 75.


37. Ibid., 63.

38. Ibid., 65-66.

39. Ibid., 66.

40. Ibid., 67.

41. Ibid., 70.

42. Ibid., 57-58.

43. M: Notes on Charges, MEW Eb. 1:423; these are notes Marx made to argue against banning the RZ.
342 Notes to Pages 44-55

45. Ibid., 63.
46. Ibid., 64.
48. Ibid., 14. Marx reiterated this position—the state can concern itself only with actions, not opinions—in a later article also, M: Banning of L.A.Z., MEW 1:157, 168.
49. Ibid., 24.
50. Ibid., 8, 7.
51. Ibid., 7.
52. Ibid., 15.
53. Ibid., 17.
54. Ibid., 24.
57. Ibid., 43-44.
60. Ibid., 48-49.
61. Ibid., 46.
62. Ibid., 49.
67. Ibid., 63-64.
68. Ibid., 74-75.
69. Ibid., 51.
70. Ibid., 73.
72. Ibid., 4-5.
75. M: Banning of L.A.Z., MEW 1:154; the argument constitutes the whole first installment of the series, 152-154.
76. Ibid., 157 (4th installment).
77. Ibid., 168 (6th installment).
80. Ibid., 59-60.
81. Ibid., 60.
82. Ibid.
83. M: Grundrisse, 155f.
84. For an expansion of this thought, see an article published by M at the end of the year, M: Supp. on Estates Comm., MEW Eb. 1:405.
86. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 219.
89. Ibid., 54.
92. Ibid., 74.
93. Ibid., 75.
98. Ibid., 409.
100. For an elaboration of this theme, see my Two Souls of Socialism, which considers the question both before and after Marx.
101. For the book, see M: Ges. Aufsätze in Bibliography. For the prospectus, see Neue Zeit, 21 Jg., 1 Heft, 1903, p. 707. Also see MEW 27:646 (note 170, 680); and Rubel: Bibliog., 11-12, 91.

2. THE POLITICAL APPRENTICE

1. Ltr, M to Ruge, 30 Nov. 1842, MEW 27:413.
3. From Heine's sonnet "Friedrike," which was published in 1844 though written in 1824.
5. Ibid., 108.
6. Ibid., 107.
7. Ibid., 108; the rest of this paragraph comes from 106-108.
13. Ibid., 189.
15. M: Local Elec., MEW Eb. 1:428-430. The claim made for this article in Cornu: K. M. et F. F., 2:100, is not supported by its content.
17. Ibid., 111.
18. Ibid., 113.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 116-117.
23. Ibid., 117.
24. Ibid., 118.
25. Ibid., 119-120.
26. Ibid., 122-123.
27. Ibid., 124.
3. EMANCIPATION FROM HEGEL

5. Ibid., 266.
6. Ibid., 257, 216. (Also see Marx's observation on this point in his "Kreuznach notebooks," quoted in MEGA I, 1.1, page LXXIV f.)
7. Ibid., 303.
8. Ibid., 304.
9. Ibid., 304-305.
10. Ibid., 312.
11. Ibid., 313-314.
12. Ibid., 222.
13. Ibid., 248-249.
17. Ibid., 250, 253.
18. Ibid., 268.
19. Ibid., 255.
20. Ibid.
23. There are few serious studies in “political lexicography”; Bestor: *Evol. Soc. Vocab.* mainly discusses new words; in Williams: *Cult. & Soc.*, the author’s introduction discusses certain terms; Christophersen: *Meaning Dem.* has a useful collection of usages and passages on democracy and gives a list of related works.
24. Cf. the word *dictatorship* for one stemming from Roman usage; cf. Draper: *Marx & D.P.*, 6-8.
27. Ibid., 225-230.
29. Ibid., 229-230.
33. Ibid., 231.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 232-233.
38. Ibid., 218.
39. Ibid., 259.
40. Ibid., 260.
41. Ibid., 279.
42. Ibid., 297; similarly, 294.
43. Ibid., 321; the emphasis is by Marx, not Hegel.
44. Ibid., 322-323.
45. Ibid., 324.
46. Ibid., 326-327.
47. Ibid., 301.
48. Ibid., 329.
49. Ibid., 330.
50. Ibid., 331.
51. Ibid., 332.
52. Ibid., 333.

4. THE NEW DIRECTION

7. For these competing terms, see Bestor: *Evol. Soc. Vocab*.
8. Cuéllar: *Hommes & Ideol.*, 130. For the Blanquist movement, see the books by Spitzer and Dommanget.
11. Ibid., 341.
12. Ibid., 343.
15. M: Ltrs from D. F. J.; no. 3 (Sept. 1843), MEW 1:344.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 346.
19. M: Ltrs from D. F. J.; no. 3 (Sept. 1843), MEW 1:344.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 345.
25. M: Ltrs from D. F. J.; no. 3 (Sept. 1843), MEW 1:345.

5. IMPLEMENTING THE NEW DIRECTION

5. See Chap. 1, p. 51.
12. Sterling: *Kampf Emanz. Jud.*, 298; if the date given here is correct, Marx was the paper's editor at the time; he made the same point in his *Holy Family* later—see p. 126 below.
13. Brazill: *Yg. Heg.*, 180, 204-205; and see Ch. 10, p. 221-226 for Bauer's elitism. Rotenstreich: *For & Against Emanc.*, 32-36.
15. Ibid., 92; cf. also 97.
16. Ibid., 59-60 on Hermes.
17. Ibid., 29, 32 (for Bauer). For the general pattern, see Dubnov: *Hist. Jews*, 4:643 (for Fichte); Silberner: *Ch. Fourier*, 262-266, or Szajkowski: *Jewish St.-Simonians*, 46 (for Fourier).
19. Ibid., 351.
20. Ibid., 352.
21. Ibid., 353-354.
22. Ibid., 354-355.
23. Ibid., 355.
24. Ibid., 355-356.
25. Ibid., 356.
26. Ibid., 361.
27. Ibid., 358.
28. Ibid., 357, 360, 361.
29. Ibid., 362.
30. Ibid., 363.
31. Ibid., 366; the preceding paragraph refers to 364-366.
32. Ibid., 366.
33. Ibid., 367-368.
34. Ibid., 368.
35. Ibid., 369.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 370.
41. Ibid., 372.
42. Ibid., 372-376 passim.
43. Ibid., 372-373.
44. Ruppin: Jews Mod. World, 110.
45. M: On Jewish Qu., MEW 1:373.
46. Ibid., 373-374.
47. Ibid., 376.
48. Ibid., 377.
49. Ibid., 374.
50. Ibid., 375.
53. Bauer's articles were published in the Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung (Charlottenburg), which he edited. The first two, Dec. 1843 and March 1844, were entitled "Latest Writings on the Jewish Question"; the third, July 1844, "What Is Now the Object of Criticism?" Cf. MEW 2:657 (ns. 32, 35, 36).
54. These three sections are in Ch. 6 of The Holy Family; each section takes up one of Bauer's articles. The most specific repetition of Marx's D. F. J. essay is in the third section; see ME: Holy Fam. (56), 143-153.
55. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 121, 145ff; and in other sections, 122-123, 138.
56. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:117.
57. Ibid., 121; more on same lines on next page.
58. Ibid., 123.
59. For Riesser, see for ex. Graupe: Entstehung Mod. Jud., 234-237. For the politics of the Jewish bourgeois liberals in general, see Sterling: Judenhass, 42-43, 45.
60. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 118.
6. ORIENTATION TOWARD THE PROLETARIAT

63. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:100.
64. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 129.
65. Ibid., 130; cf. MEW 2:102.
66. Ibid., 153.
68. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 153.
69. Ibid., 150.

5. M: Ltrs from D. F. J., no. 2 (May 1843), MEW 1:342-343; there is still a third invocation to the suffering at the end of the letter.
13. For the persistence of the old meaning, see the discussion of lumpen­proletariat in Draper: Concept of Lumpenprole., p. 2286-2289.
15. For Weitling’s article, see Ch. 2, p. 62. Talk of a new 1789 was not uncommon; e.g., see the end of an Oct. 1842 article by Engels, E: Friedr. Wilh. IV, MEW 1:453.
16. For the possible relation between Stein’s book and Marx’s later orientation, see Avineri: Soc. Polit. Th., 53-57. Note that a favorable review (anonymous) of Stein’s book appeared in the Rheinische Zeitung of 16 Mar. 1843, while Marx was still editor; cf. Silbner: M. Hess, 136.
20. Ibid., 136.
30. Ibid., 385.
31. Ibid., 382.
32. Ibid., 383.
33. Ibid., 384.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 385.
36. Ibid., 386.
37. Ibid., 387.
38. Ibid., 386.
39. Ibid., 388.
40. Ibid., 389.
41. Ibid., 390.
42. Ibid.
43. Cf. M: Pov. Philo. (FLPH), 121, 122; for the correction, which refers to the latter locus, see MEW 4:141 fn.
45. E: Com. in Ger./II, MEGA I, 4:344.

7. TOWARD A THEORY OF THE PROLETARIAT

1. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 180.
3. Ibid., 417-418.
4. Ibid., 418.
5. Ltr, E to F. Graeber, July or Aug. 1839, MEW Eb. 2:410-411.
13. Ibid., 444.
16. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 25; this section is by Engels.
20. Ibid., 537-538, 527.
21. Ibid., 538.
22. Ibid., 531, 549.
24. Ibid., 226.
25. M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 63. E's article is also cited on p. 128.
26. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 46.
27. In MEW 1:504.
30. Ibid., 454.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., 463.
34. Ibid., 533.
35. Ibid., 471; tr. in M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 65.
36. Ibid., 533 (written as a comment on a previous passage which is not extant).
37. Ibid., 533.
38. Ibid., 552.
39. Ibid., 473.
40. Ibid., 499.
41. Ibid., 505; likewise 510.
42. Ibid., 510.
43. Ibid., 536.
46. Ibid., 513-514.
47. Ibid., 514.
48. Ibid., 515, also 512.
49. Ibid., 511, and more of the same on 512.
50. Ibid., 518-519.
51. Ibid., 519-520.
52. Ibid., 112-113.
53. Ibid., 521.

8. TOWARD A CLASS THEORY OF THE STATE

2. Ibid., 357.
3. Ibid., 358.
4. Ibid., 357-358; cf. also 368 on how the French Revolution made the state a "real state."
5. M: Holy Fam., MEW 2:124; see also the reference to anarchy as a label for bourgeois society on 129.
7. See the more detailed discussion of this point in Chapter 5, p. 118f; and compare the meaning of the phrase democracy of unfreedom as explained in Chapter 3, p. 87.
8. For the passage in which this occurs, see above, Chapter 5, p. 120.
9. Hector Servadac, Ch. 22.
11. Ibid., 536 (previously quoted above in Ch. 7, p. 164).
12. Ibid., 537.
13. E: Rapid Prog. Com., MEGA I, 4:342; and see plate facing MEW 2:512. The *Northern Star* articles are published for the first time in the new ME: Collected Works, 3:530-534.
17. Ibid., 393.
20. Ibid., 395.
21. Ibid., 397-400.
22. Ibid., 400-401.
23. Ibid., 401.
24. Ibid., 393.
25. Ibid., 393-394.
26. Ibid., 401-402.
27. Ibid., 402.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., 408.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 409.
32. Ibid.
34. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:130.
35. Ibid., 131; cf. tr. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 167.
36. Besides the passage cited, see also MEW 2:120, 123, 128; in tr., 152, 156-157, 163.
37. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:100; cf. tr., 127.
40. Ibid., 247.
41. Ibid., 314-315.
42. Ibid., 318-319.
44. The articles may be found in English in MEGA I, 4:337-348; the letters in MEW 27:5-28. We will return to this material in Ch. 10.
46. E: Two Speeches in Elb., MEW 2:542.
47. Ibid., 542-543.
48. Ibid., 547-548.
49. Ibid., 555-556.
53. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 475.
54. Ibid., 36.
55. Ibid., 44.
56. Ibid., 211 n.
57. M: On Jewish Qu., MEW 1:362-370, or tr. in M: Wr. Yg. M., 233-241; for our discussion, see Ch. 5, pp. 117-120.
58. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 45.
9. CHARACTER AND REVOLUTION

1. Ltr, M to Philips, 29 Nov. 1864, MEW 31:432.
2. For sources, see M: Confessions in Ref. List. The last two of these three questions were left blank in Jenny's copy.
4. MEGA I, 1.2:41-45, or MEW Eb. 1:626-627.
6. Ltr, M to his father, 10 Nov. 1837, MEW Eb. 1:3ff. Tr. in M: Wr. Yg. M, 40ff; M: Early Texts (McLellan), 1ff; Delfgaauw: Yg. M, 101ff.
8. Ltr, M. Hess to B. Auerbach, 2 Sept, 1841, in MEGA I, 1.2:261.
9. E: Triumph of Faith, MEW Eb. 2:301; further on, 303-304, there is a rather pointless dialogue between "Bauer" and the "Marx" character.
14. MEW Eb. 2:507-508; the accompanying facsimile shows no apparent stanza breaks between the quatrains.
15. This poetic drama is contained in ltr, E to F. Graeber, 23 Apr.-1 May 1839, MEW Eb. 2:373-383; the quotation is from p. 375.
Notes to Pages 204–214

29. For the only significant reference, see M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 148; all others are passing mentions of no present interest.


31. Ibid., 329.

32. Ibid., 369–370; the emphasis is by Marx except for better.


35. E: Rev. & C. R. Ger., in ME:SW 1:312. (See also E’s earlier description of the student protest movement against the king, in a Northern Star article now published in the new ME: Collected Works, 3:515f.)

36. See Ch. 7, p. 151f.


40. E: Cola di Rienzi, esp. 7–8, 15–16, 42.


42. Ch. 3, p. 87; see M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Ms., MEW 1:225–230, or tr. in M: Wr. Yg. M., 166–173.


45. Ibid., MEW 1:341, or tr., 208.

46. Ibid., MEW 1:342, or tr., 210.

47. Ibid., MEW 1:338–339, or tr., 206.

48. E: Rev. & C. R. Ger., in ME:SW 1:312. See also the comment on 1840 as “a turning point in the history of Germany” in ME: Great Men, in ME: Col. Com. Trial, 152.

49. The cartoon may be seen in MEW 1: facing 200; or in Mehring: K. M., facing 296 (lacking in the later paperback ed.), with a detailed explanation on the verso.

50. For the German text, Cornu: K. M. und. F. E., 1:350, or Nicolaievsky & M-H., 60, with slight differences.

51. The quotations are from the Paul Elmer More translation of Prometheus Bound, in W. J. Oates & E. O’Neill Jr., Complete Greek Drama, 1:127ff., except for the first (Hephaestus) which is a paraphrase.

52. Ltr, Jenny Marx to M, after 20 June 1844, MEW Eb. 1:650.


56. Landor: Curtain Raised.

10. Toward the Principle of Self-Emancipation


2. Ltr, M to E, 27 Feb. 1861, MEW 30:160; see also M: Confessions, in which Spartacus and Kepler are listed under favorite “hero.”
3. See Aristotle: Politics, 217-221 (Book V, Ch. 6).
5. From the Aeneid, VII, 312; Juno speaking.
9. E: Pref./Com. Manif./1888, in ME:SW (55), 1:28; the formulation has a small variation from the original, as is true also in M: Crit. Gotha Prog., in ME:SW 3:20.
11. Ibid., 436.
12. Ibid., 435.
13. Ibid., 449; previously cited in Ch. 7, p. 156f.
18. E: Late Butchery, in MEGA I, 4:477.
19. See Ch. 6, p. 148.
22. M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 171; see also the passage which Marx crossed out of the preface, p. 236 in this edition.
24. For example, see M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 172, 174.
25. ME: Holy Fam., (56), 17, 21, 24 [MEW 2:9, 12, 14].
26. Cf. Hook: From Heg. to M, 103-105; the whole of Ch. 3, on Bauer, should be read in connection with this subject.
27. ME: Holy Fam., (56), 29 [MEW 2:19].
29. Ibid., 109, rev. after MEW 2:85.
30. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:85-86.
31. Ibid., 86.
34. Ibid., 88-89.
35. See Ch. 6, p. 138.
36. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:89.
37. Ibid., 90.
38. Ibid., 90-91.
39. Ibid., 91.
40. Ibid., 143.
41. Ibid., 152.
43. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:57.
44. This account is based on Chaunu: E. Sue, 5-60.
45. Sue: Myst. of Paris, 420-421.
46. Ibid., 1110, 10, 44.
47. Ibid., 429-430, 160.
48. Ibid., 530, 957.
49. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:58.
50. Ibid., 172, 176.
52. ME: Holy Fam., (56), 266-268 [MEW 2:214-215].
55. Ibid., 275, rev. after MEW 2:221.
56. Ibid., 265, rev. after MEW 2:213.
63. See Ch. 1, § 5.
64. For the two versions in English, see ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 646, 651-652; for the two in German, see MEW 3:5-6, 533-534. We have omitted entirely two changes introduced by Engels in the second paragraph: he deleted the words or self-changing and altered revolutionary practice (revolutionäre Praxis) to transformatory (or revolutionizing) practice (umwälzende Praxis).

11. THE STATE AND SOCIETY

8. M: Grundrisse, 484.
9. Ibid., 845.
12. E: Anti-Düühr. (59), 204.
13. Ibid., 205.
16. This is the title of an interesting book by V. Gordon Childe (London, 1936; N. Y., 1951).
18. Ibid., 248.
19. Ibid., 252.
24. Ibid., 251.
40. Ibid., 327, rev. after MEW 21:165-166.
41. M: Prep. for War, in N. Y. Tribune, 8 Nov. 1860.
42. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:328.
43. Ibid.
47. Ibid., 328.
49. For the Ger. original, see MEW 4:464.
51. For example, E: Hous. Qu., in ME:SW 2:347; M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:218; also in 1st Dr., in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 150, and 2d Dr., ibid., 210-211.
53. M: Notebk. Par. Com./Apr.-May, 150. Along the same lines: for 1849, see M: Cl. Str. Fr., in ME:SW 1:264; for the Commune, M: Civ. War Fr. 1st Dr., in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 104; for the Franco-Prussian war period, see E: Notes on W., 61, 129; also ltr, Jenny Marx (daughter) to Mrs. Kugelmann, 19 Nov. 1870, in Labour Monthly, Mar. 1956, 140.
57. M: Cap. 1:657.
12. THE STATE IN PRACTICE: METHODS AND FORMS

10. Ltr, M to Lafargues, 5 Mar. 1870, MEW 32:657 (facsim.).
11. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 146.
15. E.g. see p. 306.
   The whole article is relevant here.
19. M: Grundrisse, 80, 133-134.
21. Ibid., 169, 714. (Cf. also M: Grundrisse, 406.)
24. Ibid., 176.
27. Ibid., 916, 160 (the argument runs through pp. 155-160).
28. Ibid., 543-545.
29. Ibid., 545.
32. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 145.
33. Ibid., 146, 147, 147-148.
34. M: Cap. 1:60.
35. See Ch. 9, § 3.
13. THE STATE AND DEMOCRATIC FORMS

1. Lindsay: K. M.'s Cap., 105.
2. See Ch. 3, §5.
3. See the reference to this in Ch. 1, p. 58; it will come up again in another part in connection with feudal socialism.
4. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 362.
8. Ibid., 15-17.
9. For Ruge's political devolution, see Brazill: Yg. Heg., 256-259.
17. Ibid., 343.
18. For the first number, see M/E: Hüser, MEW 5:18; besides the passages quoted further along, there was constant emphasis on the issue: e.g., E: Supress. Clubs, NRZ, 20 July 1848, MEW 5:238.
25. Ibid., 440.
27. E: Debate on Jac. Motion, NRZ, 22 July 1848, MEW 5:229.
29. Ibid., 276-277.
31. E: Debate on Jac. Motion, NRZ, 18 June 1848, MEW 5:222-223.
33. Ibid., 40.
34. E.g., in E: Concil. Debates, MEW 5:49, 52.
35. M/E: Addr. Ques., NRZ, 8 June 1848, MEW 5:53.
40. Ibid., 126.
41. Ibid., 129.
45. M: article (no title), N. Y. Tribune, 5 Nov. 1858.
46. M: Aff. in Pruss., N. Y. Tribune, 8 Nov. 1858.
47. M: Aff. in Pruss., N. Y. Tribune, 3 Nov. 1858.
49. M: Civ. War Fr., 1st Dr., in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 152, and 2d Dr., ibid., 200.
For final version, see M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:220.
51. Ibid., 127, 128. See also M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:408.
52. M: article (no title), N. Y. Tribune, 5 Nov. 1858.
53. M: Aff. in Pruss., N. Y. Tribune, 8 Nov. 1858.
54. Ibid.
59. Ibid., 255.
60. M: article (no title), N. Y. Tribune, 8 Mar. 1854.
66. Ibid., 340.
67. Ltr, Harney to E, 30 Mar. 1846, in Harney Papers, 245.
68. See Ch. 10, pp. 216-218.
70. Ibid., 38, 57.
71. Ibid., 57-58, rev. after MEW 1:592.

14. THE TENDENCY TOWARD STATE AUTONOMY

1. See Ch. 11, pp. 247f.
4. Ibid., 62, 63, 63-64.
5. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 60-61.
7. Ibid., 195.
11. See Ch. 13, § 5.
17. The Tempest, I, ii, and II, ii.
18. This is the passage, in Ch. 11, § 3, ending: "the state is in being."
19. The Tempest, I, ii.
22. See Ch. 3, p. 86, and Ch. 5, § 4.
26. Ibid., 421.
27. Ltr, E to Bebel, 19 Feb. 1892, MEW 38:281; the whole passage here is of interest in this connection.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., 356.
40. Ibid., 398, 399.
41. M: Cap. 1:239.
43. E: Pref./Peas. War Ger., in ME:SW 2:159.
44. Ibid., 162; the italicized quotation is from the last page of the work itself, E: Peas. War Ger. (56), 157.
45. ME: British Politics, N. Y. Tribune, 7 Apr. 1853.
46. Ltr, E to M, 13 Apr. 1866, MEW 31:208 [tr. ME:SC, 177]; the context is discussed below, p. 257f.
47. For this, see M: Cl. Str. Fr., in ME:SW 1:268-269.
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