

the relation between the 'facts' and the concrete totality to which they belong and in which they become 'real'.

But now it becomes quite clear that the social development and its intellectual reflex that was led to form 'facts' from a reality that had been undivided (originally, in its autochthonous state) did indeed make it possible to subject nature to the will of man. At the same time, however, they served to conceal the socio-historical grounding of these facts in relations between men "so as to raise strange, phantom powers against them".⁴⁸ For the ossifying quality of reified thought with its tendency to oust the process is exemplified even more clearly in the 'facts' than in the 'laws' that would order them. In the latter it is still possible to detect a trace of human activity even though it often appears in a reified and false subjectivity. But in the 'facts' we find the crystallisation of the essence of capitalist development into an ossified, impenetrable thing alienated from man. And the form assumed by this ossification and this alienation converts it into a foundation of reality and of philosophy that is perfectly self-evident and immune from every doubt. When confronted by the rigidity of these 'facts' every movement seems like a movement *impinging* on them, while every tendency to change them appears to be a merely subjective principle (a wish, a value judgement, an ought). Thus only when the theoretical primacy of the 'facts' has been broken, only when *every phenomenon is recognised to be a process*, will it be understood that what we are wont to call 'facts' consists of processes. Only then will it be understood that the facts are nothing but the parts, the *aspects* of the total process that have been broken off, artificially isolated and ossified. This also explains why the total process which is uncontaminated by any trace of reification and which allows the process-like essence to prevail *in all its purity* should represent the authentic, higher reality. Of course, it also becomes clear why in the reified thought of the bourgeoisie the 'facts' have to play the part of its highest fetish in both theory and practice. This petrified factuality in which everything is frozen into a 'fixed magnitude',⁴⁹ in which the reality that just happens to exist persists in a totally senseless, unchanging way precludes any theory that could throw light on even this immediate reality.

This takes reification to its ultimate extreme: it no longer points dialectically to anything beyond itself: its dialectic is mediated only by the reification of the immediate forms of pro-

duction. But with that a climax is reached in the conflict between existence in its immediacy together with the abstract categories that constitute its thought, on the one hand, and a vital societal reality on the other. For these forms (e.g. interest) appear to capitalist thinkers as the fundamental ones that determine all the others and serve as paradigms for them. And likewise, every decisive turn of events in the production process must more or less reveal that the true categorical structure of capitalism has been turned completely upside down.

Thus bourgeois thought remains fixated on these forms which it believes to be immediate and original and from there it attempts to seek an understanding of economics, blithely unaware that the only phenomenon that has been formulated is its own inability to comprehend its own social foundations. Whereas for the proletariat the way is opened to a complete penetration of the forms of reification. It achieves this by starting with what is dialectically the clearest form (the immediate relation of capital and labour). It then relates this to those forms that are more remote from the production process and so includes and comprehends them, too, in the dialectical totality.⁵⁰

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Thus man has become the measure of all (societal) things. The conceptual and historical foundation for this has been laid by the methodological problems of economics: by dissolving the fetishistic objects into processes that take place among men and are objectified in concrete relations between them; by deriving the indissoluble fetishistic forms from the primary forms of human relations. At the conceptual level the structure of the world of men stands revealed as a system of dynamically changing relations in which the conflicts between man and nature, man and man (in the class struggle, etc.) are fought out. The structure and the hierarchy of the categories are the index of the degree of clarity to which man has attained concerning the foundations of his existence in these relations, i.e. the degree of consciousness of himself.

At the same time this structure and this hierarchy are the central theme of history. History is no longer an enigmatic flux *to which* men and things are subjected. It is no longer a thing to be explained by the intervention of transcendental powers or made meaningful by reference to transcendental values. History

is, on the one hand, the product (albeit the unconscious one) of man's own activity, on the other hand it is the succession of those processes in which the forms taken by this activity and the relations of man to himself (to nature, to other men) are overthrown. So that if—as we emphasised earlier on—the categories describing the structure of a social system are not immediately historical, i.e. if the empirical succession of historical events does not suffice to explain the origins of a particular form of thought or existence, then it can be said that despite this, or better, because of it, any such conceptual system will describe in its totality a definite stage in the society as a whole.

And the nature of history is precisely that every definition degenerates into an illusion: *history is the history of the unceasing overthrow of the objective forms that shape the life of man.* It is therefore not possible to reach an understanding of particular forms by studying their successive appearances in an empirical and historical manner. This is not because they transcend history, though this is and must be the bourgeois view with its addiction to thinking about isolated 'facts' in isolated mental categories. The truth is rather that these particular forms are not immediately connected with each other either by their simultaneity or by their consecutiveness. What connects them is their place and function in the totality and by rejecting the idea of a 'purely historical' explanation the notion of history as a universal discipline is brought nearer. When the problem of connecting isolated phenomena has become a problem of categories, by the same dialectical process every problem of categories becomes transformed into a historical problem. Though it should be stressed: it is transformed into a problem of universal history which now appears—more clearly than in our introductory polemical remarks—simultaneously as a problem of method and a problem of our knowledge of the present.

From this standpoint alone does history really become a history of mankind. For it contains nothing that does not lead back ultimately to men and to the relations between men. It is because Feuerbach gave this new direction to philosophy that he was able to exercise such a decisive influence on the origins of historical materialism. However, by transforming philosophy into 'anthropology' he caused man to become frozen in a fixed objectivity and thus pushed both dialectics and history to one side. And precisely this is the great danger in every 'humanism' or anthro-

pological point of view.⁵¹ For if man is made the measure of all things, and if with the aid of that assumption all transcendence is to be eliminated without man himself being measured against this criterion, without applying the same 'standard' to himself or—more exactly—without making man himself dialectical, then man himself is made into an absolute and he simply puts himself in the place of those transcendental forces he was supposed to explain, dissolve and systematically replace. At best, then, a dogmatic metaphysics is superseded by an equally dogmatic relativism.

This dogmatism arises because the failure to make man dialectical is complemented by an equal failure to make reality dialectical. Hence relativism moves within an essentially static world. As it cannot become conscious of the immobility of the world and the rigidity of its own standpoint it inevitably reverts to the dogmatic position of those thinkers who likewise offered to explain the world from premises they did not consciously acknowledge and which, therefore, they adopted uncritically. For it is one thing to relativise the truth about an individual or a species in an ultimately static world (masked though this stasis may be by an illusory movement like the "eternal recurrence of the same things" or the biological or morphological 'organic' succession of periods). And it is quite another matter when *the concrete, historical function and meaning* of the various 'truths' is revealed within a unique, concretised historical process. Only in the former case can we accurately speak of relativism. But in that case it inevitably becomes dogmatic. For it is only meaningful to speak of relativism where an 'absolute' is in some sense assumed. The weakness and the half-heartedness of such 'daring thinkers' as Nietzsche or Spengler is that their relativism only abolishes the absolute in appearance.

For, from the standpoint of both logic and method, the 'systematic location' of the absolute is to be found just where the apparent movement stops. The absolute is nothing but the fixation of thought, it is the projection into myth of the intellectual failure to understand reality concretely as a historical process. Just as the relativists have only appeared to dissolve the world into movement, so too they have only appeared to exile the absolute from their systems. Every 'biological' relativism, etc., that turns its limits into 'eternal' limits thereby involuntarily reintroduces the absolute, the 'timeless' principle of thought. And as long as

the absolute survives in a system (even unconsciously) it will prove logically stronger than all attempts at relativism. For it represents the highest principle of thought attainable in an undialectical universe, in a world of ossified things and a logical world of ossified concepts. So that *here* both *logically and methodologically* Socrates must be in the right as against the sophists, and logic and value theory must be in the right as against pragmatism and relativism.

What these relativists are doing is to take the present philosophy of man with its social and historical limits and to allow these to ossify into an 'eternal' limit of a biological or pragmatic sort. Actuated either by doubt or despair they thus stand revealed as a *decadent version* of the very rationalism or religiosity they mean to oppose. Hence they may sometimes be a not unimportant *symptom* of the inner weakness of the society which produced the rationalism they are 'combating'. But they are significant only as symptoms. It is always the culture they assail, the culture of the class that has not yet been broken, that embodies the authentic spiritual values.

Only the dialectics of history can create a radically new situation. This is not only because it relativises all limits, or better, because it puts them in a state of flux. Nor is it just because all those forms of existence that constitute the counterpart of the absolute are dissolved into processes and viewed as concrete manifestations of history so that the absolute is not so much denied as endowed with *its concrete historical shape and treated as an aspect of the process itself*.

But, in addition to these factors, it is also true that the historical process is something unique and its dialectical advances and reverses are an incessant struggle to reach higher stages of the truth and of the (societal) *self-knowledge of man*. The 'relativisation' of truth in Hegel means that the higher factor is always the truth of the factor beneath it in the system. This does not imply the destruction of 'objective' truth at the lower stages but only that it means something different as a result of being integrated in a more concrete and comprehensive totality. When Marx makes dialectics the essence of history, the movement of thought also becomes just a part of the overall movement of history. History becomes the history of the objective forms from which man's environment and inner world are constructed and which he strives to master in thought, action and art, etc. (Whereas

relativism always works with rigid and immutable objective forms.)

In the period of the "pre-history of human society" and of the struggles between classes the only possible function of truth is to establish the various possible attitudes to an essentially uncomprehended world in accordance with man's needs in the struggle to master his environment. Truth could only achieve an 'objectivity' relative to the standpoint of the individual classes and the objective realities corresponding to it. But as soon as mankind has clearly understood and hence *restructured* the foundations of its existence truth acquires a wholly novel aspect. When theory and practice are united it becomes possible to change reality and when this happens the absolute and its 'relativistic' counterpart will have played their historical role for the last time. For as the result of these changes we shall see the disappearance of that reality which the absolute and the relative expressed in like manner.

This process *begins* when the proletariat becomes conscious of its own class point of view. Hence it is highly misleading to describe dialectical materialism as 'relativism'. For although they share a common premise: man as the measure of all things, they each give it a different and even contradictory interpretation. The beginning of a 'materialist anthropology' in Feuerbach is in fact only a beginning and one that is in itself capable of a number of continuations. Marx took up Feuerbach's suggestion and thought it out to its logical conclusion. In the process he takes issue very sharply with Hegel: "Hegel makes of man a man of self-consciousness instead of making self-consciousness the self-consciousness of man, i.e. of real man as he lives in the real world of objects by which he is conditioned."⁵²

Simultaneously, however, and this is moreover at the time when he was most under the influence of Feuerbach, he sees man historically and dialectically, and both are to be understood in a double sense. (1) He never speaks of man in general, of an abstractly absolutised man: he always thinks of him as a link in a concrete totality, in a society. The latter must be explained from the standpoint of man but only after man has himself been integrated in the concrete totality and has himself been made truly concrete. (2) Man himself is the objective foundation of the historical dialectic and the subject-object lying at its roots, and as such he is decisively involved in the dialectical process. To formulate it in the initial abstract categories of dialectics: *he both*

is and at the same time is not. Religion, Marx says, in the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, "is the realisation in phantasy of the essence of man because the essence of man does not possess any true reality."⁶³ And as this non-existent man is to be made the measure of all things, the true demiurge of history, his non-being must at once become the concrete and historically dialectical form of critical knowledge of the present in which man is necessarily condemned to non-existence. The negation of his being becomes concretised, then, in the understanding of bourgeois society. At the same time—as we have already seen—the dialectics of bourgeois society and the contradictions of its abstract categories stand out clearly when measured against the nature of man. Following the criticism of Hegel's theory of consciousness we have just quoted, Marx announces his own programme in these terms: "It must be shown how the state and private property, etc., transform men into abstractions, or that they are the products of abstract man instead of being the reality of individual, concrete men." And the fact that in later years Marx adhered to this view of the abstract non-existence of man can be seen from the well-known and oft-quoted words from the Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy* in which bourgeois society is described as the last manifestation of the "pre-history of human society".

It is here that Marx's 'humanism' diverges most sharply from all the movements that seem so similar to it at first glance. Others have often recognised and described how capitalism violates and destroys everything human. I need refer only to Carlyle's *Past and Present* whose descriptive sections received the approval and in part the enthusiastic admiration of the young Engels. In such accounts it is shown, on the one hand, that it is not possible to be human in bourgeois society, and, on the other hand, that man as he exists is opposed without mediation—or what amounts to the same thing, through the mediations of metaphysics and myth—to this non-existence of the human (whether this is thought of as something in the past, the future or merely an imperative).

But this does no more than present the problem in a confused form and certainly does not point the way to a solution. The solution can only be discovered by seeing these two aspects as they appear in the concrete and real process of capitalist development, namely inextricably bound up with one another: i.e. the categories of dialectics must be applied to man as the measure of all things in a manner that also includes simultaneously a com-

plete description of the economic structure of bourgeois society and a correct knowledge of the present. For otherwise, any description will inevitably succumb to the dilemmas of empiricism and utopianism, of voluntarism and fatalism, even though it may give an accurate account of matters of detail. At best it will not advance beyond crude facticity on the one hand, while on the other it will confront the immanent course of history with alien and hence subjective and arbitrary demands.

This is without exception the fate that has befallen all those systems that start with man as their premise and strive in theory to solve the problems of his existence while in practice they seek to liberate him from them. This duality can be seen in all attempts of the type of the Christianity of the Gospels. Society as it actually exists is left unscathed. It makes no difference whether this takes the form of "giving to Caesar the things which are Caesar's", of Luther's sanctification of the powers that be, or of Tolstoy's "resist not evil". For as long as society, as it is, is to be declared sacrosanct it is immaterial with what emotional force or what metaphysical and religious emphasis this is done. What is crucial is that reality as it seems to be should be thought of as something man cannot change and its unchangeability should have the force of a moral imperative.

There are two aspects of the utopian counterpart to this ontology. The first is seen in God's annihilation of empirical reality in the Apocalypse, which can on occasion be absent (as with Tolstoy) without materially affecting the situation. The second lies in the utopian view of man as a 'saint' who can achieve an inner mastery over the external reality that cannot be eliminated. As long as such a view survives with all its original starkness its claims to offer a 'humanistic' solution to man's problems are self-refuting. For it is forced to deny humanity to the vast majority of mankind and to exclude them from the 'redemption' which alone confers meaning upon a life which is meaningless on the level of empirical experience. In so doing it reproduces the inhumanity of class society on a metaphysical and religious plane, in the next world, in eternity—of course with the signs reversed, with altered criteria and with the class structure stood on its head. And the most elementary study of any monastic order as it advances from a community of 'saints' to the point where it becomes an economic and political power at the side of the ruling class will make it abundantly clear that every relaxation of the utopian's

requirements will mean an act of adaptation to the society of the day.

But the 'revolutionary' utopianism of such views cannot break out of the inner limits set to this undialectical 'humanism'. Even the Anabaptists and similar sects preserve this duality. On the one hand, they leave the objective structure of man's empirical existence unimpaired (consumption communism), while on the other hand they expect that reality will be changed by awakening man's inwardness which, independent of his concrete historical life, has existed since time immemorial and must now be brought to life—perhaps through the intervention of a transcendental deity.

They, too, start from the assumption of man as he exists and an empirical world whose structure is unalterable. That this is the consequence of their historical situation is self-evident, but needs no further discussion in this context. It was necessary to emphasise it only because it is no accident that it was the revolutionary religiosity of the sects that supplied the ideology for capitalism in its purest forms (in England and America). For the union of an inwardness, purified to the point of total abstraction and stripped of all traces of flesh and blood, with a transcendental philosophy of history does indeed correspond to the basic ideological structure of capitalism. It could even be maintained that the equally revolutionary Calvinist union of an ethics in which man has to prove himself (interiorised asceticism) with a thorough-going transcendentalism with regard to the objective forces that move the world and control the fate of man (*deus absconditus* and predestination) contain the bourgeois reified consciousness with its things-in-themselves in a mythologised but yet quite pure state.⁵⁴

In the actively revolutionary sects the elemental vigour of a Thomas M nzer seems at first glance to obscure the irreducible quality and unsynthesised amalgam of the empirical and the utopian. But closer inspection of the way in which the religious and utopian premises of the theory *concretely impinge* upon M nzer's actions will reveal the same 'dark and empty chasm', the same 'hiatus irrationalis' between theory and practice that is everywhere apparent where a subjective and hence undialectical utopia directly assaults historical reality with the intention of changing it. Real actions then appear—precisely in their objective, revolutionary sense—wholly independent of the religious utopia: the latter can neither lead them in any real sense, nor can it offer concrete objectives or concrete proposals for their realisation.

When Ernst Bloch claims⁵⁵ that this union of religion with socio-economic revolution points the way to a deepening of the 'merely economic' outlook of historical materialism, he fails to notice that his deepening simply by-passes the real depth of historical materialism. When he then conceives of economics as a concern with objective things to which soul and inwardness are to be opposed, he overlooks the fact that the real social revolution can only mean the restructuring of the real and concrete life of man. He does not see that what is known as economics is nothing but the system of forms objectively defining this real life. The revolutionary sects were forced to evade this problem because in their historical situation such a restructuring of life and even of the definition of the problem was objectively impossible. But it will not do to fasten upon their weakness, their inability to discover the Archimedean point from which the whole of reality can be overthrown, and their predicament which forces them to aim too high or too low and to see in these things a sign of greater depth.

The individual can never become the measure of all things. For when the individual confronts objective reality he is faced by a complex of ready-made and unalterable objects which allow him only the subjective responses of recognition or rejection. Only the class can relate to the whole of reality in a practical revolutionary way. (The 'species' cannot do this as it is no more than an individual that has been mythologised and stylised in a spirit of contemplation.) And the class, too, can only manage it when it can see through the reified objectivity of the given world to the process that is also its own fate. For the individual, reification and hence determinism (determinism being the idea that things are necessarily connected) are irremovable. Every attempt to achieve 'freedom' from such premises must fail, for 'inner freedom' presupposes that the world cannot be changed. Hence, too, the cleavage of the ego into 'is' and 'ought', into the intelligible and the empirical ego, is unable to serve as the foundation for a dialectical process of becoming, even for the individual subject. The problem of the external world and with it the structure of the external world (of things) is referred to the category of the empirical ego. Psychologically and physiologically the latter is subject to the same deterministic laws as apply to the external world in the narrow sense. The intelligible ego becomes a transcendental idea (regardless of whether it is viewed as a metaphysical existent

or an ideal to be realised). It is of the essence of this idea that it should preclude a dialectical interaction with the empirical components of the ego and *a fortiori* the possibility that the intelligible ego should recognise itself in the empirical ego. The impact of such an idea upon the empirical reality corresponding to it produces the same riddle that we described earlier in the relationship between 'is' and 'ought'.

This discovery makes it quite clear why all such views must end in mysticism and conceptual mythologies. Mythologies are always born where two terminal points, or at least two stages in a movement, have to be regarded as terminal points without its being possible to discover any concrete mediation between them and the movement. This is equally true of movements in the empirical world and of indirectly mediated movements of thought designed to encompass the totality. This failure almost always has the appearance of involving simultaneously the unbridgeable distance between the movement and the thing moved, between movement and mover, and between mover and thing moved. But mythology inevitably adopts the structure of the problem whose opacity had been the cause of its own birth. This insight confirms once again the value of Feuerbach's 'anthropological' criticism.

And thus there arises what at first sight seems to be the paradoxical situation that this projected, mythological world seems closer to consciousness than does the immediate reality. But the paradox dissolves as soon as we remind ourselves that we must abandon the standpoint of immediacy and solve the problem if immediate reality is to be mastered in truth. Whereas mythology is simply *the reproduction in imagination of the problem in its insolubility*. Thus immediacy is merely reinstated on a higher level. The desert beyond God which, according to Master Eckhart, the soul must seek in order to find the deity is nearer to the isolated individual soul than is its concrete existence within the concrete totality of a human society which from this background must be indiscernible even in its general outlines. Thus for reified man a robust causal determinism is more accessible than those mediations that could lead him out of his reified existence. But to posit the individual man as the measure of all things is to lead thought into the labyrinths of mythology.

Of course, 'indeterminism' does not lead to a way out of the difficulty for the individual. The indeterminism of the modern

pragmatists was in origin nothing but the acquisition of that margin of 'freedom' that the conflicting claims and irrationality of the reified laws can offer the individual in capitalist society. It ultimately turns into a mystique of intuition which leaves the fatalism of the external reified world even more intact than before. Jacobi had rebelled in the name of 'humanism' against the tyranny of the 'law' in Kant and Fichte, he demanded that "laws should be made for the sake of man, not man for the sake of the law". But we can see that where Kant had left the established order untouched in the name of rationalism, Jacobi did no more than offer to glorify the same empirical, merely existing reality in the spirit of irrationalism.⁵⁶

Even worse, having failed to perceive that man in his negative immediacy was a moment in a dialectical process, such a philosophy, when consciously directed toward the restructuring of society, is forced to distort the social reality in order to discover the positive side, man as he exists, in one of its manifestations. In support of this we may cite as a typical illustration the well-known passage in Lassalle's *Bastiat-Schulze*: "There is no *social way* that leads out of this social situation. The vain efforts of *things* to behave like *human beings* can be seen in the English strikes whose melancholy outcome is familiar enough. *The only way out for the workers is to be found in that sphere within which they can still be human beings, i.e. in the state.* Hence the instinctive but infinite hatred which the liberal bourgeoisie bears the concept of the state in its every manifestation."⁵⁷

It is not our concern here to pillory Lassalle for his material and historical misconceptions. But it is important to establish that the abstract and absolute separation of the state from the economy and the rigid division between man as thing on the one hand and man as man on the other, is not without consequences. (1) It is responsible for the birth of a fatalism that cannot escape from immediate empirical facticity (we should think here of Lassalle's *Iron Law of Wages*). And (2) the 'idea' of the state is divorced from the development of capitalism and is credited with a completely utopian function, wholly alien to its concrete character. And this means that every path leading to a change in this reality is systematically blocked. Already the mechanical separation between economics and politics precludes any really effective action encompassing society in its totality, for this itself is based on the mutual interaction of both these factors. For a fatalism in

economics would prohibit any thorough-going economic measure, while a state utopianism would either await a miracle or else pursue a policy of adventurous illusions.

This disintegration of a dialectical, practical unity into an inorganic aggregate of the empirical and the utopian, a clinging to the 'facts' (in their untranscended immediacy) and a faith in illusions as alien to the past as to the present is characteristic in increasing measure of the development of social democracy. We have only to consider it in the light of our systematic analysis of reification in order to establish that such a posture conceals a total capitulation before the bourgeoisie—and this notwithstanding the apparent 'socialism' of its policies. For it is wholly within the class interests of the bourgeoisie to separate the individual spheres of society from one another and to fragment the existence of men correspondingly. Above all we find, justified in different terms but essential to social democracy nevertheless, this very dualism of economic fatalism and ethical utopianism as applied to the 'human' functions of *the state*. It means inevitably that the proletariat will be drawn on to the territory of the bourgeoisie and naturally the bourgeoisie will maintain its superiority.⁵⁸

The danger to which the proletariat has been exposed since its appearance on the historical stage was that it might remain imprisoned in its immediacy together with the bourgeoisie. With the growth of social democracy this threat acquired a real political organisation which artificially cancels out the mediations so laboriously won and forces the proletariat back into its immediate existence where it is merely a component of capitalist society and not *at the same time* the motor that drives it to its doom and destruction. Thus the proletariat submits to the 'laws' of bourgeois society either in a spirit of supine fatalism (e.g. towards the natural laws of production) or else in a spirit of 'moral' affirmation (the state as an ideal, a cultural positive). It is doubtless true that these 'laws' are part of an objective dialectic inaccessible to the reified consciousness and as such lead to the downfall of capitalism.⁵⁹ But as long as capitalism survives, such a view of society corresponds to the elementary class interests of the bourgeoisie. It derives every practical advantage from revealing aspects of the structure of immediate existence from revealing aspects of the problems may be concealed (regardless of how many insoluble while veiling the overall unified dialectical structure).

On this territory, social democracy must inevitably remain in

the weaker position. This is not just because it renounces of its own free will the historical mission of the proletariat to point to the way out of the problems of capitalism that the bourgeoisie cannot solve, nor is it because it looks on fatalistically as the 'laws' of capitalism drift towards the abyss. But social democracy must concede defeat on every particular issue also. For when confronted by the overwhelming resources of knowledge, culture and routine which the bourgeoisie undoubtedly possesses and will continue to possess as long as it remains the ruling class, the only effective superiority of the proletariat, its only decisive weapon is its ability to see the social totality as a concrete historical totality; to see the reified forms as processes between men; to see the immanent meaning of history that only appears negatively in the contradictions of abstract forms, to raise its positive side to consciousness and to put it into practice. With the ideology of social democracy and to put proletariat falls victim to all the antinomies of reification that we have hitherto analysed in such detail. The important role increasingly played in this ideology by 'man' as a value, an ideal, an imperative, accompanied, of course, by a growing 'insight' into the necessity and logic of the actual economic process, is only one symptom of this relapse into the reified immediacy of the bourgeoisie. For the unmediated juxtaposition of natural laws and imperatives is the logical expression of immediate societal existence in bourgeois society.

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Reification is, then, the necessary, immediate reality of every person living in capitalist society. It can be overcome only by *constant and constantly renewed efforts to disrupt the reified structure of existence by concretely relating to the concretely manifested contradictions of the total development, by becoming conscious of the immanent meanings of these contradictions for the total development*. But it must be emphasised that (1) the structure can be disrupted only if the immanent contradictions of the process are made conscious. Only when the consciousness of the proletariat is able to point out the road along which the dialectics of history is objectively impelled, but which it cannot travel unaided, will the consciousness of the proletariat awaken to a consciousness of the process, and only then will the proletariat become the identical subject-object of history whose praxis will change reality. If the proletariat fails to take this step

the contradiction will remain unresolved and will be reproduced by the dialectical mechanics of history at a higher level, in an altered form and with increased intensity. It is in *this* that the objective necessity of history consists. The deed of the proletariat can never be more than to take the *next step*⁶⁰ in the process. Whether it is 'decisive' or 'episodic' depends on the concrete circumstances, but in this context, where we are concerned with our knowledge of the structure, it does not much matter as we are talking about an unbroken process of such disruptions.

(2) Inseparable from this is the fact that the relation to totality does not need to become explicit, the plenitude of the totality does not need to be consciously integrated into the motives and objects of action. What is crucial is that there should be an aspiration towards totality, that action should serve the purpose, described above, in the totality of the process. Of course, with the mounting capitalist socialisation of society it becomes increasingly possible and hence necessary to integrate the content of each specific event into the totality of contents.⁶¹ (World economics and world politics are much more immediate forms of existence today than they were in Marx's time.) However, this does not in the least contradict what we have maintained here, namely that the decisive actions can involve an—apparently—trivial matter. For here we can see in operation the truth that in the dialectical totality the individual elements incorporate the structure of the whole. This was made clear on the level of theory by the fact that e.g. it was possible to gain an understanding of the whole of bourgeois society from its commodity structure. We now see the same state of affairs in practice, when the fate of a whole process of development can depend on a decision in an—apparently—trivial matter.

Hence (3) when judging whether an action is right or wrong it is essential to relate it to its function in the total process. Proletarian thought is practical thought and as such is strongly pragmatic. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," Engels says, providing an idiomatic gloss on Marx's second *Thesis on Feuerbach*: "The question whether human thinking can pretend to objective truth is not a theoretical but a practical question. Man must prove the truth, i.e. the reality and power, the 'this-sidedness' of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question." This pudding, however, is the making of the

proletariat into a class: the process by which its class consciousness becomes real in practice. This gives a more concrete form to the proposition that the proletariat is the identical subject-object of the historical process, i.e. the first subject in history that is (objectively) capable of an adequate social consciousness. It turns out that the contradictions in which the antagonisms of the mechanics of history are expressed are only capable of an objective social solution in practice if the solution is at the same time a new, practically-won consciousness on the part of the proletariat.⁶² Whether an action is functionally right or wrong is decided ultimately by the evolution of proletarian class consciousness.

The eminently practical nature of this consciousness is to be seen (4) in that an adequate, correct consciousness means a change in its own objects, and in the first instance, in itself. In Section II of this essay we discussed Kant's view of the ontological proof of God's existence, of the problem of existence and thought, and we quoted his very logical argument to the effect that if existence were a true predicate, then "I could not say that precisely the object of my concept exists". Kant was being very consistent when he denied this. At the same time it is clear that from the standpoint of the proletariat the empirically given reality of the objects does dissolve into processes and tendencies; this process is no single, unrepeatable tearing of the veil that masks the process but the unbroken alternation of ossification, contradiction and movement; and thus the proletariat represents the true reality, namely the tendencies of history awakening into consciousness. We must therefore conclude that Kant's seemingly paradoxical statement is a precise description of what actually follows from every functionally correct action of the proletariat.

This insight alone puts us in a position to see through the last vestiges of the reification of consciousness and its intellectual form, the problem of the thing-in-itself. Even Friedrich Engels has put the matter in a form that may easily give rise to misunderstandings. In his account of what separates Marx and himself from the school of Hegel, he says: "We comprehend the concepts in our heads once more materialistically—as reflections of real things instead of regarding the real things as reflections of this or that stage of the absolute concept."⁶³

But this leaves a question to be asked and Engels not only asks it but also answers it on the following page quite in agreement with us. There he says: "that the world is not to be comprehended

as a complex of ready-made *things*, but as a complex of *processes*". But if there are no things, what is 'reflected' in thought? We cannot hope to offer even an outline of the history of the 'reflection theory' even though we could only unravel the full implications of this problem with its aid. In the theory of 'reflection' we find the theoretical embodiment of the duality of thought and existence, consciousness and reality, that is so intractable to the reified consciousness. And from *that point of view* it is immaterial whether things are to be regarded as reflections of concepts or whether concepts are reflections of things. In both cases the duality is firmly established.

Kant's grandiose and very cogent attempt to overcome this duality *by logic*, his theory of the synthetic function of consciousness in the creation of the domain of theory could not arrive at any *philosophical* solution to the question. For his duality was merely banished from logic to reappear in perpetuity in the form of the duality of phenomenon and the thing-in-itself. And in these terms it remained an insoluble philosophical problem. The later history of his theory shows how very unsatisfactory his solution was. To see Kant's epistemology as scepticism and agnosticism is of course a misunderstanding. But it is one that has at least one root in the theory itself—not, be it admitted, in the logic but in the relation between the logic and the metaphysics, in the relation between thought and existence.

It must be clearly understood that every contemplative stance and thus every kind of 'pure thought' that must undertake the task of knowing an object outside itself raises the problem of subjectivity and objectivity. The object of thought (as something outside) becomes something alien to the subject. This raises the problem of whether thought corresponds to the object! The 'purer' the cognitive character of thought becomes and the more 'critical' thought is, the more vast and impassable does the abyss appear that yawns between the 'subjective' mode of thought and the objectivity of the (existing) object. Now it is possible—as with Kant—to view the object of thought as something 'created' by the forms of thought. But this does not suffice to solve the problem of existence, and Kant, by removing it from the sphere of epistemology, creates this philosophical situation for himself: even his excogitated objects must correspond to some 'reality' or other. But this reality is treated as a thing-in-itself and placed outside the realm of that which can be known by the

'critical' mind. It is with respect to *this* reality (which is the authentic, the metaphysical reality for Kant, as his ethics shows) that his position remains one of scepticism and agnosticism. This remains true however unsceptical was the solution he found for epistemological objectivity and the immanent theory of truth.

It is, therefore, no accident that it is from Kant that the various agnostic trends have taken their cue (one has only to think of Maimon or Schopenhauer). It is even less of an accident that Kant himself was responsible for the reintroduction into philosophy of the principle that is most violently opposed to his own synthetic principle of 'creation' (*Erzeugung*), namely the Platonic theory of ideas. For this theory is the most extreme attempt to rescue the objectivity of thought and its correspondence with its object, without having to resort to empirical and material reality to find a criterion for the correspondence.

Now it is evident that every consistent elaboration of the theory of ideas requires a principle that both links thought with the objects of the world of ideas and also connects these with the objects of the empirical world (recollection, intellectual intuition, etc.). But this in turn leads the theory of thought to transcend the limits of thought itself: and it becomes psychology, metaphysics or the history of philosophy. Thus instead of a solution to the problem we are left with complexities that have been doubled or tripled. And the problem remains without a solution. For the insight that a correspondence or relationship of 'reflection' cannot in principle be established between heterogeneous objects is precisely the driving force behind every view of the type of the Platonic theory of ideas. This undertakes to prove that the same ultimate essence forms the core of the objects of thought as well as of thought itself. Hegel gives an apt description of the basic philosophical theme of the theory of recollection from this standpoint when he says that it provides a myth of man's fundamental situation: "in him lies the truth and the only problem is to make it conscious".⁶⁴ But how to prove this identity in thought and existence of the ultimate substance?—above all when it has been shown that they are completely heterogeneous in the way in which they present themselves to the intuitive, contemplative mind? It becomes necessary to invoke metaphysics and with the aid of its overt or concealed mythical mediations thought and existence can once again be reunited. And this despite the fact that their separation is not merely the starting-point of 'pure'

thought but also a factor that constantly informs it whether it likes it or not.

The situation is not improved in the slightest when the mythology is turned on its head and thought is deduced from empirical material reality. Rickert once described materialism as an inverted Platonism. And he was right in so doing. As long as thought and existence persist in their old, rigid opposition, as long as their own structure and the structure of their interconnections remain unchanged, then the view that thought is a product of the brain and hence must correspond to the objects of the empirical world is just such a mythology as those of recollection and the world of Platonic ideas. It is a mythology for it is incapable of explaining the *specific* problems that arise here by reference to *this principle*. It is forced to leave them unsolved, to solve them with the 'old' methods and to reinstate the mythology as a key to the whole unanalysed complex.⁶⁵ But as will already be clear, it is not possible to eliminate the distinction by means of an infinite progression. For that produces either a pseudo-solution or else the theory of reflection simply reappears in a different guise.⁶⁶

Historical thought perceives the correspondence of thought and existence in their—immediate, but no more than immediate—rigid, reified structure. This is precisely the point at which non-dialectical thought is confronted by this insoluble problem. From the fact of this rigid confrontation it follows (1) that thought and (empirical) existence cannot reflect each other, but also (2) that the criterion of correct thought can only be found in the realm of reflection. As long as man adopts a stance of intuition and contemplation he can only relate to his own thought and to the objects of the empirical world in an immediate way. He accepts both as ready-made—produced by historical reality. As he wishes only to know the world and not to change it he is forced to accept both the empirical, material rigidity of existence and the logical rigidity of concepts as unchangeable. His mythological analyses are not concerned with the concrete origins of this rigidity nor with the real factors inherent in them that could lead to its elimination. They are concerned solely to discover how the *unchanged nature* of these data could be conjoined whilst leaving them unchanged and how to explain them *as such*.

The solution proposed by Marx in his *Theses on Feuerbach* is to transform philosophy into praxis. But, as we have seen, this praxis has its objective and structural preconditions and complement

in the view that reality is a "complex of processes". That is to say, in the view that the movements of history represent the true reality; not indeed a transcendental one, but at all events a higher one than that of the rigid, reified facts of the empirical world, from which they arise. For the reflection theory this means that thought and consciousness are orientated towards reality but, at the same time, the criterion of truth is provided by relevance to reality. This reality is by no means identical with empirical existence. This reality is not, it becomes.

The process of Becoming is to be understood in a twofold sense. (1) In this Becoming, in this tendency, in this process the true nature of the object is revealed. This is meant in the sense that—as in the case of the instances we have cited and which could easily be multiplied—the transformation of things into a process provides a *concrete* solution to all the *concrete* problems created by the paradoxes of existent objects. The recognition that one cannot step into the same river twice is just an extreme way of highlighting the unbridgeable abyss between concept and reality. It does nothing to increase our concrete knowledge of the river.

In contrast with this, the recognition that capital as a process can only be accumulated, or rather accumulating, capital, provides the positive, concrete solution to a whole host of positive, concrete problems of method and of substance connected with capital. Hence only by overcoming the—theoretical—duality of philosophy and special discipline, of methodology and factual knowledge can the way be found by which to annul the duality of thought and existence. Every attempt to overcome the duality dialectically in logic, in a system of thought stripped of every concrete relation to existence, is doomed to failure. (And we may observe that despite many other opposing tendencies in his work, Hegel's philosophy was of this type.) For every pure logic is Platonic: it is thought released from existence and hence ossified. Only by conceiving of thought as a form of reality, as a factor in the total process can philosophy overcome its own rigidity dialectically and take on the quality of Becoming.⁶⁷

(2) Becoming is also the mediation between past and future. But it is the mediation between the concrete, i.e. historical past, and the equally concrete, i.e. historical future. When the concrete here and now dissolves into a process it is no longer a continuous, intangible moment, immediacy slipping away;⁶⁸ it is the focus of the deepest and most widely ramified mediation, the focus of

decision and of the birth of the new. As long as man concentrates his interest contemplatively upon the past *or* future, both ossify into an alien existence. And between the subject and the object lies the unbridgeable "pernicious chasm" of the present. Man must be able to comprehend the present as a becoming. He can do this by seeing in it the tendencies out of whose dialectical opposition he can *make* the future. Only when he does this will the present be a process of becoming, that belongs to *him*. Only he who is willing and whose mission it is to create the future can see the present in its concrete truth. As Hegel says: "Truth is not to treat objects as alien."⁶⁹

But when the truth of becoming is the future that is to be created but has not yet been born, when it is the new that resides in the tendencies that (with our conscious aid) will be realised, then the question whether thought is a reflection appears quite senseless. It is true that reality is the criterion for the correctness of thought. But reality is not, it becomes—and to become the participation of thought is needed. We see here the fulfilment of the programme of classical philosophy: the principle of genesis means in fact that dogmatism is overcome (above all in its most important historical incarnation: the Platonic theory of reflection). But only concrete (historical) becoming can perform the function of such a genesis. And consciousness (the practical class consciousness of the proletariat) is a necessary, indispensable, integral part of that process of becoming.

Thus thought and existence are not identical in the sense that they 'correspond' to each other, or 'reflect' each other, that they 'run parallel' to each other or 'coincide' with each other (all expressions that conceal a rigid duality). Their identity is that they are aspects of one and the same real historical and dialectical process. What is 'reflected' in the consciousness of the proletariat is the new positive reality arising out of the dialectical contradictions of capitalism. And this is by no means the invention of the proletariat, nor was it 'created' out of the void. It is rather the inevitable consequence of the process in its totality; one which changed from being an abstract possibility to a concrete reality only after it had become part of the consciousness of the proletariat and had been made practical by it. And this is no mere formal transformation. For a possibility to be realised, for a tendency to become actual, what is required is that the objective components of a society should be transformed; their functions must be changed

and with them the structure and content of every individual object.

But it must never be forgotten: *only the practical class consciousness of the proletariat* possesses this ability to transform things. Every contemplative, purely cognitive stance leads ultimately to a divided relationship to its object. Simply to transplant the structure we have discerned here into any stance other than that of proletarian action—for only the class can be practical in its relation to the total process—would mean the creation of a new conceptual mythology and a regression to the standpoint of classical philosophy refuted by Marx. For every purely cognitive stance bears the stigma of immediacy. That is to say, it never ceases to be confronted by a whole series of ready-made objects that cannot be dissolved into processes. Its dialectical nature can survive only in the tendency towards praxis and in its orientation towards the actions of the proletariat. It can survive only if it remains critically aware of its own tendency to immediacy inherent in every non-practical stance and if it constantly strives to explain critically the mediations, the relations to the totality as a process, to the actions of the proletariat as a class.

The practical character of the thought of the proletariat is born and becomes real as the result of an equally dialectical process. In this thought self-criticism is more than the self-criticism of its object, i.e. the self-criticism of bourgeois society. It is also a critical awareness of how much of its own practical nature has really become manifest, which stage of the genuinely practicable is objectively possible and how much of what is objectively possible has been made real. For it is evident that however clearly we may have grasped the fact that society consists of processes, however thoroughly we may have unmasked the fiction of its rigid reification, this does not mean that we are able to annul the 'reality' of this fiction in capitalist society *in practice*. The moments in which this insight *can* really be converted into practice are determined by developments in society. Thus proletarian thought is in the first place merely a *theory of praxis* which only gradually (and indeed often spasmodically) transforms itself into a *practical theory* that overturns the real world. The individual stages of this process cannot be sketched in here. They alone would be able to show how proletarian class consciousness evolves dialectically (i.e. how the proletariat becomes a class). Only then would it be possible to throw light on the intimate dialectical process of inter-

action between the socio-historical situation and the class consciousness of the proletariat. Only then would the statement that the proletariat is the identical subject-object of the history of society become truly concrete.⁷⁰

Even the proletariat can only overcome reification as long as it is oriented towards practice. And this means that there can be no single act that will eliminate reification in all its forms at one blow; it means that there will be a whole host of objects that at least in appearance remain more or less unaffected by the process. This is true in the first instance of nature. But it is also illuminating to observe how a whole set of social phenomena become dialecticised by a different path than the one we have traced out to show the nature of the dialectics of history and the process by which the barriers of reification can be shattered. We have observed, for instance, how certain works of art are extraordinarily sensitive to the qualitative nature of dialectical changes without their becoming conscious of the antagonisms which they lay bare and to which they give artistic form.

At the same time we observed other societal phenomena which contain inner antagonisms but only in an abstract form, i.e. their inner contradictions are merely the secondary effects of the inner contradictions of other, more primary phenomena. This means that these last contradictions can only become visible if mediated by the former and can only become dialectical when they do. (This is true of interest as opposed to profit.) It would be necessary to set forth the whole system of these qualitative gradations in the dialectical character of the different kinds of phenomena before we should be in a position to arrive at the concrete totality of the categories with which alone true knowledge of the present is possible. The hierarchy of these categories would determine at the same time the point where system and history meet, thus fulfilling Marx's postulate (already cited) concerning the categories that "their sequence is determined by the relations they have to each other in modern bourgeois society".

In every consciously dialectical system of thought, however, any sequence is itself dialectical—not only for Hegel, but also as early as Proclus. Moreover, the dialectical deduction of categories cannot possibly involve a simple juxtaposition or even the succession of identical forms. Indeed, if the method is not to degenerate into a rigid schematicism, even identical formal patterns must not be allowed to function in a repetitively mechanical way (thus, the

famous triad: thesis, antithesis and synthesis). When the dialectical method becomes rigid, as happens frequently in Hegel, to say nothing of his followers, the only control device and the only protection is the concrete historical method of Marx. But it is vital that we should draw all the conclusions possible from this situation. Hegel himself distinguishes between negative and positive dialectics.⁷¹ By positive dialectics he understands the growth of a particular content, the elucidation of a concrete totality. In the process, however, we find that he almost always advances from the determinants of reflection to the positive dialectics even though his conception of nature, for example, as "otherness", as the idea in a state of "being external to itself"⁷² directly precludes a positive dialectics. (It is here that we can find one of the theoretical sources for the frequently artificial constructs of his philosophy of nature.) Nevertheless, Hegel does perceive clearly at times that the dialectics of nature can never become anything more exalted than a dialectics of movement witnessed by the detached observer, as the subject cannot be integrated into the dialectical process, at least not at the stage reached hitherto. Thus he emphasises that Zeno's antinomies reached the same level as those of Kant,⁷³ with the implication that it is not possible to go any higher.

From this we deduce the necessity of separating the merely objective dialectics of nature from those of society. For in the dialectics of society the subject is included in the reciprocal relation in which theory and practice become dialectical with reference to one another. (It goes without saying that the growth of *knowledge* about nature is a social phenomenon and therefore to be included in the second dialectical type.) Moreover, if the dialectical method is to be consolidated concretely it is essential that the different types of dialectics should be set out in concrete fashion. It would then become clear that the Hegelian distinction between positive and negative dialectics as well as the different levels of intuition, representation and concept [*Anschauung*, *Vorstellung*, *Begriff*—(a terminology that need not be adhered to) are only some of the possible types of distinction to be drawn. For the others the economic works of Marx provide abundant material for a clearly elaborated analysis of structures. However, even to outline a typology of these dialectical forms would be well beyond the scope of this study.

Still more important than these systematic distinctions is the

fact that even the objects in the very centre of the dialectical process can only slough off their reified form after a laborious process. A process in which the seizure of power by the proletariat and even the organisation of the state and the economy on socialist lines are only stages. They are, of course, extremely important stages, but they do not mean that the ultimate objective has been achieved. And it even appears as if the decisive crisis-period of capitalism may be characterised by the tendency to intensify reification, to bring it to a head. Roughly in the sense in which Lassalle wrote to Marx: "Hegel used to say in his old age that directly before the emergence of something qualitatively new, the old state of affairs gathers itself up into its original, purely general, essence, into its simple totality, transcending and absorbing back into itself all those marked differences and peculiarities which it evinced when it was still viable."⁷⁴ On the other hand, Bukharin, too, is right when he observes that in the age of the dissolution of capitalism, the fetishistic categories collapse and it becomes necessary to have recourse to the 'natural form' underlying them.⁷⁵ The contradiction between these two views is, however, only apparent. For the contradiction has two aspects: on the one hand, there is the increasing undermining of the forms of reification—one might describe it as the cracking of the crust because of the inner emptiness—their growing inability to do justice to the phenomena, even as isolated phenomena, even as the objects of reflection and calculation. On the other hand, we find the quantitative increase of the forms of reification, their empty extension to cover the whole surface of manifest phenomena. And the fact that these two aspects together are in conflict provides the key signature to the decline of bourgeois society.

As the antagonism becomes more acute two possibilities open up for the proletariat. It is given the opportunity to substitute its own positive contents for the emptied and bursting husks. But also it is exposed to the danger that for a time at least it might adapt itself ideologically to conform to these, the emptiest and most decadent forms of bourgeois culture.

History is at its least automatic when it is the consciousness of the proletariat that is at issue. The truth that the old intuitive, mechanistic materialism could not grasp turns out to be doubly true for the proletariat, namely that it can be transformed and liberated only by its own actions, and that "the educator must himself be educated". The objective economic evolution could

do no more than create the position of the proletariat in the production process. It was this position that determined its point of view. But the objective evolution could only give the proletariat the opportunity and the necessity to change society. Any transformation can only come about as the product of the—free—action of the proletariat itself.

NOTES ON SECTION I

- 1 *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 53.
- 2 *Capital* III, p. 324.
- 3 *Capital* III, p. 810.
- 4 *Capital* I, p. 72. On this antagonism cf. the purely economic distinction between the exchange of goods in terms of their value and the exchange in terms of their cost of production. *Capital* III, p. 174.
- 5 *Capital* I, p. 170.
- 6 Cf. *Capital* I, pp. 322, 345.
- 7 This whole process is described systematically and historically in *Capital* I. The facts themselves can also be found in the writings of bourgeois economists like Bücher, Sombart, A. Weber and Gottl among others—although for the most part they are not seen in connection with the problem of reification.
- 8 *Capital* I, p. 384.
- 9 *Capital* I, p. 355 (note).
- 10 That this should appear so is fully justified from the point of view of the *individual* consciousness. As far as class is concerned we would point out that this subjugation is the product of a lengthy struggle which enters upon a new stage with the organisation of the proletariat into a class—but on a higher plane and with different weapons.
- 11 *Capital* I, pp. 374–6, 423–4, 460, etc. It goes without saying that this 'contemplation' can be more demanding and demoralizing than 'active' labour. But we cannot discuss this further here.
- 12 *The Poverty of Philosophy*, pp. 58–9.
- 13 *Capital* I, p. 344.
- 14 Cf. Gottl: *Wirtschaft und Technik*, Grundriss der Sozialökonomik II, 234 et seq.
- 15 *Capital* I, p. 77.
- 16 This refers above all to capitalist private property. *Der heilige Max. Dokumente des Sozialismus* III, 363. Marx goes on to make a number of very fine observations about the effects of reification upon language. A philological study from the standpoint of historical materialism could profitably begin here.
- 17 *Capital* III, pp. 384–5.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 809.

- 19 *Gesammelte politische Schriften*, Munich, 1921, pp. 140-2. Weber's reference to the development of English law has no bearing on our problem. On the gradual ascendancy of the principle of economic calculation, see also A. Weber, *Standort der Industrien*, especially p. 216.
- 20 Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 491.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 129.
- 22 If we do not emphasise the class character of the state in *this* context, this is because our aim is to understand reification as a *general* phenomenon constitutive of the *whole* of bourgeois society. But for this the question of class would have to begin with the machine. On this point see Section III.
- 23 Cf. Max Weber, *Politische Schriften*, p. 154.
- 24 Cf. the essay by A. Fogarasi in *Kommunismus*, Jg. II, No. 25/26.
- 25 *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*, Pt. I, § 24.
- 26 *The Origin of the Family*, in S. W. II, p. 293.
- 27 *Capital III*, p. 239.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 183.
- 29 *Capital I*, p. 356.
- 30 Letter to Conrad Schmidt in S.W. II, pp. 447-8.
- 31 *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 276.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 33 *Finanzkapital*, 2nd edition, pp. 378-9.
- 34 *Capital II*, pp. 75-6.
- 35 *Die Akkumulation des Kapitals*, 1st edition, pp. 78-9. It would be a fascinating task to work out the links between this process and the development of the great rationalist systems.
- 36 Quoted by Bergbohm, *Jurisprudenz und Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 170.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 375.
- 38 Preuss, *Zur Methode der juristischen Begriffsbildung*. In Schmollers *Jahrbuch*, 1900, p. 370.
- 39 *Lehrbuch des Naturrechts*, Berlin, 1799, § 141. Marx's polemic against Hugo (Nachlass I, pp. 268 et seq.) is still on Hegelian lines.
- 40 *Hauptprobleme der Staatsrechtslehre*, p. 411 (my italics).
- 41 F. Somlo, *Juristische Grundlehre*, p. 117.

NOTES ON SECTION II

- 1 Reclam, p. 17.
- 2 *Capital I*, p. 372 (note).
- 3 Cf. Tönnies, *Hobbes' Leben und Lehre* and especially Ernst Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit*. We shall return to the conclusions of this book which are of value for us because they have been arrived at from a completely different point of view and yet describe the same process, showing the impact of the rationalism of mathematics and the 'exact' sciences upon the origins of modern thought.
- 4 *Capital I*, p. 486. See also Gottl, op. cit., pp. 238-45, for the

- contrast with antiquity. For this reason the concept of 'rationalism' must not be employed as an unhistorical abstraction, but it is always necessary precisely to determine the object (or sphere of life) to which it is to be related, and above all to define the objects to which it is *not* related.
- 5 Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie II*, pp. 165-70. A like structure can be found in the development of all the 'special' sciences in India: a highly advanced technology in particular branches without reference to a rational totality and without any *attempt* to rationalise the *whole* and to confer universal validity upon the rational categories. Cf. also *Ibid.*, pp. 146-7, 166-7. The situation is similar with regard to the 'rationalism' of Confucianism. Op. cit. I, p. 527.
- 6 In this respect Kant is the culmination of the philosophy of the eighteenth century. Both the line from Locke to Berkeley and Hume and also the tradition of French materialism move in this direction. It would be beyond the scope of this inquiry to outline the different stages of this development with its various divergent strands.
- 7 *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, pp. 403-4. Cf. also pp. 330 et seq.
- 8 Feuerbach also connected the problem of the absolute transcendence of sensuousness (by the understanding) with a contradiction in the existence of God. "The proof of the existence of God goes beyond the bounds of reason; true enough; but in the same sense in which seeing, hearing, smelling go beyond the bounds of reason." *Das Wesen des Christentums*, Reclam., p. 303. See Cassirer, op. cit. II, p. 608, for similar arguments in Hume and Kant.
- 9 This problem is stated most clearly by Lask: "For subjectivity" (i.e. for the logically subjective status of judgement), "it is by no means self-evident, but on the contrary it is the whole task of the philosopher to ascertain the categories into which logical form divides when applied to a particular subject-matter or, to put it differently, to discover which subjects form the particular province of the various categories." *Die Lehre vom Urteil*, p. 162.
- 10 *Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, p. 564.
- 11 This is not the place to show that neither Greek philosophy (with the possible exception of quite late thinkers, such as Proclus) nor mediaeval philosophy were acquainted with the idea of a 'system' in our sense. The problem of systems originates in modern times, with Descartes and Spinoza and from Leibniz and Kant onwards it becomes an increasingly conscious methodological postulate.
- 12 The idea of "infinite understanding", of intellectual intuition, etc., is *partly* designed as an epistemological solution to this difficulty. However, Kant had already perceived quite clearly that this problem leads on to the one we are about to discuss.
- 13 Once again it is Lask who perceives this most clearly and uncompromisingly. Cf. *Die Logik der Philosophie*, pp. 60-2. But he does not draw all the consequences of his line of reasoning, in

- particular that of the impossibility of a rational system in principle.
- 14 We may point for example to Husserl's phenomenological method in which the whole terrain of logic is ultimately transformed into a 'system of facts' of a higher order. Husserl himself regards this method as purely descriptive. Cf. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie* in Vol. I of his *Jahrbuch*, p. 113.
 - 15 This fundamental tendency of Leibniz's thought attains maturity in the philosophy of Maimon where it appears in the form of the dissolution of the problem of the thing-in-itself and of "intelligible chance"; from here a path leads directly to Fichte and through him to later developments. The problem of the irrationality of mathematics is analysed incisively in an essay by Rickert, "Das Eine, die Einheit und das Eins," in *Logos* II, p. 1.
 - 16 *Die Wissenschaftslehre* of 1804, Lecture XV, *Werke* (Neue Ausgabe) IV, p. 288. My italics. The problem is put similarly—though with varying degrees of clarity—by later 'critical' philosophers. Most clearly of all by Windelband when he defines existence as "content independent of form". In my opinion his critics have only obscured his paradox without providing a solution to the problem it contains.
 - 17 This is not the place to offer a critique of particular philosophical schools. By way of proof of the correctness of this sketch I would only point to the relapse into natural law (which methodologically belongs to the pre-critical period) observable—in substance, though not in terminology—in the works of Cohen and also of Stammler whose thought is related to that of the Marburg School.
 - 18 Rickert, one of the most consistent representatives of this school of thought, ascribes no more than a formal character to the cultural values underlying historiography, and it is precisely this fact that highlights the whole situation. On this point see Section III.
 - 19 *Transcendentale Logik*, Lecture XXIII, *Werke* VI, p. 335. Readers unfamiliar with the terminology of classical philosophy are reminded that Fichte's concept of the ego has nothing to do with the empirical ego.
 - 20 Second Introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre*, *Werke* III, p. 52. Although Fichte's terminology changes from one work to the next, this should not blind us to the fact that he is always concerned with the same *problem*.
 - 21 Cf. *Die Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, Philosophische Bibliothek, p. 72.
 - 22 "Now nature is in the common view the existence of things subject to laws." *Ibid.*, p. 57.
 - 23 *Ibid.*, pp. 125-6.
 - 24 *Über die wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts*, *Werke* I, pp. 352-3. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 351. "For it is the absolute abstraction from every subject-matter of the will; every content posits a heteronomy of the free will." Or, with even greater clarity, in

- the *Phenomenology of Mind*: "For pure duty is . . . absolutely indifferent towards every content and is compatible with every content." *Werke* II, p. 485.
- 25 This is quite clear in the case of the Greeks. But the same structure can be seen in the great systems at the beginning of the modern age, above all in Spinoza.
 - 26 *Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, pp. 472-3.
 - 27 Hegel, *Werke* III, pp. 78 et seq.
 - 28 *Nachlass* I, p. 117. [*Fragments on The Difference between The Democritean and Epicurean philosophies of nature*].
 - 29 From this ontological situation it becomes possible to understand the point of departure for the belief, so alien to modern thought in 'natural' states, e.g. the "credo ut intellegam" of Anselm of Canterbury, or the attitude of Indian thought ("Only by him whom he chooses will he be understood," it has been said of Atman). Descartes' systematic scepticism, which was the starting-point of *exact* thought, is no more than the sharpest formulation of this antagonism that was very consciously felt at the birth of the modern age. It can be seen again in every important thinker from Galileo to Bacon.
 - 30 For the history of this universal mathematics, see Cassirer, *op. cit.* I, pp. 446, 563; II, 138, 156 et seq. For the connection between this mathematicisation of reality and the bourgeois 'praxis' of calculating the anticipated results of the 'laws', see Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus* (Reclam) I, pp. 321-32 on Hobbes, Descartes and Bacon.
 - 31 For the Platonic theory of ideas was indissolubly linked—with what right need not be discussed here—both with the totality and the qualitative existence of the given world. Contemplation means at the very least the bursting of the bonds that hold the 'soul' imprisoned within the limitations of the empirical. The Stoic ideal of ataraxy is a much better instance of this quite pure contemplation, but it is of course devoid of the paradoxical union with a feverish and uninterrupted 'activity'.
 - 32 *Die Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems*, *Werke* I, p. 242. Every such 'atomic' theory of society only represents the ideological reflection of the purely bourgeois point of view; this was shown conclusively by Marx in his critique of Bruno Bauer, *Nachlass* II, p. 227. But this is not to deny the 'objectivity' of such views: they are in fact the necessary forms of consciousness that reified man has of his attitude towards society.
 - 33 Hegel, *Werke* IX, p. 528.
 - 34 *Capital* I, 390 (footnote).
 - 35 *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, 3rd edition, p. 38.
 - 36 *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* in *S.W.* II, p. 336.
 - 37 E.g. the *Phenomenology of Mind*, Preface, *Werke* II, p. 20; and also *ibid.*, pp. 67-8, 451, etc.
 - 38 Marx employs this terminology in the important, oft-quoted

- passage about the proletariat (it is to be found in these pages too). *The Poverty of Philosophy*, p. 195. For this whole question, see also the relevant passages in the *Logik*, especially in Vol. III, pp. 127 et. seq., 166 et seq., and Vol. IV, pp. 120 et seq., and see also the critique of Kant in a number of places.
- 39 *Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, pp. 208 et seq.
- 40 Nachlass I, p. 449. [*An Outline of a Critique of National Economy*].
- 41 *Capital* I, p. 592, etc. Cf. also the essay on "Class Consciousness" for the question of the 'false consciousness' of the bourgeoisie.
- 42 It is this that provokes repeated attacks from Hegel. But in addition Goethe's rejection of the Kantian ethic points in the same direction although Goethe's motives and hence his terminology are different. That Kant's ethics is faced with the task of solving the problem of the thing-in-itself can be seen in innumerable places, e.g. the *Grundlegung der Metaphysik der Sitten*, Philosophische Bibliothek, p. 87; *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, p. 123.
- 43 *Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, p. 77.
- 44 Cf. also the essay "The Marxism of Rosa Luxemburg" on the question of the methodological interrelatedness of these two principles.
- 45 *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus*, pp. 54 et seq., 122 et seq. How near Holbach and Helvetius came to the problem of the thing-in-itself—admittedly in a more naïve form—can likewise be seen there on pp. 9, 51, etc.
- 46 The history of the stories à la Robinson cannot be undertaken here. I refer the reader to Marx's comments (*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, pp. 266 et seq., and to Cassirer's subtle remarks about the role of Robinson Crusoe in Hobbes' epistemology. Op. cit. II, pp. 61 et seq.
- 47 On this point cf. especially *Die Kritik der Urteilskraft* § 42. Via Schiller the illustration of the real and the imitated nightingale strongly influenced later thinkers. It would be of absorbing interest to follow through the historical development leading from German Romanticism via the historical school of law, Carlyle, Ruskin, etc., in the course of which the concept of 'organic growth' was converted from a protest against reification into an increasingly reactionary slogan. To do so, however, would be outside the scope of this work. Here it is only the *structure of the objects* that need concern us: namely the fact that what would seem to be the highpoint of the interiorisation of nature really implies the abandonment of any true understanding of it. To make moods [Stimmung] into the content presupposes the existence of unpenetrated and impenetrable objects (things-in-themselves) just as much as do the laws of nature.
- 48 *Das System der Sittenlehre*, 3. Hauptstück, § 31, Werke II, p. 747. It would be both interesting and rewarding to show how the so rarely understood Nature philosophy of the classical epoch necessarily springs from this state of affairs. It is not by chance that Goethe's Nature philosophy arose in the course of a conflict

- with Newton's 'violation' of nature. Nor was it an accident that it set the pattern for all later developments. But both phenomena can only be understood in terms of the relation between man, nature and art. This also explains the methodological return to the qualitative Nature philosophy of the Renaissance as being the first assault upon a mathematical conception of nature.
- 49 *Die Kritik der Urteilskraft*, § 77.
- 50 *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, 15th Letter.
- 51 *Die Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems*, Werke I, p. 174.
- 52 It is in his opposition to this that we can locate the substantive core in Schelling's later philosophy. However, his mythologising approach now became wholly reactionary. Hegel represents—as we shall show—the absolute consummation of rationalism, but this means that he can be superseded only by an interrelation of thought and existence that *has ceased to be contemplative*, by the concrete demonstration of the identical subject-object. Schelling made the absurd attempt to achieve this by going in the reverse direction and so to reach a purely intellectual solution. He thus ended up, like all the epigones of classical philosophy, in a reactionary mythology that glorified an empty irrationality.
- 53 It is not possible to examine the question in detail here, but I should like to point out that this is the point at which to begin an analysis of the problematics of Romanticism. Familiar, but seldom understood concepts, such as 'irony' spring from this situation. In particular the incisive questions posed by Solger who has wrongly been allowed to slide into oblivion, place him together with Friedrich Schlegel as a pioneer of the dialectical method between Schelling and Hegel, a position in some ways comparable to that occupied by Maimon in between Kant and Fichte. The role of mythology in Schelling's aesthetics becomes clearer with this in mind. There is an obvious connection between such problems and the conception of nature as a mood. The truly critical, metaphysically non-hypostatised, artistic view of the world leads to an even greater fragmentation of the unity of the subject and thus to an increase in the symptoms of alienation; this has been borne out by the later evolution of consistently modern views of art (Flaubert, Konrad Fiedler, etc.) On this point cf. my essay, *Die Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung in der Ästhetik*, Logos, Jahrgang IV.
- 54 *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Book 12. The subterranean influence of Hamann is much greater than is usually supposed.
- 55 Werke I, pp. 173–4. The *Phenomenology* is an attempt—unsurpassed hitherto, even by Hegel—to develop such a method.
- 56 Lask, the most ingenious and logical of the modern Neo-Kantians, clearly perceives this development in Hegel's Logic. "In this respect, too, the critic must admit that Hegel is in the right: irrationality can be overcome *if and only if* dialectically changing concepts are acceptable." *Fichtes Idealismus und die Geschichte*, p. 67.

- 57 Cf. Plekhanov, op. cit., pp. 9, 51, etc. But *methodologically* only formalistic rationalism is confronted by an insoluble problem at this point. Setting aside the *substantive* scientific value of mediaeval solutions to these questions, it is indubitable that the Middle Ages did not see any problem here, let alone an insoluble one. We may compare Holbach's statement, quoted by Plekhanov, that we cannot know "whether the chicken preceded the egg, or the egg the chicken" with e.g. the statement of Master Eckhard, "Nature makes the man from the child and the chicken from the egg; God makes the man before the child and the chicken before the egg" (Sermon of the noble man). Needless to say, we are here concerned *exclusively* with the contrast in *methodology*. On the basis of this methodological limitation as the result of which history is made to appear as a thing-in-itself, Plekhanov has rightly judged these materialists to be naive idealists in their approach to history. *Zu Hegels 60. Todestag*, Neue Zeit X. I. 273.
- 58 Here too we can do no more than refer in passing to the history of this problem. The opposed positions were clearly established very early on. I would point to e.g. Friedrich Schlegel's critique of Condorcet's attempt (1795) to provide a rationalist explanation of history (as it were, of the type of Comte or Spencer). "*The enduring qualities* of man are the subject of pure science, but *the changing aspects of man*, both as an individual and in the mass, are the subject of a scientific history of mankind." *Prosaische Jugendschriften*, Vienna, 1906. Vol. II, p. 52.
- 59 *Die Encyclopädie*, § 309. For us, of course, *only* the methodological aspect has any significance. Nevertheless, we must emphasise that all formal, rationalist concepts exhibit this same reified impenetrability. The modern substitution of functions for things does not alter this situation in the least, as concepts of function do not at all differ from thing-concepts in the only area that matters, i.e. the form-content relationship. On the contrary, they take their formal, rationalist structure to its extreme logical conclusion.
- 60 Hegel, Werke II, p. 267.
- 61 *Die Philosophie des Rechts*, § 345-7. *Encyclopädie*, § 548-52.
- 62 In the last versions of the system history represents the transition from the philosophy of right to the absolute spirit. (In the Phenomenology the relation is more complex but methodologically just as ambiguous and undefined.) 'Absolute spirit' is the truth of the preceding moment, of history and therefore, in accordance with Hegel's logic, it would have to have annulled and preserved history within itself. However, in the dialectical method history cannot be so transcended and this is the message at the end of Hegel's *Philosophy of History* where at the climax of the system, at the moment where the 'absolute spirit' realises itself, history makes its reappearance and points beyond philosophy in its turn: "That the determinants of thought had this importance is a further insight that does not belong within the history of philosophy. These concepts are the simplest revelation of the

- spirit of the world: this in its most concrete form is history." Werke XV, p. 618.
- 63 Werke I, p. 174. Needless to say, Fichte places an even heavier emphasis on chance.
- 64 Cf. the essay "What is orthodox Marxism?"
- 65 With this the Logic itself becomes problematic. Hegel's postulate that the concept is "reconstituted being" (Werke V, 30) is only possible on the assumption of the real creation of the identical subject-object. A failure at this point means that the concept acquires a Kantian, idealistic emphasis which is in conflict with its dialectical function. To show this in detail would be well beyond the scope of this study.

NOTES ON SECTION III

- 1 Cf. "What is orthodox Marxism?", "Class Consciousness" and "The Changing Function of Historical Materialism". In view of the fact that the themes in these essays are so closely interrelated it has regrettably not always been possible to avoid repetition.
- 2 Nachlass II, p. 132. [*The Holy Family*, Chapter 4.]
- 3 *Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*, 2nd ed., p. 562.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 606-7.
- 5 Cf. "What is orthodox Marxism?"
- 6 *Capital* I, p. 441.
- 7 For eighteenth century materialism, see Plekhanov, op. cit., p. 51. In Section I we have shown how this belief underlies the bourgeois theory of crisis, the theory of the origin of law, etc. In history itself anyone can easily understand that an approach that is not world-historical and that does not relate to the overall development must necessarily interpret the most important turning-points of history as senseless cataclysms as their causes lie outside its scheme. This can be seen, e.g. in the Germanic Migrations, in the downward trend of German history from the Renaissance on, etc.
- 8 Hegel's Werke II, p. 73.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 275.
- 10 Cf. e.g. *Capital* III, pp. 336, 349-50, 370-1, 374-6, 383-4.
- 11 *Die Philosophie des Geldes*, p. 531.
- 12 *The Poverty of Philosophy*, p. 135.
- 13 I would refer the reader once again to Plekhanov's statement of the dilemma confronting older forms of materialism. As Marx showed in his critique of Bruno Bauer (Nachlass II, pp. 178 et seq.) every bourgeois view of history logically ends up by mechanising the 'masses' and irrationalising the hero. However, exactly the same dualism can be found in such thinkers as Carlyle or Nietzsche. Even a cautious thinker like Rickert, (despite some reservations, e.g. op. cit., p. 380) is inclined to regard 'milieu' and the 'movements of masses' as subject to natural laws and to

- see only the isolated personality as a historical individual. Op. cit., pp. 444, 460-1.
- 14 *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 304.
 - 15 *The Poverty of Philosophy*, pp. 128-9.
 - 16 *Die Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, pp. 38-9, Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 24, 123; *Die Grundlegung der Metaphysik der Sitten*, pp. 4, 38. Cf. also Hegel's critique, *Werke III*, pp. 133 et seq.
 - 17 *Werke III*, p. 147.
 - 18 *Ibid.*, p. 262.
 - 19 *Ibid.*, pp. 432-5. Plehkanov deserves the credit for having pointed to the importance of this side of Hegel's Logic for the distinction between evolution and revolution as early as 1891 (*Neue Zeit X/I*, pp. 280 et seq.). Regrettably his insight was neglected by later theorists.
 - 20 On the methodological side of this question, see above all the first part of Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion*. In particular, *Werke XI*, pp. 158-9. "There is no immediate knowledge. Immediate knowledge is where we have no consciousness of mediation; but it is mediated for all that." Similarly in the Preface to the Phenomenology: "The true is not an original unity as such or an immediate one, but only this reconstituting equality or reflection in otherness in itself." *Werke II*, p. 15.
 - 21 Engels in fact accepted the Hegelian theory of the false (which has its finest definition in the Preface to the Phenomenology, *Werke II*, p. 30 et seq.). Cf. his analysis of the role of 'evil' in history, *Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, in *S.W. II*, p. 345 et seq. This refers, of course, only to the truly original representatives of bourgeois thought. Epigones, eclectics and simple partisans of the interests of a declining class belong in quite a different category.
 - 22 On this distinction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, see the essay on "Class Consciousness".
 - 23 *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 31.
 - 24 *Capital I*, p. 572.
 - 25 All so-called theories of abstinence are based on this. We may mention especially the importance attributed by Max Weber to 'inner worldly asceticism' in the origins of the 'spirit' of capitalism. Marx, too, confirms this fact when he points out that for the capitalist "his own private consumption is a robbery perpetrated on accumulation, just as in book-keeping by double entry, the private expenditure of the capitalist is placed on the debtor side of his account against his capital". *Capital I*, p. 592.
 - 26 *Wages, Price and Profit* in *S.W. I*, p. 398.
 - 27 *Anti-Dühring*, p. 141.
 - 28 *Capital I*, p. 309.
 - 29 *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 29.
 - 30 Thus Marx writes to Engels: "These gentry, the economists, have hitherto overlooked the extremely simple point that the form: 20 yards of linen = 1 coat is only the undeveloped basis of

- 20 yards of linen = £2, and that therefore the simplest form of a commodity, in which its value is not yet expressed as a relation to all other commodities but only as something differentiated from the commodity in its natural form, contains the whole secret of the money form and with it, in embryo, of all the bourgeois forms of the product of labour. (22 June, 1867). *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, n.d., p. 228. On this point see also the magisterial analysis of the distinction between exchange value and price in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* where it is shown that in this distinction "all the tempests that threaten the commodity in the real process of circulation are concentrated", p. 80.
- 31 *Werke II*, p. 27.
 - 32 *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 299.
 - 33 Thus Marx says of Feuerbach's use of the term 'species'—and all such views fail to advance beyond Feuerbach and many indeed do not go as far—that "it can be understood only as the inward dumb generality which naturally unites the many individuals". *6th Thesis on Feuerbach*.
 - 34 *Nachlass II*, p. 54. [*Critical Notes on "The King of Prussia and Social Reform"*.] We are interested here solely in the methodical implications. Mehring's question (*ibid.*, p. 30) about the extent to which Marx overestimated the consciousness of the Weavers' Uprising does not concern us here. *Methodologically* he has provided a perfect description of the development of revolutionary class consciousness in the proletariat and his later views (in the *Manifesto*, *Eighteenth Brumaire*, etc.) about the difference between bourgeois and proletarian revolutions are wholly in line with this.
 - 35 We have in mind here Bachofen's analysis of the *Orestia* and of its significance for the history of social development. The fact that Bachofen's ideological timidity prevented him from going further than the correct interpretation of the drama is additional proof of the rightness of the views set out here.
 - 36 On this point cf. Marx's analysis of the industrial reserve army and surplus-population. *Capital I*, pp. 628 et seq.
 - 37 *Encyclopädie*, § 15.
 - 38 *Capital I*, pp. 234-5. Cf. also *Wages, Price and Profit*, *S.W. I*, pp. 401-2.
 - 39 Cf. what is said on the 'post festum' nature of the consciousness of the bourgeoisie in the essays "The Changing Function of Historical Materialism" and "What is Orthodox Marxism?"
 - 40 A detailed examination of this question is not possible here although this distinction would enable us to differentiate clearly between the ancient and the modern world, because Heraclitus' self-annulling conception of the object bears the closest resemblance to the reified structure of modern thought. This alone would clearly reveal the limitation of the thought of the Ancients, viz. their inability to grasp dialectically their own societal existence in the present and hence also in history, as a limitation of classical

- society. In various other contexts, but always in a way that leads to the same methodological goal, Marx has made the same point about Aristotle's 'economics'. Hegel's and Lassalle's overestimation of the modernity of Heraclitus' dialectics has symptomatic importance for their own. This only means, however, that this limitation of the thought of the 'Ancients' (the ultimately uncritical attitude towards the historical conditioning of the formations from which thought arises) remains decisive for them, too, and then emerges in the contemplative and speculative character of their thought, as opposed to a material and practical one.
- 41 *Capital* I, pp. 570, 572-3. Here too, as we have already emphasised, the change from quantity to quality is seen to be a characteristic of every single moment. The quantified moments only remain quantitative when regarded separately. Seen as aspects of a process they appear as qualitative changes in the economic structure of capital.
- 42 *Wage, Labour and Capital*, S.W. I, p. 86.
- 43 Cf. "The Changing Function of Historical Materialism". On fact and reality see the essay "What is Orthodox Marxism?"
- 44 Cf. the dispute about the disappearance or increase of the medium-sized firms in Rosa Luxemburg, *Soziale Reform oder Revolution*, pp. 11 et seq.
- 45 *Capital* III, p. 326.
- 46 *Ibid.*, pp. 349-50. The rate of interest is thus "given as a fixed magnitude, like the price of commodities on the market" and the general profit rate is expressly contrasted with it as an opposing tendency. *Ibid.*, p. 359. We see here the fundamental issue dividing us from bourgeois thought.
- 47 Cf. the essay "What is Orthodox Marxism?"
- 48 *Origin of the Family*, S.W. II, p. 92.
- 49 Cf. Marx's comments on Bentham, *Capital* I, pp. 609-10.
- 50 A fine elucidation of the different stages can be found in *Capital* III, pp. 806 et seq.
- 51 Modern pragmatism provides a model illustration of this.
- 52 *Nachlass* II (*The Holy Family*, chap. 8), p. 304.
- 53 *Nachlass* I, p. 384. (*Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* in *Botto-more*, *Early Writings*, p. 43.) The italics are mine.
- 54 On this point, see Max Weber's essays in Vol. I of his *Sociology of Religion*. Whether we accept his causal interpretation or not is irrelevant to a judgement of his factual material. On the connection between Calvinism and capitalism, see also Engels' remarks in *Über historischen Materialismus*, *Neue Zeit* XI, I, p. 43. The same structure of ethics and existence is still active in the Kantian system. Cf. e.g. the passage in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 120, which sounds wholly in line with Franklin's acquisitive Calvinist ethics. An analysis of the profound similarities would lead us too far away from our theme.
- 55 *Thomas Münzer*, pp. 73 et seq.
- 56 *Werke* III, pp. 37-8. Except that there is also an echo of the

- nostalgia—here of no importance—for natural social formations. Cf. Hegel's methodologically correct negative criticisms in *Glauben und Wissen*, *Werke* I, pp. 105 et seq. His positive conclusions, of course, amount to much the same thing.
- 57 Lassalle, *Werke*, Cassirer Verlag, V, pp. 275-6. The extent to which Lassalle, by exalting a notion of the state founded in natural law, moves on to the terrain of the bourgeoisie, can be seen not only in the development of particular theories of natural law that have deduced the impropriety of every organised movement of the proletariat from the very idea of 'freedom' and the 'dignity of man'. (Cf. e.g. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 497, on American natural law.) But also C. Hugo, the cynical founder of the historical school of law arrives at a similar theoretical construction—though he does so in order to prove the opposite of Lassalle—viz. the view that it is possible to devise certain rights that transform men into a commodity without negating their 'human dignity' in other spheres. *Naturrecht*, § 144.
- 58 Cf. the essay "Class Consciousness".
- 59 These views can be found in an undiluted form in Kautsky's latest programmatic statement. One need not go beyond the rigid, mechanical separation of politics and economics to see that he is treading the same mistaken path as Lassalle. His conception of democracy is too familiar to require a fresh analysis here. And as for his economic fatalism, it is symptomatic that even where Kautsky admits that it is impossible to make concrete predictions about the economic phenomenon of crises it remains self-evident for him that the course of events will unfold according to the laws of the capitalist economy, p. 57.
- 60 Lenin's achievement is that he rediscovered this side of Marxism that points the way to an understanding of its practical core. His constantly reiterated warning to seize the 'next link' in the chain with all one's might, that link on which the fate of the totality depends in that one moment, his dismissal of all utopian demands, i.e. his 'relativism' and his 'Realpolitik': all these things are nothing less than the practical realisation of the young Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*.
- 61 It must now be self-evident that totality is a problem of category and in particular a problem of revolutionary action. It is obvious that we cannot regard a method as authentically totalising if it deals with 'all problems' in a substantive manner (which is, of course, an impossibility) while remaining contemplative. This is to be referred above all to the social-democratic treatment of history in which a plethora of material is designed constantly to divert attention from social action.
- 62 Cf. the essay "Towards a Methodology of the Problem of Organisation".
- 63 *Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, S.W. II, p. 350.
- 64 Hegel, *Werke* XI, p. 160.
- 65 This rejection of the metaphysical import of bourgeois materialism

does not affect our historical evaluation of it: it was the ideological form of the bourgeois revolution, and as such it remains of *practical relevance* as long as the bourgeois revolution remains relevant (including its relevance as an aspect of the proletarian revolution). On this point, see my essays on "Moleschott", "Feuerbach" and "Atheism" in the Rote Fahne, Berlin; and above all Lenin's comprehensive essay "Under the Banner of Marxism", The Communist International, 1922, No. 21.

- 66 Lask has very logically introduced a distinction between an antecedent and subsequent region ['vorbildlich' and 'nachbildlich'] (Die Lehre vom Urteil.) This does indeed enable him to eliminate pure Platonism, the reflective duality of idea and reality—in the spirit of criticism—but it then experiences a logical resurrection.
- 67 Purely logical and systematic studies simply refer to the historical point at which we find ourselves: they signify our temporary inability to grasp and represent the totality of categoric problems as the problems of a historical reality in the process of revolutionising itself.
- 68 Cf. on this point Hegel's *Phenomenology*, especially Werke II, pp. 73 et seq., where this problem receives its profoundest analysis. See also Ernst Bloch's theory of the "opacity of the lived moment" and his theory of "knowledge that has not yet become conscious".
- 69 Hegel, Werke XII, p. 207.
- 70 On the relationship between a theory of praxis to a practical theory, see the interesting essay by Josef Révai in *Kommunismus* I, Nos. 46-9, "The Problem of Tactics", even though I am not in agreement with all his conclusions.
- 71 *Encyclopädie*, §16.
- 72 *Ibid.*, § 192.
- 73 Hegel, Werke XIII, pp. 299 et seq.
- 74 Letter dated 12 December, 1851. Ed. G. Mayer, p. 41.
- 75 Bukharin, *Ökonomie der Transformationsperiode*, pp. 50-1.

The Changing Function of Historical Materialism

A Lecture given at the inauguration of the Institute for Research into Historical Materialism in Budapest

THE victory gained by the proletariat evidently confronts it with the task of perfecting as far as possible the intellectual weapons which have hitherto enabled it to hold its own in the class struggle. Among these weapons historical materialism is, of course, pre-eminent.

Historical materialism was one of the proletariat's most potent weapons at a time when it was oppressed and now that it is preparing to rebuild society and culture anew it is natural to take the method over into the new age. If only for this reason it was necessary to found this Institute with the aim of applying the methods of historical materialism to the historical sciences as a whole. Up to now historical materialism was doubtless a superb weapon but from a scientific point of view it was hardly more than a programme, an indication of the way in which history ought to be written. Now, however, a further task devolves upon it: the whole of history really has to be re-written; the events of the past have to be sorted, arranged and judged from the point of view of historical materialism. We must strive to turn historical materialism into the authentic method for carrying out concrete historical research and for historiography in general.

But here we must answer the question why this has only now become possible. A superficial answer would be to claim that the time was only now ripe for converting historical materialism into a scientific method because it was only now that the proletariat had seized power and with it control of the physical and intellectual forces without which this could not be achieved and which society as it was would never have made available to it. However, much deeper underlying factors than the fact of naked power place the proletariat of today in a position to organise science as it thinks fit. These deeper factors are closely connected with the profound change in function resulting from the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. from the fact that the class struggle is now waged from above and not from below. This change in function

By the same author

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THE MEANING OF CONTEMPORARY REALISM
ESSAYS OF THOMAS MANN
GOETHE AND HIS AGE
SOLZHENITSYN

GEORG LUKÁCS

*History and Class
Consciousness*

Studies in Marxist Dialectics

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