Early Writings

for the animal kingdom of the philistines wallowing in their passive and thoughtless existence.

For our part it is our task to drag the old world into the full light of day and to give positive shape to the new one. The more time history allows thinking mankind to reflect and suffering mankind to collect its strength the more perfect will be the fruit which the present now bears within its womb.

[Bakunin and Feuerbach contribute letters to the correspondence in which they both reject Ruge's pessimism. Feuerbach, agreeing that the situation in Germany is intolerable, calls for 'united forces' to rebuild everything by means of united 'praxis'. He considers a new journal to be a vital element in that praxis. Ruge, in a final letter to Marx, announces his conversion to atheism and his support for the 'new philosophers'. He now sees the Yearbooks as a means by which to 'criticize ourselves and all Germany'. It is in this context that Marx stresses the idea that criticism must involve itself in actual political struggle.]

Marx to Ruge

Kreuznach, September 1843

I am very pleased to find you so resolute and to see your thoughts turning away from the past and towards a new enterprise. In Paris, then, the ancient bastion of philosophy—absit omen!—and the modern capital of the modern world. Whatever is necessary adapts itself. Although I do not underestimate the obstacles, therefore, I have no doubt that they can be overcome.

Our enterprise may or may not come about, but in any event I shall be in Paris by the end of the month as the very air here turns one into a serf and I can see no opening for free activity in Germany.

In Germany everything is suppressed by force, a veritable anarchy of the spirit, a reign of stupidity itself has come upon us and Zurich obeys orders from Berlin. It is becoming clearer every day that independent, thinking people must seek out a new centre. I am convinced that our plan would satisfy a real need and real needs must be satisfied in reality. I shall have no doubts once we begin in earnest.

In fact the internal obstacles seem almost greater than the

6. May there be no ill omen.
external difficulties. For even though the question 'where from?' presents no problems, the question 'where to?' is a rich source of confusion. Not only has universal anarchy broken out among the reformers but also every individual must admit to himself that he has no precise idea about what ought to happen. However, this very defect turns to the advantage of the new movement, for it means that we do not anticipate the world with our dogmas but instead attempt to discover the new world through the critique of the old. Hitherto philosophers have left the keys to all riddles lying in their desks, and the stupid, uninitiated world had only to wait around for the roasted pigeons of absolute science to fly into its open mouth. Philosophy has now become secularized and the most striking proof of this can be seen in the way that philosophical consciousness has joined battle not only outwardly, but inwardly too. If we have no business with the construction of the future or with organizing it for all time there can still be no doubt about the task confronting us at present: the ruthless criticism of the existing order, ruthless in that it will shrink neither from its own discoveries nor from conflict with the powers that be.

I am therefore not in favour of our hoisting a dogmatic banner. Quite the reverse. We must try to help the dogmatists to clarify their ideas. In particular, communism is a dogmatic abstraction and by communism I do not refer to some imagined, possible communism, but to communism as it actually exists in the teachings of Cabet, Dézamy and Weitling, etc. This communism is itself only a particular manifestation of the humanistic principle and is infected by its opposite, private property. The abolition of private property is therefore by no means identical with communism and communism has seen other socialist theories, such as those of Fourier and Proudhon, rising up in opposition to it, not fortuitously but necessarily, because it is only a particular, one-sided realization of the principle of socialism.

And by the same token the whole principle of socialism is concerned only with one side, namely the reality of the true existence of man. We have also to concern ourselves with the other side, i.e. with man's theoretical existence, and make his religion and science, etc., into the object of our criticism. Furthermore, we wish to influence our contemporaries, our German contemporaries above all. The problem is how best to achieve this. In this context there are two incontestable facts. Both religion and politics are matters of the very first importance in contemporary Germany.
Our task must be to latch onto these as they are and not to oppose them with any ready-made system such as the *Voyage en Icarie.*

Reason has always existed, but not always in a rational form. Hence the critic can take his cue from every existing form of theoretical and practical consciousness and from this ideal and final goal implicit in the *actual* forms of existing reality he can deduce a true reality. Now as far as real life is concerned, it is precisely the *political* state which contains the postulates of reason in all its *modern* forms, even where it has not been the conscious repository of socialist requirements. But it does not stop there. It consistently assumes that reason has been realized and just as consistently it becomes embroiled at every point in a conflict between its ideal vocation and its actually existing premises.

This internecine conflict within the political state enables us to infer the social truth. Just as religion is the table of contents of the theoretical struggles of mankind, so the *political state* enumerates its practical struggles. Thus the particular form and nature of the political state contains all social struggles, needs and truths within itself. It is therefore anything but beneath its dignity to make even the most specialized political problem — such as the distinction between the representative system and the Estates system — into an object of its criticism. For this problem only expresses at the *political* level the distinction between the rule of man and the rule of private property. Hence the critic not only can but must concern himself with these political questions (which the crude socialists find entirely beneath their dignity). By demonstrating the superiority of the representative system over the Estates system he will *interest* a great party in *practice.* By raising the representative system from its political form to a general one and by demonstrating the true significance underlying it he will force this party to transcend itself — for its victory is also its defeat.

Nothing prevents us, therefore, from lining our criticism with a criticism of politics, from taking sides in politics, i.e. from entering into real struggles and identifying ourselves with them. This does not mean that we shall confront the world with new doctrinaire principles and proclaim: Here is the truth, on your knees before it! It means that we shall develop for the world new principles from the existing principles of the world. We shall not say: Abandon your struggles, they are mere folly; let us provide

you with the true campaign-slogans. Instead we shall simply show
the world why it is struggling, and consciousness of this is a thing
it must acquire whether it wishes or not.

The reform of consciousness consists entirely in making the
world aware of its own consciousness, in arousing it from its
dream of itself, in explaining its own actions to it. Like Feuerbach’s
critique of religion, our whole aim can only be to translate
religious and political problems into their self-conscious human
form.

Our programme must be: the reform of consciousness not
through dogmas but by analysing mystical consciousness obscure
to itself, whether it appear in religious or political form. It will
then become plain that the world has long since dreamed of some-
thing of which it needs only to become conscious for it to possess
it in reality. It will then become plain that our task is not to draw
a sharp mental line between past and future but to complete the
thought of the past. Lastly, it will become plain that mankind
will not begin any new work, but will consciously bring about the
completion of its old work.

We are therefore in a position to sum up the credo of our
journal in a single word: the self-clarification (critical philosophy)
of the struggles and wishes of the age. This is a task for the world
and for us. It can succeed only as the product of united efforts.
What is needed above all is a confession, and nothing more than
that. To obtain forgiveness for its sins mankind needs only to
declare them for what they are.
II


Bauer deals in this form with the relation between the Jewish and Christian religions, as well as their relation to criticism. Their relation to criticism is their relation ‘to the capacity to become free’.

His conclusion is:

The Christian has only one hurdle to overcome, namely, his religion, in order to dispense with religion altogether, and hence to become free. The Jew, on the other hand, does not only have to break with his Jewish nature; he also has to break with the development towards the completion of his religion, a development which has remained alien to him.28

Thus Bauer here transforms the question of Jewish emancipation into a purely religious question. The theological problem as to who has the better chance of gaining salvation – Jew or Christian – is here repeated in a more enlightened form: who is the more capable of emancipation? The question is no longer: which gives freedom, Judaism or Christianity? Rather it is the reverse: which gives more freedom, the negation of Judaism or the negation of Christianity?

If they wish to become free, the Jews should not embrace Christianity but Christianity in dissolution and more generally religion in dissolution, i.e. enlightenment, criticism and its product – free humanity.29

It is still a matter of embracing a religion for the Jew. It is no longer a question of Christianity, but of Christianity in dissolution.

Bauer demands of the Jew that he break with the essence of the Christian religion – a demand which, as he himself says, does not proceed from the development of the Jewish nature.

Since Bauer, at the end of his Jewish Question, represented Judaism as nothing more than a crude religious criticism of Christianity, and therefore gave it ‘only’ a religious significance, it was clear in advance that he would also transform the emancipation of the Jews into a philosophico-theological act.

29. ibid., p. 70.
Bauer sees the ideal and abstract essence of the Jew, his religion, as his whole essence. He is therefore right to conclude: 'The Jew gives nothing to humanity when he lays aside his limited law,' when he abolishes all his Judaism.  

According to this the relationship of Jews and Christians is as follows: the only interest Christians have in the emancipation of the Jews is a general human and theoretical interest. Judaism is an offensive fact for the religious eye of the Christian. As soon as his eye ceases to be religious, this fact ceases to be offensive. The emancipation of the Jews is in and for itself not the task of the Christian.  

However, if the Jew wants to liberate himself, he has to complete not only his own task but also the task of the Christian − the Critique of the Evangelical History of the Synoptics and the Life of Jesus, etc.  

'They must see to it themselves: they will determine their own destiny; but history does not allow itself to be mocked.'  

We will try to avoid looking at the problem in a theological way. For us the question of the Jews' capacity for emancipation is transformed into the question: what specific social element must be overcome in order to abolish Judaism? For the capacity of the present-day Jew for emancipation is the relation of Judaism to the emancipation of the present-day world. This relation flows inevitably from the special position of Judaism in the enslaved world of today.  

Let us consider the real secular Jew − not the sabbath Jew, as Bauer does, but the everyday Jew.  

Let us not look for the Jew's secret in his religion: rather let us look for the secret of religion in the real Jew.  

What is the secular basis of Judaism? Practical need, self-interest.  

What is the secular cult of the Jew? Haggling. What is his secular God? Money.  

Well then! Emancipation from haggling and from money, i.e. from practical, real Judaism, would be the same as the self-emancipation of our age.  

An organization of society that abolished the basis upon which  

30. ibid., p. 65.  
31. These two books are by Bruno Bauer (Brunswick, 1842) and David Friedrich Strauss (Tübingen, 1835–6) respectively.  
haggling exists, i.e. the possibility of haggling, would have made
the Jew impossible. His religious consciousness would vanish like
an insipid haze in the vital air of society. On the other hand, when
the Jew recognizes this his practical nature as null and works to
abolish it, he is working outwards from his previous course of
development in the direction of general human emancipation and
turning against the supreme practical expression of human self-
estrangement.

We therefore recognize in Judaism the presence of a universal
and contemporary anti-social element whose historical evolution
– eagerly nurtured by the Jews in its harmful aspects – has arrived
at its present peak, a peak at which it will inevitably disintegrate.

The emancipation of the Jews is, in the last analysis, the emanci-
pation of mankind from Judaism.

The Jew has already emancipated himself in a Jewish way.

The Jew, who is merely tolerated in Vienna, for example, determines
the fate of the whole empire through the financial power he possesses.
The Jew, who can be without rights in the smallest of the German
states, decides the fate of Europe. While the corporations and the
guilds exclude him or are not yet willing to look upon him with favour,
the audacity of his industry mocks the obstinacy of medieval insti-
tutions.33

This is not an isolated fact. The Jew has emancipated himself
in a Jewish way not only by acquiring financial power but also
because through him and apart from him money has become a
world power and the practical Jewish spirit has become the
practical spirit of the Christian peoples. The Jews have emanci-
pated themselves in so far as the Christians have become Jews.

For example, Captain Hamilton informs us34 that the pious and
politically free inhabitant of New England is a kind of Laocoön
who does not make even the slightest effort to free himself from
the snakes that are choking him. Mammon is his idol and he prays
to him not only with his lips but with all the power of his body and
his soul. For him the world is nothing but a Stock Exchange and
he is convinced that his sole vocation here on earth is to get
richer than his neighbours. He is possessed by the spirit of
bargaining and the only way he can relax is by exchanging objects.
When he travels it is as if he carried his shop and office on his

34. In the work quoted above, p. 219.
back and spoke of nothing but interest and profit. If he takes his eyes off his own business for a moment, it is simply so that he can poke his nose into someone else's.

Indeed, the practical domination of Judaism over the Christian world is expressed in such an unambiguous and natural fashion in North America that the very proclamation of the Gospel, Christian teaching, has become a commercial object and the bankrupt businessman is just as likely to go into evangelizing as the successful evangelist into business.

'The man you see at the head of a respectable congregation started out as a businessman; his business failed so he became a minister; the other started out as a priest, but as soon as he had saved some money he left the pulpit for business. In many people's eyes the religious ministry is a veritable industrial career.'

In Bauer's view it is 'a dishonest state of affairs when in theory the Jew is deprived of political rights while in practice he possesses enormous power and exercises a political influence in the larger sphere that is denied him as an individual'.

The contradiction between the practical political power of the Jew and his political rights is the contradiction between politics and financial power in general. Ideally speaking the former is superior to the latter, but in actual fact it is in thrall to it.

Judaism has kept going alongside Christianity not simply as a religious critique of Christianity and an embodiment of doubts about the religious origins of Christianity but also because the practical Jewish spirit, Judaism, has managed to survive in Christian society and has even reached its highest level of development there. The Jew, who is a particular member of civil society, is only the particular manifestation of the Judaism of civil society.

Judaism has managed to survive not despite history but through it.

Civil society ceaselessly begets the Jew from its own entrails.

What was the essential basis of the Jewish religion? Practical need, egoism.

The monotheism of the Jew is therefore in reality the polytheism of the many needs, a polytheism that makes even the

37. The German word *Judentum* — 'Judaism' — could also be used to mean 'commerce'. Marx plays on this double meaning of the word.
lavatory an object of divine law. *Practical need*, *egoism*, is the principle of *civil society* and appears as such in all its purity as soon as civil society has fully brought forth the political state. The god of *practical need and self-interest* is *money*.

Money is the jealous god of Israel before whom no other god may stand. Money debases all the gods of mankind and turns them into commodities. Money is the universal and self-constituted *value* of all things. It has therefore deprived the entire world – both the world of man and of nature – of its specific value. Money is the estranged essence of man’s work and existence; this alien essence dominates him and he worships it.

The god of the Jews has been secularized and become the god of the world. Exchange is the true god of the Jew. His god is nothing more than illusory exchange.

The view of nature which has grown up under the regime of private property and of money is an actual contempt for and practical degradation of nature which does exist in the Jewish religion but only in an imaginary form.

In this sense Thomas Müntzer declares it intolerable that ‘all creatures have been made into property, the fish in the water, the birds in the air, the plants on the earth – all living things must also become free’.38

What is present in an abstract form in the Jewish religion – contempt for theory, for art, for history, for man as an end in himself – is the *actual* and *conscious* standpoint, the virtue, of the man of money. The species-relation itself, the relation between man and woman, etc., becomes a commercial object! Woman is put on the market.

The *chimerical* nationality of the Jew is the nationality of the merchant, of the man of money in general.

The ungrounded and unfounded law of the Jew is only the religious caricature of ungrounded and unfounded morality and law in general, of the purely *formal* rites with which the world of self-interest surrounds itself.

Here too the supreme relation of man is the *legal* relation, the relation to laws which apply to him not because they are the laws of his own will and nature but because they *dominate* him and because breaches of them would be *avenged*.

38. From the pamphlet issued by Müntzer in 1524 and entitled *Hoch verursachte Schutzrede und Antwort wider das geistlose, sanftlebende Fleisch zu Witterberg*. 
Jewish Jesuitry, the same practical Jesuitry that Bauer finds in
the Talmud, is the relationship of the world of self-interest to the
laws that dominate it; the wily circumvention of those laws
constitutes the principal skill of that world.

Indeed, the motion of that world within its laws is necessarily

Judaism could not develop further as a religion, could not
develop further theoretically, because the world-view of practical
need is by nature narrow-minded and rapidly exhausted.

The religion of practical need could not by its very nature find
its completion in theory but only in practice, precisely because its
truth is practice.

Judaism could not create a new world; it could only draw the
new creations and conditions of the world into the province of its
own activity, since practical need, whose understanding is only at
the level of self-interest, is passive and incapable of extending
itself in directions of its own choosing; instead, it finds itself
extended in line with the development of social conditions them-
selves.

Judaism reaches its peak with the completion of civil society;
but civil society first reaches its completion in the Christian world.
Only under the rule of Christianity, which makes all national,
natural, moral and theoretical relationships external to man,
could civil society separate itself completely from political life,
tear apart all the species-bonds of man, substitute egoism and
selfish need for those bonds and dissolve the human world into a
world of atomistic individuals confronting each other in enmity.

Christianity sprang from Judaism. It has now dissolved back
into Judaism.

The Christian was from the very beginning the theorizing Jew.
The Jew is therefore the practical Christian and the practical
Christian has once again become a Jew.

Christianity overcame real Judaism only in appearance. It was
too refined, too spiritual, to do away with the crudeness of prac-
tical need except by raising it into celestial space.

Christianity is the sublime thought of Judaism and Judaism is
the vulgar application of Christianity. But this application could
not become universal until Christianity as perfected religion had
theoretically completed the self-estrangement of man from him-
self and from nature.

Only then could Judaism attain universal domination and turn
alienated man and alienated nature into *alienable*, saleable objects subject to the slavery of egoistic need and to the market.

Selling is the practice of alienation [*Die Veräusserung ist die Praxis der Entäusserung*]. As long as man is restrained by religion he can objectify his essence only by making it into an *alien*, fantastic being. In the same way, when under the sway of egoistic need he can act practically and practically produce objects only by making his products and his activity subordinate to an alien substance and giving them the significance of an alien substance – money.

Translated into practice, the Christian egoism of eternal happiness inevitably becomes the material egoism of the Jew, celestial need becomes terrestrial need and subjectivism becomes self-interest. We can explain the tenacity of the Jew not from his religion but from the human foundation of his religion, from practical need and egoism.

Since the real essence of the Jew is universally realized and secularized in civil society, civil society could not convince the Jew of the *unreality* of his *religious* essence, which is nothing more than the ideal expression of practical need. Therefore not only in the Pentateuch and the Talmud but also in present-day society we find the essence of the modern Jew not in an abstract but in a supremely empirical form, not only as the narrowness of the Jew but as the Jewish narrowness of society.

As soon as society succeeds in abolishing the *empirical* essence of Judaism – the market and the conditions which give rise to it – the Jew will have become *impossible*, for his consciousness will no longer have an object, the subjective basis of Judaism – practical need – will have become humanized and the conflict between man's individual sensuous existence and his species-existence will have been superseded.

The *social* emancipation of the Jew is the *emancipation of society from Judaism.*
Early Writings

struggle of the layman with the priest outside himself, but rather of his struggle with his own inner priest, with his priestly nature. And if the Protestant transformation of the German laymen into priests emancipated the lay priests—the princes together with their clergy, the privileged and the philistines—the philosophical transformation of the priestly Germans into men will emancipate the people. But just as emancipation did not stop with the princes, so will secularization of property not stop with the dispossession of the churches, which was set going above all by hypocritical Prussia. At that time the Peasants’ War, the most radical episode in German history, suffered defeat because of theology. Today, when theology itself has failed, the most unfree episode in German history, our status quo, will founder on philosophy. On the eve of the Reformation official Germany was Rome’s most unquestioning vassal. On the eve of its revolution Germany is the unquestioning vassal of lesser powers than Rome—of Prussia and Austria, of clod-hopping squires and philistines.

But a major difficulty appears to stand in the way of a radical German revolution.

The point is that revolutions need a passive element, a material basis. Theory is realized in a people only in so far as it is a realization of the people’s needs. But will the enormous gap that exists between the demands of German thought and the responses of German reality now correspond to the same gap both between civil society and the state and civil society and itself? Will the theoretical needs be directly practical needs? It is not enough that thought should strive to realize itself; reality must itself strive towards thought.

But Germany did not pass through the intermediate stages of political emancipation at the same time as modern nations. Even the stages that it has left behind in theory it has not yet reached in practice. How is Germany, in one salto mortale, to override not only its own limitations but also those of the modern nations, to override limitations which in point of fact it ought to experience and strive for as liberation from its real limitations? A radical revolution can only be the revolution of radical needs, but the preconditions and seedbeds for such needs appear to be lacking.

Yet, even if Germany has only kept company with the development of the modern nations through the abstract activity of thought, without taking an active part in the real struggles of this development, it has nevertheless shared in the sufferings of this...
development without sharing in its pleasures and its partial satisfaction. Abstract activity on the one hand corresponds to abstract suffering on the other. Germany will therefore one day find itself at the level of European decadence before it has ever reached the level of European emancipation. It will be like a fetish-worshipper suffering from the diseases of Christianity.

If we examine the German governments, we find that as a result of the circumstances of the time, the situation in Germany, the standpoint of German education and finally their own happy instincts they are driven to combine the civilized defects of the modern political world, whose advantages we lack, with the barbaric defects of the ancien régime, of which we have our full measure. In this way Germany must participate more and more, if not in the reason then at least in the unreason even of those state forms which have progressed beyond its own status quo. For example, is there any country in the world which shares as naively as so-called constitutional Germany all the illusions of the constitutional state without sharing any of the realities? Or was it just an accident that the idea of combining the torments of censorship with the torments of the French September laws, which presuppose freedom of the press, was the invention of a German government? Just as the gods of all nations could be found in the Roman Pantheon, so the sins of all state forms will be found in the Holy Roman German Empire. That this eclecticism will take on unheard-of proportions is assured in particular by the politico-aesthetic gourmandise of a German king, who proposes to play all the roles of royalty – feudal and bureaucratic, absolute and constitutional, autocratic and democratic – if not in the person of the people then at least in his own person, and if not for the people, then at least for himself. Germany, as a world of its own embodying all the deficiencies of the present political age, will not be able to overcome the specifically German limitations without overcoming the universal limitation of the present political age.

It is not radical revolution or universal human emancipation which is a utopian dream for Germany; it is the partial, merely political revolution, the revolution which leaves the pillars of the building standing. What is the basis of a partial and merely

7. The September laws of 1835 limited the activity of juries and the press. Harsh penalties were introduced for those people who agitated against private property and the existing state order.
8. Frederick William IV.
political revolution? Its basis is the fact that one part of civil society emancipates itself and attains universal domination, that one particular class undertakes from its particular situation the universal emancipation of society. This class liberates the whole of society, but only on condition that the whole of society finds itself in the same situation as this class, e.g. possesses or can easily acquire money and education.

No class of civil society can play this role without awakening a moment of enthusiasm in itself and in the masses; a moment in which this class fraternizes and fuses with society in general, becomes identified with it and is experienced and acknowledged as its universal representative; a moment in which its claims and rights are truly the rights and claims of society itself and in which it is in reality the heart and head of society. Only in the name of the universal rights of society can a particular class lay claim to universal domination. Revolutionary energy and spiritual self-confidence are not enough to storm this position of liberator and to ensure thereby the political exploitation of all the other spheres of society in the interests of one's own sphere. If the revolution of a people and the emancipation of a particular class [Klasse] of civil society are to coincide, if one class is to stand for the whole of society, then all the deficiences of society must be concentrated in another class [Stand], one particular class must be the class which gives universal offence, the embodiment of a general limitation; one particular sphere of society must appear as the notorious crime of the whole of society, so that the liberation of this sphere appears as universal self-liberation. If one class [Stand] is to be the class of liberation par excellence, then another class must be the class of overt oppression. The negative general significance of the French nobility and the French clergy determined the positive general significance of the class which stood nearest to and opposed to them – the bourgeoisie.

But in Germany every particular class lacks not only the consistency, acuteness, courage and ruthlessness which would stamp it as the negative representative of society; equally, all classes lack that breadth of spirit which identifies itself, if only for a moment, with the spirit of the people, that genius which can raise material force to the level of political power, that revolutionary boldness which flings into the face of its adversary the defiant words: I am nothing and I should be everything. The main feature of German morality and honour, not only in individuals but in
classes, is that *modest egoism* which asserts its narrowness and allows that narrowness to be used against it. The relationship of the different spheres of German society is therefore epic rather than dramatic. Each begins to experience itself and to set up camp alongside the others with its own particular claims, not as soon as it is oppressed but as soon as circumstances, without any contribution from the sphere concerned, create an inferior social stratum which it in its turn can oppress. Even the *moral self-confidence of the German middle class* is based simply on an awareness of being the general representative of the philistine mediocrity of all the other classes. It is therefore not only the German kings who mount the throne *mal-à-propos*, but every sphere of civil society which experiences defeat before it celebrates victory, develops its own limitations before it overcomes the limitations confronting it, and asserts its narrow-mindedness before it has had a chance to assert its generosity. As a result, even the opportunity of playing a great role has always passed by before it was ever really available and every class, as soon as it takes up the struggle against the class above it, is involved in a struggle with the class beneath it. Thus princes struggle against kings, bureaucrats against aristocrats, and the bourgeoisie against all of these, while the proletariat is already beginning to struggle against the bourgeoisie. The middle class scarcely dares to conceive of the idea of emancipation from its own point of view, and already the development of social conditions and the progress of political theory have demonstrated this point of view to be antiquated or at least problematical.

In France it is enough to be something for one to want to be everything. In Germany no one may be anything unless he renounces everything. In France partial emancipation is the basis of universal emancipation. In Germany universal emancipation is the *conditio sine qua non* of any partial emancipation. In France it is the reality, in Germany the impossibility, of emancipation in stages that must give birth to complete freedom. In France each class of the people is a *political idealist* and experiences itself first and foremost not as a particular class but as the representative of social needs in general. The role of *emancipator* therefore passes in a dramatic movement from one class of the French people to the next, until it finally reaches that class which no longer realizes social freedom by assuming certain conditions external to man and yet created by human society, but rather by organizing all the
conditions of human existence on the basis of social freedom. In Germany, however, where practical life is as devoid of intellect as intellectual life is of practical activity, no class of civil society has the need and the capacity for universal emancipation unless under the compulsion of its immediate situation, of material necessity and of its chains themselves.

So where is the positive possibility of German emancipation?

This is our answer. In the formation of a class with radical chains, a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society, a class [Stand] which is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere which has a universal character because of its universal suffering and which lays claim to no particular right because the wrong it suffers is not a particular wrong but wrong in general; a sphere of society which can no longer lay claim to a historical title, but merely to a human one, which does not stand in one-sided opposition to the consequences but in all-sided opposition to the premises of the German political system; and finally a sphere which cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from — and thereby emancipating — all the other spheres of society, which is, in a word, the total loss of humanity and which can therefore redeem itself only through the total redemption of humanity. This dissolution of society as a particular class is the proletariat.

The proletariat is only beginning to appear in Germany as a result of the emergent industrial movement. For the proletariat is not formed by natural poverty but by artificially produced poverty; it is formed not from the mass of people mechanically oppressed by the weight of society but from the mass of people issuing from society's acute disintegration and in particular from the dissolution of the middle class. (Clearly, however, the ranks of the proletariat are also gradually swelled by natural poverty and Christian-Germanic serfdom.)

When the proletariat proclaims the dissolution of the existing world order, it is only declaring the secret of its own existence, for it is the actual dissolution of that order. When the proletariat demands the negation of private property, it is only elevating to a principle for society what society has already made a principle for the proletariat, what is embodied in the proletariat, without its consent, as the negative result of society. The proletarian then finds that he has the same right, in relation to the world which is coming into being, as the German King in relation to the world as it is at present when he calls the people his people just as he calls
his horse his horse. By calling the people his private property, the
king is merely declaring that the owner of private property is king.

Just as philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat,
so the proletariat finds its intellectual weapons in philosophy; and
once the lightning of thought has struck deeply into this virgin
soil of the people, emancipation will transform the Germans into
men.

Let us sum up the result:

The only liberation of Germany which is practically possible is
liberation from the point of view of that theory which declares
man to be the supreme being for man. Germany can emancipate
itself from the Middle Ages only if it emancipates itself at the same
time from the partial victories over the Middle Ages. In Germany
no form of bondage can be broken without breaking all forms of
bondage. Germany, which is renowned for its thoroughness,
cannot make a revolution unless it is a thorough one. The emancipa-
tion of the German is the emancipation of man. The head of this
emancipation is philosophy, its heart the proletariat. Philosophy
cannot realize itself without the transcendence [Aufhebung] of the
proletariat, and the proletariat cannot transcend itself without
the realization [Verwirklichung] of philosophy.

When all the inner conditions are met, the day of the German
resurrection will be heralded by the crowing of the Gallic cock.
282 Early Writings

Failure to go to the root of the matter is inevitable, since even the critical theologian is still a theologian. Either he must start out from certain presuppositions of philosophy which he considers authoritative or, if in the process of criticism and as a result of other people's discoveries he begins to doubt these philosophical presuppositions, he abandons them in a cowardly and indefensible way, he abstracts from them and he demonstrates his enthrallment to them and his resentment of this enthrallment purely in a negative, unconscious and sophistical way.

On close investigation theological criticism, although it was a truly progressive factor at the beginning of the movement, is in the final analysis nothing more than the culmination and consequence of the old philosophical, and especially Hegelian, transcendence distorted into a theological caricature. Elsewhere I shall describe in detail this interesting example of historical justice, this Nemesis, which has now burdened theology—always philosophy's sore point—with the additional task of portraying in itself the negative dissolution of philosophy, i.e. its process of decay.

FIRST MANUSCRIPT

Wages of Labour

Wages are determined by the fierce struggle between capitalist and worker. The capitalist inevitably wins. The capitalist can live longer without the worker than the worker can without him. Combination among capitalists is habitual and effective, while combination among the workers is forbidden and has painful consequences for them. In addition to that, the landowner and the capitalist can increase their revenues with the profits of industry, while the worker can supplement his income from industry with neither ground rent nor interest on capital. This is the reason for the intensity of competition among the workers. It is therefore only for the worker that the separation of capital, landed property and labour is a necessary, essential and pernicious separation. Capital and landed property need not remain constant in this abstraction, as must the labour of the workers.

So for the worker the separation of capital, ground rent and labour is fatal.

5. Marx fulfilled this promise in The Holy Family, written jointly with Engels in 1845.
For wages the lowest and the only necessary rate is that required for the subsistence of the worker during work and enough extra to support a family and prevent the race of workers from dying out. According to Smith, the normal wage is the lowest which is compatible with common humanity, i.e. with a bestial existence.¹

The demand for men necessarily regulates the production of men, as of every other commodity. If the supply greatly exceeds the demand, then one section of the workers sinks into beggary or starvation. The existence of the worker is therefore reduced to the same condition as the existence of every other commodity. The worker has become a commodity, and he is lucky if he can find a buyer. And the demand on which the worker’s life depends is regulated by the whims of the wealthy and the capitalists. If supply exceeds demand, one of the elements which go to make up the price – profit, ground rent, wages – will be paid below its price. A part of these elements is therefore withdrawn from this application, with the result that the market price gravitates towards the natural price as the central point. But (1) it is very difficult for the worker to direct his labour elsewhere where there is a marked division of labour; and (2) because of his subordinate relationship to the capitalist, he is the first to suffer.

So the worker is sure to lose and to lose most from the gravitation of the market price towards the natural price. And it is precisely the ability of the capitalist to direct his capital elsewhere which either drives the worker, who is restricted to one particular branch of employment, into starvation or forces him to submit to all the capitalist’s demands.

The sudden chance fluctuations in market price hit ground rent less than that part of the price which constitutes profit and wages, but they hit profit less than wages. For every wage which rises, there is generally one which remains stationary and another which falls.

The worker does not necessarily gain when the capitalist gains, but he necessarily loses with him. For example, the worker does not gain if the capitalist keeps the market price above the natural price by means of a manufacturing or trade secret, a monopoly or a favourably placed property.

Moreover, the prices of labour are much more constant than the

prices of provisions. They are often in inverse proportion. In a dear year, wages drop because of a drop in demand and rise because of an increase in the price of provisions. They therefore balance. In any case, some workers are left without bread. In cheap years wages rise on account of the rise in demand and fall on account of the fall in the price of provisions. So they balance.2

Another disadvantage for the worker:
The price of the labour of different kinds of workers varies much more than the profits of the various branches in which capital is put to use. In the case of labour, all the natural, spiritual and social variations in individual activity are manifested and variously rewarded, whereas dead capital behaves in a uniform way and is indifferent to real individual activity.

In general, we should note that where worker and capitalist both suffer, the worker suffers in his very existence while the capitalist suffers in the profit on his dead mammon.

The worker has not only to struggle for his physical means of subsistence; he must also struggle for work, i.e. for the possibility and the means of realizing his activity.

Let us consider the three main conditions which can occur in society and their effect on the worker.

(1) If the wealth of society is decreasing, the worker suffers most, for although the working class cannot gain as much as the property owners when society is prospering, none suffers more cruelly from its decline than the working class.3

(2) Let us now consider a society in which wealth is increasing. This condition is the only one favourable to the worker. Here competition takes place among the capitalists. The demand for workers outstrips supply. But:

In the first place the rise in wages leads to overwork among the workers. The more they want to earn the more they must sacrifice their time and freedom and work like slaves in the service of avarice. In doing so they shorten their lives. But this is all to the good of the working class as a whole, since it creates a renewed demand. This class must always sacrifice a part of itself if it is to avoid total destruction.

Furthermore, when is a society in a condition of increasing prosperity? When the capitals and revenues of a country are growing. But this is only possible

(a) as a result of the accumulation of a large quantity of labour,

for capital is accumulated labour; that is to say, when more and more of the worker's products are being taken from him, when his own labour increasingly confronts him as alien property and the means of his existence and of his activity are increasingly concentrated in the hands of the capitalist.

(b) The accumulation of capital increases the division of labour, and the division of labour increases the number of workers; conversely, the growth in the number of workers increases the division of labour, just as the growth in the division of labour increases the accumulation of capital. As a consequence of this division of labour on the one hand and the accumulation of capitals on the other, the worker becomes more and more uniformly dependent on labour, and on a particular, very one-sided and machine-like type of labour. Just as he is depressed, therefore, both intellectually and physically to the level of a machine, and from being a man becomes an abstract activity and a stomach, so he also becomes more and more dependent on every fluctuation in the market price, in the investment of capital and in the whims of the wealthy. Equally, the increase in that class of men who do nothing but work increases the competition among the workers and therefore lowers their price. In the factory system conditions such as these reach their climax.

(c) In a society which is becoming increasingly prosperous, only the very richest can continue to live from the interest on money. All the rest must run a business with their capital, or put it on the market. As a result the competition among the capitalists increases, there is a growing concentration of capital, the big capitalists ruin the small ones and a section of the former capitalists sinks into the class of the workers which, because of this increase in numbers, suffers a further depression of wages and becomes even more dependent on the handful of big capitalists. Because the number of capitalists has fallen, competition for workers hardly exists any longer, and because the number of workers has increased, the competition among them has become all the more considerable, unnatural and violent. Hence a section of the working class is reduced to beggary or starvation with the same necessity as a section of the middle capitalists ends up in the working class.

So even in the state of society most favourable to him, the inevitable consequence for the worker is overwork and early death, reduction to a machine, enslavement to capital which piles
up in threatening opposition to him, fresh competition and starvation or beggary for a section of the workers.

An increase in wages arouses in the worker the same desire to get rich as in the capitalist, but he can only satisfy this desire by sacrificing his mind and his body. An increase in wages presupposes, and brings about, the accumulation of capital, and thus opposes the product of labour to the worker as something increasingly alien to him. Similarly, the division of labour makes him more and more one-sided and dependent, introducing competition from machines as well as from men. Since the worker has been reduced to a machine, the machine can confront him as a competitor. Finally, just as the accumulation of capital increases the quantity of industry and therefore the number of workers, so it enables the same quantity of industry to produce a greater quantity of products. This leads to overproduction and ends up either by putting a large number of workers out of work or by reducing their wages to a pittance.

Such are the consequences of a condition of society which is most favourable to the worker, i.e. a condition of growing wealth.

But in the long run the time will come when this state of growth reaches a peak. What is the situation of the worker then?

(3) 'In a country which had acquired that full complement of riches . . . both the wages of labour and the profits of stock would probably be very low . . . the competition for employment would necessarily be so great as to reduce the wages of labour to what was barely sufficient to keep up the number of labourers, and, the country being already fully peopled, that number could never be augmented.'

The surplus population would have to die.

So in a declining state of society we have the increasing misery of the worker; in an advancing state, complicated misery; and in the terminal state, static misery.

Smith tells us that a society of which the greater part suffers is not happy. But since even the most prosperous state of society leads to suffering for the majority and since the economic system [Nationalökonomie], which is a society based on private interests, brings about such a state of prosperity, it follows that society's distress is the goal of the economic system.

We should further note in connection with the relationship between worker and capitalist that the latter is more than com-

4. ibid., p. 84. 5. ibid., p. 70.
pensated for wage rises by a reduction in the amount of labour time, and that wage rises and increases in the interest on capital act on commodity prices like simple and compound interest respectively.

Let us now look at things from the point of view of the political economist and compare what he has to say about the theoretical and practical claims of the worker.

He tells us that originally, and in theory, the whole produce of labour belongs to the worker. But at the same time he tells us that what the worker actually receives is the smallest part of the product, the absolute minimum necessary; just enough for him to exist not as a human being but as a worker and for him to propagate not humanity but the slave class of the workers.

The political economist tells us that everything is bought with labour and that capital is nothing but accumulated labour, but then goes on to say that the worker, far from being in a position to buy everything, must sell himself and his humanity.

While the ground rent of the indolent landowner generally amounts to a third of the product of the soil and the profit of the busy capitalist to as much as twice the rate of interest, the surplus which the worker earns amounts at best to the equivalent of death through starvation for two of his four children.

According to the political economist labour is the only means whereby man can enhance the value of natural products, and labour is the active property of man. But according to this same political economy the landowner and the capitalist, who as such are merely privileged and idle gods, are everywhere superior to the worker and dictate the law to him.

According to the political economist labour is the only constant price of things. But nothing is more subject to chance than the price of labour, nothing exposed to greater fluctuations.

While the division of labour increases the productive power of labour and the wealth and refinement of society, it impoverishes the worker and reduces him to a machine. While labour gives rise to the accumulation of capital and so brings about the growing prosperity of society, it makes the worker increasingly dependent on the capitalist, exposes him to greater competition and drives him into the frenzied world of overproduction, with its subsequent slump.

According to the political economist the interest of the worker

6. ibid., p. 57. 7. ibid., p. 60.
is never opposed to the interest of society. But society is invariably and inevitably opposed to the interest of the worker.

According to the political economist the interest of the worker is never opposed to that of society (1) because the rise in wages is more than made up for by the reduction in the amount of labour time, with the other consequences explained above, and (2) because in relation to society the entire gross product is net product, and only in relation to the individual does the net product have any significance.

But it follows from the analyses made by the political economists, even though they themselves are unaware of the fact, that labour itself — not only under present conditions but in general in so far as its goal is restricted to the increase of wealth — is harmful and destructive.

* 

In theory, ground rent and profit on capital are deductions made from wages. But in reality wages are a deduction which land and capital grant the worker, an allowance made from the product of labour to the worker, to labour.

The worker suffers most when society is in a state of decline. He owes the particular severity of his distress to his position as a worker, but the distress as such is a result of the situation of society.

But when society is in a state of progress the decline and impoverishment of the worker is the product of his labour and the wealth produced by him. This misery therefore proceeds from the very essence of present-day labour.

A society at the peak of its prosperity — an ideal, but one which is substantially achieved, and which is at least the goal of the economic system and of civil society — is static misery for the worker.

It goes without saying that political economy regards the proletarian, i.e. he who lives without capital and ground rent from labour alone, and from one-sided, abstract labour at that, as nothing more than a worker. It can therefore advance the thesis that, like a horse, he must receive enough to enable him to work. It does not consider him, during the time when he is not working, as a human being. It leaves this to criminal law, doctors, religion, statistical tables, politics and the beadle.

Let us now rise above the level of political economy and
examine the ideas developed above, taken almost word for word from the political economists, for the answers to these two questions:

(1) What is the meaning, in the development of mankind, of this reduction of the greater part of mankind to abstract labour?

(2) What mistakes are made by the piecemeal reformers, who either want to raise wages and thereby improve the situation of the working class, or - like Proudhon - see equality of wages as the goal of social revolution?

In political economy labour appears only in the form of wage-earning activity.

*  

'It can be argued that those occupations which demand specific abilities or longer training have on the whole become more lucrative; while the commensurate wage for mechanically uniform activity, in which anyone can be quickly and easily trained, has fallen, and inevitably so, as a result of growing competition. And it is precisely this kind of labour which, under the present system of labour organization, is by far the most common. So if a worker in the first category now earns seven times as much as he did fifty years ago, while another in the second category continues to earn the same as he did then, then on average they earn four times as much. But if in a given country there are only a thousand workers in the first category and a million in the second, then 999,000 are no better off than fifty years ago, and they are worse off if the prices of staple goods have risen. And yet people are trying to deceive themselves about the most numerous class of the population with superficial average calculations of this sort. Moreover, the size of wages is only one factor in evaluating a worker's income: it is also essential to take into account the length of time for which such wages are guaranteed, and there is no question of guarantees in the anarchy of so-called free competition with its continual fluctuations and stagnation. Finally, we must bear in mind the hours of work which were usual earlier and those which are usual now. And for the English cotton workers the working day has been increased, as a result of the employers' greed, from twelve to sixteen hours during the past twenty-five years or so, i.e. since labour-saving machines were introduced. This increase in one country and in one branch of industry inevitably carried over to a greater or lesser degree into other areas,
Early Writings

different expressions of one and the same relationship. Appropriation appears as estrangement, as alienation; and alienation appears as appropriation, estrangement as true admission to citizenship.

We have considered the one aspect, alienated labour in relation to the worker himself, i.e. the relation of alienated labour to itself. And as product, as necessary consequence of this relationship we have found the property relation of the non-worker to the worker and to labour. Private property as the material, summarized expression of alienated labour embraces both relations—the relation of the worker to labour and to the product of his labour and the non-worker and the relation of the non-worker to the worker and to the product of his labour.

We have already seen that, in relation to the worker who appropriates nature through his labour, appropriation appears as estrangement, self-activity as activity for another and of another, vitality as a sacrifice of life, production of an object as loss of that object to an alien power, to an alien man. Let us now consider the relation between this man, who is alien to labour and to the worker, and the worker, labour, and the object of labour.

The first thing to point out is that everything which appears for the worker as an activity of alienation, of estrangement, appears for the non-worker as a situation of alienation, of estrangement.

Secondly, the real, practical attitude of the worker in production and to the product (as a state of mind) appears for the non-worker who confronts him as a theoretical attitude.

Thirdly, the non-worker does everything against the worker which the worker does against himself, but he does not do against himself what he does against the worker.

Let us take a closer look at these three relationships.  

SECOND MANUSCRIPT

The Relationship of Private Property

... forms the interest on his capital.  

1. Page xl of the second manuscript begins with these words; the previous pages of the manuscript are missing.

3. The first manuscript breaks off at this point.
himself, just as capital is the objective manifestation of the fact that labour is man lost to himself. But the worker has the misfortune to be a living capital, and hence a capital with needs, which forfeits its interest and hence its existence every moment it is not working. As capital, the value of the worker rises or falls in accordance with supply and demand, and even in a physical sense his existence, his life, was and is treated as a supply of a commodity, like any other commodity. The worker produces capital and capital produces him, which means that he produces himself; man as a worker, as a commodity, is the product of this entire cycle. The human properties of man as a worker — man who is nothing more than a worker — exist only in so far as they exist for a capital which is alien to him. But because each is alien to the other and stands in an indifferent, external and fortuitous relationship to it, this alien character inevitably appears as something real. So as soon as it occurs to capital — whether from necessity or choice — not to exist any longer for the worker, he no longer exists for himself; he has no work, and hence no wages, and since he exists not as a man but as a worker, he might just as well have himself buried, starve to death, etc. The worker exists as a worker only when he exists for himself as capital, and he exists as capital only when capital exists for him. The existence of capital is his existence, his life, for it determines the content of his life in a manner indifferent to him. Political economy therefore does not recognize the unoccupied worker, the working man in so far as he is outside this work relationship. The swindler, the cheat, the beggar, the unemployed, the starving, the destitute and the criminal working man are figures which exist not for it, but only for other eyes — for the eyes of doctors, judges, grave-diggers, beadles, etc. Nebulous figures which do not belong within the province of political economy. Therefore as far as political economy is concerned, the requirements of the worker can be narrowed down to one: the need to support him while he is working and prevent the race of workers from dying out. Wages therefore have exactly the same meaning as the maintenance and upkeep of any other productive instrument, or as the consumption of capital in general which is necessary if it is to reproduce itself with interest (e.g. the oil which is applied to wheels to keep them turning). Wages therefore belong to the necessary costs of capital and of the capitalist, and must not be in excess of this necessary amount. It was
therefore quite logical for the English factory owners, before the Amendment Bill of 1834, to deduct from the worker's wages the public alms which he received from the Poor Rate, and to consider these alms as an integral part of those wages.

Production does not produce man only as a commodity, the human commodity, man in the form of a commodity; it also produces him as a mentally and physically dehumanized being ... Immorality, malformation, stupidity of workers and capitalists ... Its product is the self-conscious and self-acting commodity ... the human commodity ... A great advance by Ricardo, Mill, etc., on Smith and Say, to declare the existence of the human being – the greater or lesser human productivity of the commodity – to be indifferent and even harmful. The real aim of production is not how many workers a particular sum of capital can support, but how much interest it brings in and how much it saves each year. Similarly, English political economy took a big step forward, and a logical one, when – while acknowledging labour as the sole principle of political economy – it showed with complete clarity that wages and interest on capital are inversely related and that as a rule the capitalist can push up his profits only by forcing down wages, and vice-versa. Clearly the normal relationship is not one in which the customer is cheated, but in which the capitalist and the worker cheat each other. The relation of private property contains latent within itself the relation of private property as labour, the relation of private property as capital and the connection of these two. On the one hand we have the production of human activity as labour, i.e. as an activity wholly alien to itself, to man and to nature, and hence to consciousness and vital expression, the abstract existence of man as a mere workman who therefore tumbles day after day from his fulfilled nothingness into absolute nothingness, into his social and hence real non-existence; and on the other, the production of the object of human labour as capital, in which all the natural and social individuality of the object is extinguished and private property has lost its natural and social quality (i.e. has lost all political and social appearances and is not even apparently tainted with any human relationships), in which the same capital stays the same in the most varied natural and social circumstances, totally indifferent to its real content.

2. Better known as the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.
longer mediated through the abolition of religion, just as real life is positive reality no longer mediated through the abolition of private property, through communism. Communism is the act of positing as the negation of the negation, and is therefore a real phase, necessary for the next period of historical development, in the emancipation and recovery of mankind. Communism is the necessary form and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism is not as such the goal of human development — the form of human society.9

Need, Production and Division of Labour

We have seen what significance the wealth of human needs has, on the presupposition of socialism, and consequently what significance a new mode of production and a new object of production have. A fresh confirmation of human powers and a fresh enrichment of human nature. Under the system of private property their significance is reversed. Each person speculates on creating a new need in the other, with the aim of forcing him to make a new sacrifice, placing him in a new dependence and seducing him into a new kind of enjoyment and hence into economic ruin. Each attempts to establish over the other an alien power, in the hope of thereby achieving satisfaction of his own selfish needs. With the mass of objects grows the realm of alien powers to which man is subjected, and each new product is a new potentiality of mutual fraud and mutual pillage. Man becomes ever poorer as a man, and needs ever more money if he is to achieve mastery over the hostile being. The power of his money falls in inverse proportion to the volume of production, i.e. his need grows as the power of money increases. The need for money is for that reason the real need created by the modern economic system, and the only need it creates. The quantity of money becomes more and more its sole important property. Just as it reduces everything to its own form of abstraction, so it reduces itself in the course of its own movement to something quantitative. Lack of moderation and intemperance become its true standard. Subjectively this is

9. The meaning of this sentence is unclear. ‘Communism . . . as such’ is sometimes taken as referring to the ‘crude communism’ discussed earlier. On the other hand, the sentence can be interpreted as meaning that communism is not the final stage in the development of humanity, but will in its turn be transcended by a richer and higher stage.
manifested partly in the fact that the expansion of production and needs becomes the inventive and ever calculating slave of inhuman, refined, unnatural and imaginary appetites — for private property does not know how to transform crude need into human need. Its idealism is fantasy, caprice and infatuation. No eunuch flatters his despot more basely or uses more infamous means to revive his flagging capacity for pleasure, in order to win a surreptitious favour for himself, than does the eunuch of industry, the manufacturer, in order to sneak himself a silver penny or two or coax the gold from the pocket of his dearly beloved neighbour. (Every product is a bait with which to entice the essence of the other, his money. Every real or potential need is a weakness which will tempt the fly onto the lime-twig. Universal exploitation of communal human nature. Just as each one of man's inadequacies is a bond with heaven, a way into his heart for the priest, so every need is an opportunity for stepping up to one's neighbour in sham friendship and saying to him: 'Dear friend, I can give you what you need, but you know the terms. You know which ink you must use in signing yourself over to me. I shall cheat you while I provide your pleasure.' He places himself at the disposal of his neighbour's most depraved fancies, panders to his needs, excites unhealthy appetites in him, and pounces on every weakness, so that he can then demand the money for his labour of love.

This estrangement partly manifests itself in the fact that the refinement of needs and of the means of fulfilling them gives rise to a bestial degeneration and a complete, crude and abstract simplicity of need; or rather, that it merely reproduces itself in its opposite sense. Even the need for fresh air ceases to be a need for the worker. Man reverts once more to living in a cave, but the cave is now polluted by the mephitic and pestilential breath of civilization. Moreover, the worker has no more than a precarious right to live in it, for it is for him an alien power that can be daily withdrawn and from which, should he fail to pay, he can be evicted at any time. He actually has to pay for this mortuary. A dwelling in the light, which Prometheus describes in Aeschylus as one of the great gifts through which he transformed savages into men, ceases to exist for the worker. Light, air, etc. — the simplest animal cleanliness — ceases to be a need for man. Dirt — this pollution and putrefaction of man, the sewage (this word is to be understood in its literal sense) of civilization — becomes an element of life for him. Universal unnatural neglect, putrefied nature,
Early Writings

becomes an element of life for him. None of his senses exist any longer, either in their human form or in their inhuman form, i.e. not even in their animal form. The crudest modes (and instruments) of human labour reappear; for example, the tread-mill used by Roman slaves has become the mode of production and mode of existence of many English workers. It is not only human needs which man lacks — even his animal needs cease to exist. The Irishman has only one need left — the need to eat, to eat potatoes, and, more precisely, to eat rotten potatoes, the worst kind of potatoes. But England and France already have a little Ireland in each of their industrial cities. The savage and the animal at least have the need to hunt, to move about, etc., the need of companionship. The simplification of machinery and of labour is used to make workers out of human beings who are still growing, who are completely immature, out of children, while the worker himself becomes a neglected child. The machine accommodates itself to man’s weakness, in order to turn weak man into a machine.

The fact that the multiplication of needs and of the means of fulfilling them gives rise to a lack of needs and of means is proved by the political economist (and by the capitalist — we invariably mean empirical businessmen when we refer to political economists, who are the scientific exposition and existence of the former) in the following ways:

(1) By reducing the worker’s needs to the paltriest minimum necessary to maintain his physical existence and by reducing his activity to the most abstract mechanical movement. In so doing, the political economist declares that man has no other needs, either in the sphere of activity or in that of consumption. For even this life he calls human life and human existence.

(2) By taking as his standard — his universal standard, in the sense that it applies to the mass of men — the worst possible state of privation which life (existence) can know. He turns the worker into a being with neither needs nor senses and turns the worker’s activity into a pure abstraction from all activity. Hence any luxury that the worker might enjoy is reprehensible, and anything that goes beyond the most abstract need — either in the form of passive enjoyment or active expression — appears to him as a luxury. Political economy, this science of wealth, is therefore at the same time the science of denial, of starvation, of saving, and it actually goes so far as to save man the need for fresh air or physical exercise. This science of the marvels of industry is at the same time
the science of asceticism, and its true ideal is the ascetic but rapacious skinflint and the ascetic but productive slave. Its moral ideal is the worker who puts a part of his wages into savings, and it has even discovered a servile art which can dignify this charming little notion and present a sentimental version of it on the stage. It is therefore — for all its worldly and debauched appearance — a truly moral science, the most moral science of all. Self-denial, the denial of life and of all human needs, is its principal doctrine. The less you eat, drink, buy books, go to the theatre, go dancing, go drinking, think, love, theorize, sing, paint, fence, etc., the more you save and the greater will become that treasure which neither moths nor maggots can consume — your capital. The less you are, the less you give expression to your life, the more you have, the greater is your alienated life and the more you store up of your estranged life. Everything which the political economist takes from you in terms of life and humanity, he restores to you in the form of money and wealth, and everything which you are unable to do, your money can do for you: it can eat, drink, go dancing, go to the theatre, it can appropriate art, learning, historical curiosities, political power, it can travel, it is capable of doing all those things for you; it can buy everything; it is genuine wealth, genuine ability. But for all that, it only likes to create itself, to buy itself, for after all everything else is its servant. And when I have the master I have the servant, and I have no need of his servant. So all passions and all activity are lost in greed. The worker is only permitted to have enough for him to live, and he is only permitted to live in order to have.

It is true that a controversy has arisen in the field of political economy. One school (Lauderdale, Malthus, etc.) advocates luxury and execrates thrift. The other (Say, Ricardo, etc.) advocates thrift and execrates luxury. But the former admits that it wants luxury in order to produce labour, i.e. absolute thrift; and the latter admits that it advocates thrift in order to produce wealth, i.e. luxury. The former has the romantic notion that greed alone should not regulate the consumption of the rich, and it contradicts its own laws when it forwards the idea of prodigality as a direct means of enrichment. The other side then advances earnest and detailed arguments to show that through prodigality I diminish rather than increase my possessions; but its supporters hypocritically refuse to admit that production is regulated by caprice and fancy; they forget the 'refined needs' and forget that
without consumption there can be no production; they forget that through competition production inevitably becomes more extensive and more luxurious; they forget that it is use which determines the value of a thing, and that it is fashion which determines use; they want only 'useful things' to be produced, but they forget that the production of too many useful things produces too many useless people. Both sides forget that prodigality and thrift, luxury and privation, wealth and poverty are equal.

And you must not only be parsimonious in gratifying your immediate senses, such as eating, etc. You must also be chary of participating in affairs of general interest, showing sympathy and trust, etc., if you want to be economical and if you want to avoid being ruined by illusions.

You must make everything which is yours venal, i.e. useful. I might ask the political economist: am I obeying economic laws if I make money by prostituting my body to the lust of another (in France the factory workers call the prostitution of their wives and daughters the nth working hour, which is literally true), or if I sell my friend to the Moroccans1 (and the direct sale of men in the form of trade in conscripts, etc., occurs in all civilized countries)? His answer will be: your acts do not contravene my laws, but you should find out what Cousin Morality and Cousin Religion have to say about it; the morality and religion of my political economy have no objection to make, but . . . But who should I believe, then? Political economy or morality? The morality of political economy is gain, labour and thrift, sobriety – and yet political economy promises to satisfy my needs. The political economy of morality is the wealth of a good conscience, of virtue, etc. But how can I be virtuous if I do not exist? And how can I have a good conscience if I am not conscious of anything? It is inherent in the very nature of estrangement that each sphere imposes upon me a different and contrary standard: one standard for morality, one for political economy, and so on. This is because each of them is a particular estrangement of man and each is centred upon one particular area of estranged essential activity; each is related in an estranged way to the other . . . Thus M. Michel Chevalier accuses Ricardo of abstracting from morality. But Ricardo allows political economy to speak its own language.

1. There were Christian slaves in Morocco until the early nineteenth century.
If this language is not that of morality, it is not the fault of Ricardo. M. Chevalier abstracts from political economy in so far as he moralizes, but he really and necessarily abstracts from morality in so far as he deals with political economy. The relationship of political economy to morality is either an arbitrary and contingent one which is neither founded nor scientific, a simulacrum, or it is essential and can only be the relationship of economic laws to morality. If such a relationship does not exist, or if the opposite is rather the case, can Ricardo do anything about it? Moreover, the opposition between political economy and morality is only an apparent one. It is both an opposition and not an opposition. Political economy merely gives expression to moral laws in its own way.

Absence of needs as the principle of political economy is most strikingly apparent in its theory of population. There are too many people. Even the existence of man is a pure luxury, and if the worker is ‘moral’ he will be economical in procreation. (Mill suggests public commendation of those who show themselves temperate in sexual matters and public rebuke of those who sin against this barrenness of marriage . . . Is this not the morality, the doctrine, of asceticism?)² The production of people appears as a public disaster.

The meaning which production has for the wealthy is revealed in the meaning which it has for the poor. At the top it always manifests itself in a refined, concealed and ambiguous way – as an appearance. At the bottom it manifests itself in a crude, straightforward and overt way – as a reality. The crude need of the worker is a much greater source of profit than the refined need of the rich. The basement dwellings in London bring in more for the landlords than the palaces, i.e. they constitute a greater wealth for him and, from an economic point of view, a greater social wealth.

Just as industry speculates on the refinement of needs, so too it speculates on their crudity. But the crudity on which it speculates is artificially produced, and its true manner of enjoyment is therefore self-stupefaction, this apparent satisfaction of need, this civilization within the crude barbarism of need. The English gin-shops are therefore the symbolic representation of private property. Their luxury demonstrates to man the true relation of

industrial luxury and wealth. For that reason they are rightly the only Sunday enjoyment of the English people, and are at least treated mildly by the English police.

We have already seen how the political economist establishes the unity of labour and capital in a number of different ways: (1) capital is *accumulated labour*; (2) the purpose of capital within production – partly the reproduction of capital with profit, partly capital as raw material (material of labour) and partly as itself a *working instrument* (the machine is capital directly identified with labour) – is *productive labour*; (3) the worker is a piece of capital; (4) wages belong to the costs of capital; (5) for the worker, labour is the reproduction of his life capital; (6) for the capitalist, it is a factor in the activity of his capital.

Finally, (7) the political economist postulates the original unity of capital and labour as the unity of capitalist and worker, which he sees as the original state of bliss. The fact that these two elements leap at each other's throats in the form of two persons is a *contingent* event for the political economist, and hence only to be explained by external factors (see Mill).

Those nations which are still dazzled by the sensuous glitter of precious metals and therefore make a fetish of metal money are not yet fully developed money nations. Compare England and France. The extent to which the solution of theoretical problems is a function of practice and is mediated through practice, and the extent to which true practice is the condition of a real and positive theory is shown, for example, in the case of *fetish-worship*. The sense perception of a fetish-worshipper is different from that of a Greek because his sensuous existence is different. The abstract hostility between sense and intellect is inevitable so long as the human sense [*Sinn*] for nature, the human significance [*Sinn*] of nature and hence the *natural sense of man*, has not yet been produced by man's own labour.

*Equality* is nothing but a translation into French, i.e. into political form, of the German ‘Ich = Ich’. Equality as the *basis* of communism is its *political* foundation. It is the same as when the German founds it on the fact that he sees man as universal *self-consciousness*. It goes without saying that the supersession of estrangement always emanates from the form of estrangement which is the *dominant* power – in Germany, *self-consciousness*; in France, *equality*, because politics; in England, real, material, *practical* need, which only measures itself against itself. It is from
this point of view that Proudhon should be criticized and acknowledged.

If we characterize communism itself – which because of its character as negation of the negation, as appropriation of the human essence which is mediated with itself through the negation of private property, is not yet the true, self-generating position [Position], but one generated by private property [...] the real estrangement of human life remains and is all the greater the more one is conscious of it as such, it can only be attained once communism is established. In order to supersede the idea of private property, the idea of communism is enough. In order to supersede private property as it actually exists, real communist activity is necessary. History will give rise to such activity, and the movement which we already know in thought to be a self-superseding movement will in reality undergo a very difficult and protracted process. But we must look upon it as a real advance that we have gained at the outset an awareness of the limits as well as the goal of this historical movement and are in a position to see beyond it.

When communist workmen gather together, their immediate aim is instruction, propaganda, etc. But at the same time they acquire a new need – the need for society – and what appears as a means has become an end. This practical development can be most strikingly observed in the gatherings of French socialist workers. Smoking, eating and drinking, etc., are no longer means of creating links between people. Company, association, conversation, which in its turn has society as its goal, is enough for them. The brotherhood of man is not a hollow phrase, it is a reality, and the nobility of man shines forth upon us from their work-worn figures.

When political economy maintains that supply and demand always balance each other, it immediately forgets its own assertion that the supply of people (the theory of population) always exceeds the demand and that therefore the disproportion between supply and demand finds its most striking expression in what is the essential goal of production – the existence of man.

The extent to which money, which appears to be a means, is the true power and the sole end – the extent to which in general the means which gives me being and which appropriates for me alien

3. At this point a corner of the page is missing and only the fragments of six sentences remain. The meaning of the missing passage is impossible to reconstruct.
and objective being, is an *end in itself*. . . is apparent from the fact that landed property, where the soil is the source of life, and the *horse* and the *sword*, where they are the *true means of life*, are also recognized as the actual political powers. In the Middle Ages an Estate becomes emancipated as soon as it is allowed to bear a sword. Among nomadic peoples it is the *horse* which makes me into a free man and a participant in the life of the community.

We said above that man is regressing to the *cave dwelling*, etc., but in an estranged, repugnant form. The savage in his cave – an element of nature which is freely available for his use and shelter – does not experience his environment as alien; he feels just as much at home as a *fish* in water. But the poor man’s basement dwelling is an uncongenial element, an ‘alien, restrictive power which only surrenders itself to him at the expense of his sweat and blood’. He cannot look upon it as his home, as somewhere he can call his own. Instead he finds himself in someone else’s house, in an *alien* house, whose owner lies in wait for him every day, and evicts him if he fails to pay the rent. At the same time he is aware of the difference in quality between his own dwelling and those *other-worldly* human dwellings which exist in the heaven of wealth.

Estrangement appears not only in the fact that the means of *my* life belong to *another* and that *my* desire is the inaccessible possession of *another*, but also in the fact that all things are *other* than themselves, that *my* activity is *other* than itself, and that finally – and this goes for the capitalists too – an *inhuman* power rules over everything.

There is one form of inactive and extravagant wealth, given over exclusively to pleasure, the owner of which is *active* as a merely *ephemeral* individual, rushing about erratically. He looks upon the slave labour of others, their human *sweat and blood*, as the prey of his desires, and regards man in general – including himself – as a futile and sacrificial being. He arrogantly looks down upon mankind, dissipating what would suffice to keep alive a hundred human beings, and propagates the infamous illusion that his unbridled extravagance and ceaseless, unproductive consumption is a condition of the *labour* and hence *subsistence* of the others. For him, the realization of man’s *essential powers* is simply the realization of his own disorderly existence, his whims and his capricious and bizarre notions. But this wealth, which regards wealth as a mere means, worthy only of destruction, and
which is therefore both slave and master, both generous and mean, capricious, conceited, presumptuous, refined, cultured and ingenious – this wealth has not yet experienced wealth as an entirely alien power over itself; it sees in wealth nothing more than its own power, the final aim of which is not wealth but consumption...

... and the glittering illusion about the nature of wealth – an illusion which derives from its sensuous appearance – is confronted by the working, sober, prosaic, economical industrialist who is enlightened about the nature of wealth and who not only provides a wider range of opportunities for the other’s self-indulgence and flatters him through his products – for his products are so many base compliments to the appetites of the spendthrift – but also manages to appropriate for himself in the only useful way the other’s dwindling power. So if industrial wealth at first appears to be the product of extravagant, fantastic wealth, in its inherent course of development it actively supplants the latter. For the fall in the interest on money is a necessary consequence and result of industrial development. Therefore the means of the extravagant rentier diminish daily in inverse proportion to the growing possibilities and temptations of pleasure. He must therefore either consume his capital himself, and in so doing bring about his own ruin, or become an industrial capitalist... On the other hand, it is true that there is a direct and constant rise in the rent of land as a result of industrial development, but as we have already seen there inevitably comes a time when landed property, like every other kind of property, falls into the category of capital which reproduces itself with profit – and this is a result of the same industrial development. Therefore even the extravagant landlord is forced either to consume his capital, i.e. ruin himself, or become the tenant farmer of his own property – an agricultural industrialist.

The decline in the rate of interest – which Proudhon regards as the abolition of capital and as a tendency towards the socialization of capital – is therefore rather a direct symptom of the complete victory of working capital over prodigal wealth, i.e. the transformation of all private property into industrial capital. It is the complete victory of private property over all those of its

4. At this point the bottom of the page is torn and three or four lines are missing.
Critical Notes on the Article ‘The King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian’

[This article, written in August 1844 for the Paris Vorwärts!, is a reply to an article by Arnold Ruge published in Vorwärts! No. 60. Ruge, inaccurately signing himself ‘a Prussian’, belittles the importance of the Silesian weavers’ rising and goes on to issue a call for a political party through which to campaign for social reform within the existing state system. Marx’s scathing reply represents a final break with Ruge.

Marx’s aim in writing the ‘Notes’ was twofold. Firstly, he wanted to make it quite plain that he was not the anonymous ‘Prussian’ and secondly he wanted to criticize Ruge’s ideas on the state, social reform and the prospects for the German working class. He develops his earlier theory of the split between the state (political society) and civil society (that is, economic life). The state, he argues, is by nature incapable of removing the social roots of misery in civil life. This is because its jurisdiction ends where civil society begins. The contradiction between public and private life is the very basis of the state.

This is not to say that socialists should reject the idea of political activity. But it is essential to avoid substituting political action, which is action from the standpoint of the state, for social revolution. A social revolution involves the ‘whole’, which is excluded from political life. Through social revolution the individual once more becomes part of a real human community. Socialism certainly requires political activity. But as soon as its ‘goal, its soul emerges, socialism throws its political mask aside’.

Marx bases his hopes for a socialist revolution on the growing awareness of the German working class, as seen in the Silesian uprising. He calls the German proletariat the ‘theoretician of the European proletariat’.

1. Particular circumstances make it necessary for me to declare that the present article is my first contribution to Vorwärts! [Marx’s note]
An article has appeared in the sixtieth issue of the *Vorwärts!* with the title 'The King of Prussia and Social Reform' and it is signed by 'A Prussian'.

This so-called Prussian begins by reporting the contents of the Royal Prussian Order in Council on the subject of the workers' uprising in Silesia and goes on to give the opinion of the French journal *La Réforme* of that same Prussian Order in Council. The *Réforme*, he says, discerns the origins of the Order in Council in the King's 'panic and his religious sentiments'. It even hails this document as a presentiment of the great reforms imminent in bourgeois society. The 'Prussian' delivers the following lecture to the *Réforme*.

Neither the King nor German society has had any 'presentiment of its reform'; not even the uprisings in Bohemia and Silesia have managed to arouse such feelings. In an unpolitical country like Germany it is not possible to represent the sporadic misery of the factory districts as a matter of universal concern, let alone as a disaster to the whole civilized world. As far as the Germans are concerned, these events belong in the same category as any local shortage of food or water. In accordance with this the King views it as a failure of the administration or of charitable institutions. For this reason and because but few troops were needed to deal with the feeble weavers the destruction of factories and machines does not make the King and the authorities 'panic'. Nor were religious sentiments responsible for the Order in Council; it was instead a very sober expression of Christian statesmanship and of a doctrine which does not permit any obstacles to stand in the way of its only remedy: the 'good intentions of Christian hearts'. Poverty and crime are two great evils; who can provide a cure for them? The state and the authorities? By no means. But the union of all Christian hearts can do so.

2. A German newspaper published twice weekly in Paris from January to December 1844. Under the influence of Marx, who clearly co-operated in editing the paper from the summer of 1844 onwards, *Vorwärts!* began to take on a communistic character. The paper mercilessly criticized the situation in Prussia. At the request of the Prussian government, the Guizot ministry ordered the expulsion from France of Marx and the principal collaborators on the paper in January 1845.

3. This is a reference to the uprising of 4–6 June 1844 – the first great struggle between workers and capitalists that Germany had ever seen.


5. Note the stylistic and grammatical nonsense. 'Neither the King nor German society has had any presentiment of its reform.' (To whom does 'its' refer?) [Marx's note]
Our so-called Prussian denies that the King 'panicked' for a number of reasons, among them being the fact that few troops were needed to deal with the feeble weavers.

This means that in a country where banquets with liberal toasts and liberal champagne froth provoke Royal Orders in Council (as we saw in the case of the Düsseldorf banquet), where the burning desire of the entire liberal bourgeoisie for freedom of the press and a constitution could be suppressed without the aid of a single soldier, in a country where passive obedience is the order of the day, can it be anything but an event and indeed a terrifying event when armed troops have to be called out against feeble weavers? And in the first encounter the feeble weavers even gained a victory. They were only suppressed when reinforcements were brought up. Is the uprising of a mass of workers less dangerous because it can be defeated without the aid of a whole army? Our sharp-witted Prussian should compare the revolt of the Silesian weavers with the uprisings of English workers. The Silesians will then stand revealed as strong weavers.

A consideration of the general relationship between politics and the defects of society will enable us to explain why the weavers could not induce any great 'panic' in the King. For the present, however, we will only point out that the uprising was directed in the first instance not against the King of Prussia but against the bourgeoisie. As an aristocrat and an absolute monarch the King of Prussia can have no love of the bourgeoisie; even less can he feel any anxiety if the submissiveness and impotence of the bourgeoisie is increased by its tense and difficult relationship with the proletariat. Similarly, an orthodox Catholic will feel a greater hostility towards an orthodox Protestant than towards an atheist, just as a legitimist will dislike a liberal more than a communist. This is not because atheists are closer to Catholics or communists closer to legitimists than they are to Protestants or liberals respectively, but, on the contrary, because they are more remote from them, because the latter do not impinge on their sphere of interests. The direct political antagonist of the King of Prussia, in his role as politician, is to be found in liberalism. For the King,

6. A reference to the decree of the Prussian king Frederick William IV (18 July 1843) in connection with the participation of government employees in a banquet given in Düsseldorf by some liberals in honour of the Seventh Flemish Parliament. State employees were henceforth forbidden to take part in such Rhenish events.
the antagonism of the proletariat exists no more than does the King for the proletariat. This means that if the proletariat has contrived to eliminate such antipathies and political antagonisms, and to attract the entire hostility of the political powers towards itself, it must have acquired a very definite power. Lastly, the King’s appetite for interesting and significant phenomena is well known and it must have been a very pleasant surprise for him to discover such an ‘interesting’ and ‘much discussed’ pauperism within his very own frontiers and thus to find yet another opportunity to appear in the public eye. How he must have rejoiced to hear the news that he too now possessed his ‘own’ Royal Prussian pauperism!

Our ‘Prussian’ is even less fortunate when he denies that ‘religious sentiment’ was responsible for the Royal Order in Council.

Why is ‘religious sentiment’ not the source of this Order in Council? Because the latter ‘was the very sober expression of Christian statesmanship’, a ‘sober’ expression of the doctrine whose ‘only remedy, the good intentions of Christian hearts . . . does not permit any obstacles to stand in its way’.

Is not religious sentiment the source of Christian statesmanship? Is it not true that a doctrine which possesses a universal panacea in the good intentions of Christian hearts is founded on religious sentiments? Is it true that the expression of religious feelings ceases to be the expression of religious feelings if it is sober? I would go even further! I would maintain that any religious feelings that contest the ability of ‘the state and the authorities’ to ‘remedy great evils’ while they themselves seek a cure in the ‘union of Christian hearts’ must be conceited and drunk in the extreme. Only very drunk religious feelings could locate the source of the evil – as does our ‘Prussian’ – in the absence of the Christian spirit. Such feelings alone could suggest that the authorities should resort to ‘exhortation’ as the only means whereby the Christian spirit might be fortified. According to the ‘Prussian’ Christian sentiment is the sole end and aim of the Order in Council. Religious sentiment, when it is drunk, of course, not when it is sober, considers itself to be the only good. Whenever it comes across evil it attributes it to its own absence, for, if it is the only good, then it alone can create the good. Therefore, an Order in Council, dictated by religious feelings, logically enough itself decrees religious feelings. A politician with sober religious feelings
would not attempt to find a 'cure' for his own 'perplexity' in the 'exhortations of the pious Preacher to cultivate Christian sentiments'.

How then does our so-called 'Prussian' demonstrate to the Réforme that the Order in Council is not an emanation of religious feeling? By describing it as an emanation of religious feeling. What insight into social movements can be expected from such an illogical mind? Let us listen to him gossiping about the relationship of German society to the workers' movement and social reform in general.

Let us distinguish — as our 'Prussian' fails to do — let us distinguishing between the various categories subsumed by the expression 'German society': government, bourgeoisie, the press and finally the workers themselves. These are the various masses we are concerned with here. The 'Prussian' merges them all into one mass and condemns them en masse from his exalted standpoint. According to him German society has 'not even had a presentiment of its reform'.

Why is it so lacking in this instinct? Because, the Prussian explains,

In an unpolitical country like Germany it is not possible to represent the sporadic misery of the factory districts as a matter of universal concern, let alone as a disaster to the whole civilized world. As far as the Germans are concerned, these events belong in the same category as any local shortage of food or water. In accordance with this the King views it as a failure of the administration or of charitable institutions.

The 'Prussian' thus explains this absurd interpretation of the plight of the workers with reference to the peculiar nature of an unpolitical country.

It will be granted that England is a political nation. It will further be granted that England is the nation of pauperism; the word itself is English in origin. An examination of the situation in England is thus the most certain way whereby to discover the relation of a political nation to pauperism. In England the misery of the workers is not sporadic but universal; it is not confined to the factory districts but extends to country districts too. Workers' movements are not in their infancy but have recurred periodically for close on a century.

What then is the view of pauperism taken by the English bourgeoisie and the government and the press connected with it?
In so far as the English bourgeoisie regards pauperism as the fault of politics the Whigs put the blame on the Tories and the Tories put it on the Whigs. According to the Whigs the chief cause of pauperism is to be discovered in the monopoly of landed property and in the laws prohibiting the import of grain. In the Tory view the source of the trouble lies in liberalism, in competition and the excesses of the factory system. Neither party discovers the explanation in politics itself but only in the politics of the other party. Neither party would even dream of a reform of society as a whole.

The most decisive expression of the insight of the English into pauperism — and by the English we mean the English bourgeoisie and the government — is to be found in English Political Economy, i.e. the scientific reflection of the state of the economy in England. MacCulloch, a pupil of the cynic Ricardo and one of the best and most celebrated of the English economists, is familiar with the present state of affairs and has an overall view of the movement of bourgeois society. In a public lecture, amidst applause, he had the temerity to apply to political economy what Bacon had said of philosophy:

The man who suspends his judgement with true and untiring wisdom, who progresses gradually, and who successively surmounts obstacles which impede the course of study like mountains, will in time reach the summit of knowledge where rest and pure air may be enjoyed, where Nature may be viewed in all her beauty, and whence one may descend by an easy path to the final details of practice.7

The pure air of the pestilential atmosphere of English basement dwellings! The great natural beauty of the fantastic rags in which the English poor are clothed and of the faded, shrivelled flesh of the women worn out by work and want; the children lying on dung-heaps; the stunted monsters produced by overwork in the mechanical monotony of the factories! The most charming final details of practice: prostitution, murder and the gallows!

Even that section of the English bourgeoisie which is conscious of the dangers of pauperism regards both the dangers and the means for remedying them not merely as particular problems, but — to put it bluntly — in a childish and absurd manner.

Thus, for example, in his pamphlet 'Recent Measures for the Promotion of Education in England', Dr Kay reduces the whole question to the neglect of education. It is not hard to guess the reason! He argues that the worker's lack of education prevents him from understanding the 'natural laws of trade', laws which necessarily reduce him to pauperism. For this reason the worker rises up in rebellion. And this rebellion may well 'cause embarrassment to the prosperity of English manufactures and English commerce, impair the mutual confidence of businessmen and diminish the stability of political and social institutions'.

This is the extent of the insanity of the English bourgeoisie and its press on the subject of pauperism, the national epidemic of England.

Let us assume for the moment that the criticisms levelled by our 'Prussian' at German society are justified. Is it true that their explanation is to be found in the unpolitical nature of Germany? But if the bourgeoisie of an unpolitical Germany is unable to achieve clarity about the general significance of sporadic misery, it does not lag behind the bourgeoisie of a political England which has managed to overlook the general significance of universal misery, of misery whose general meaning has become apparent partly by virtue of its periodic recurrence in time, partly by its extension in space and partly by the failure of every attempt to eliminate it.

The 'Prussian' heaps further obloquy on the unpolitical nature of Germany because the King of Prussia has located the cause of pauperism in 'failures of the administration or of charitable institutions' and has therefore looked to administrative or charitable measures to provide a cure for pauperism.

Is this analysis peculiar to the King of Prussia? Let us again look briefly at England, the only country where there has been any large-scale action against pauperism worth mentioning.

The present English Poor Laws date from Act 43 of the reign of Elizabeth. How does this legislation propose to deal with pauperism? By obliging the parishes to support their own poor workers, by the Poor Rate, by legal charity. Charity dispensed by the administration: this has been the method in force for two centuries. After long and painful experiences what view is adopted by Parliament in its Bill of Amendment in 1834?

8. It is not necessary for our purposes here to go back to the labourers' Statute of Edward III. [Marx's note]
It begins by explaining the frightening increase in pauperism as the result of a ‘defect in the administration’.

It therefore provides for a reform of the administration of the Poor Rate by officials of the different parishes. Unions of about twenty parishes are to be set up under a central administration. On a specified day the Board of Guardians, consisting of officials elected by the tax-payers, are to assemble at the headquarters of the union and decide on eligibility for relief. These Boards are presided over and controlled by government representatives from the Central Commission at Somerset House, the Ministry of Pauperism, to use the phrase aptly coined by a Frenchman.9 The capital so administered is almost equal to the sum required by the War Office in France. The number of local offices thus maintained amounts to 500 and each of these local offices keeps at least twelve officials busy.

The English Parliament did not rest content with the formal reform of the administration.

The chief cause of the acute condition of English pauperism was found to lie in the Poor Law itself. It was discovered that charity, the legal method of combating social evils, itself fostered social evils. As for pauperism in general, it was held to be an eternal law of nature in accordance with Malthus’s theory:

Since the population threatens unceasingly to exceed the available means of subsistence, benevolence is folly, an open encouragement to misery. The state, therefore, can do nothing but leave misery to its fate, and, at best, facilitate the death of those in want.

The English Parliament combined this philanthropic theory with the view that pauperism is a state of misery brought on by the workers themselves, and that in consequence it should not be regarded as a misfortune to be prevented but as a crime to be suppressed and punished.

In this way the system of the workhouse came into being, i.e. houses for the poor whose internal arrangements were devised to deter the indigent from seeking a refuge from starvation. In the workhouses charity has been ingeniously combined with the revenge of the bourgeoisie on all those wretched enough to appeal to their charity.

Initially England attempted to eliminate pauperism by means of charity and administrative measures. It then came to regard the

progressive increase in pauperism not as the inevitable consequence of modern industry but rather as the consequence of the English Poor Law. It construed the state of universal need as merely a particular feature of English law. What was formerly attributed to a deficiency of charity was now ascribed to the superabundance of charity. Lastly, need was regarded as the fault of the needy and punishable as such.

The general lesson learnt by political England from its experience of pauperism is none other than that, in the course of history and despite all administrative measures, pauperism has developed into a national institution which has inevitably become the object of a highly ramified and extensive administrative system, a system however which no longer sets out to eliminate it, but which strives instead to discipline and perpetuate it. This administrative system has abandoned all attempts to stop pauperism at its source through positive measures; it confines itself to preparing a grave for it with true police mildness as soon as it erupts on the surface of officialdom. Far from advancing beyond administrative and charitable measures, the English state has regressed to a far more primitive position. It dispenses its administrative gifts only to that pauperism which is induced by despair to allow itself to be caught and incarcerated.

Thus far the ‘Prussian’ has failed to show that the procedure adopted by the King of Prussia has any features peculiar to it. But why, our great man now exclaims with rare naivety: ‘Why does the King not decree the education of all deprived children at a stroke?’ Why must he turn first to the authorities with requests for their plans and proposals?

Our all-too-clever ‘Prussian’ will regain his composure when he realizes that in acting thus the King of Prussia is just as unoriginal as in all his other actions. In fact he has taken the only course of action open to the head of a state.

Napoleon wished to do away with begging at a single stroke. He instructed his officials to prepare plans for the abolition of beggary throughout the whole of France. The project was subject to delay; Napoleon became impatient, he wrote to Crétet, his Minister of the Interior; he commanded him to get rid of begging within a month. He said, ‘One should not depart this life without leaving traces which commend our memory to posterity. Do not ask me for another three or four months to obtain information; you have young advocates, clever prefects, expert engineers of bridges and
roads. Set them all in motion, do not fall into the sleepy inactivity of routine office work.'

Within a few months everything was ready. On 5 July 1808 the law to suppress begging was enacted. By what means? By means of the dépôts which were so speedily transformed into penal institutions that in a short time the poor man could gain access to one only via a police court. Nevertheless, M. Noailles du Gard, a member of the legislative body, was able to declare, 'Eternal gratitude to the hero who has found a refuge for the needy and the means of life for the poor. Childhood will no longer be abandoned, poor families will no longer lack resources, nor will workers go without encouragement and employment. Nos pas ne seront plus arrêtés par l'image dégoûtante des infirmités et de la honteuse misère.'

This last cynical statement is the only truth contained in this eulogy.

If Napoleon can turn to his advocates, prefects and engineers for counsel, why should not the King of Prussia turn to his authorities?

Why did not Napoleon simply decree the abolition of beggary at a stroke? This question is just as valid as that of our 'Prussian' who asks: 'Why does the King not decree the education of all deprived children at a stroke?' Does the 'Prussian' understand what the King would have to decree? Nothing other than the abolition of the proletariat. To educate children it is necessary to feed them and free them from the need to earn a livelihood. The feeding and educating of destitute children, i.e. the feeding and educating of the entire future proletariat, would mean the abolition of the proletariat and of pauperism.

For a moment the Convention had the courage to decree the abolition of pauperism, not indeed 'at a stroke', as the 'Prussian' requires of his King, but only after instructing the Committee of Public Safety to draw up the necessary plans and proposals and after the latter had made use of the extensive investigation by the Constituent Assembly into the state of poverty in France and, through Barrère, had proposed the establishment of the 'Livre de la bienfaisance nationale' etc. What was achieved by the decree of the Convention? Simply that there was now one decree more

10. We will no longer be hampered by the disgusting sight of illness and shameful misery.
in the world and that one year later starving women besieged the Convention.

The Convention, however, represented the maximum of political energy, political power and political understanding.

No government in the whole world has issued decrees about pauperism at a stroke and without consulting the authorities. The English Parliament even sent emissaries to all the countries in Europe in order to discover the different administrative remedies in use. But in their attempts to come to grips with pauperism every government has stuck fast at charitable and administrative measures or even regressed to a more primitive stage than that.

Can the state do otherwise?

The state will never discover the source of social evils in the "state and the organization of society", as the Prussian expects of his King. Wherever there are political parties each party will attribute every defect of society to the fact that its rival is at the helm of the state instead of itself. Even the radical and revolutionary politicians look for the causes of evil not in the nature of the state but in a specific form of the state which they would like to replace with another form of the state.

From a political point of view the state and the organization of society are not two different things. The state is the organization of society. In so far as the state acknowledges the existence of social grievances it locates their origins either in the laws of nature over which no human agency has control, or in private life, which is independent of the state, or else in malfunctions of the administration which is dependent on it. Thus England finds poverty to be based on the law of nature according to which the population must always outgrow the available means of subsistence. From another point of view it explains pauperism as the consequence of the bad will of the poor, just as the King of Prussia explains it in terms of the unchristian feelings of the rich and the Convention explains it in terms of the counter-revolutionary and suspect attitudes of the proprietors. Hence England punishes the poor, the King of Prussia exhorts the rich and the Convention beheads the proprietors.

Lastly, all states seek the cause in fortuitous or intentional defects in the administration and hence the cure is sought in administrative measures. Why? Because the administration is the organizing agency of the state.

The contradiction between the vocation and the good intentions
of the administration on the one hand and the means and powers at its disposal on the other cannot be eliminated by the state, except by abolishing itself; for the state is based on this contradiction. It is based on the contradiction between public and private life, between universal and particular interests. For this reason, the state must confine itself to formal, negative activities, since the scope of its own power comes to an end at the very point where civil life and work begin. Indeed, when we consider the consequences arising from the asocial nature of civil life, of private property, of trade, of industry, of the mutual plundering that goes on between the various groups in civil life, it becomes clear that the law of nature governing the administration is impotence. For, the fragmentation, the depravity and the slavery of civil society is the natural foundation of the modern state, just as the civil society of slavery was the natural foundation of the state in antiquity. The existence of the state is inseparable from the existence of slavery. The state and slavery in antiquity — frank and open classical antitheses — were not more closely welded together than the modern state and the cut-throat world of modern business — sanctimonious Christian antitheses. If the modern state desired to abolish the impotence of its administration it would have to abolish contemporary private life. And to abolish private life it would have to abolish itself, since it exists only as the antithesis of private life. However, no living person believes the defects of his existence to be based on the principle, the essential nature of his own life; they must instead be grounded in circumstances outside his own life. Suicide is contrary to nature. Hence the state cannot believe in the intrinsic impotence of its administration, i.e. of itself. It can only perceive formal, contingent defects in it and try to remedy them. If these modifications are inadequate, well, that just shows that social ills are natural imperfections, independent of man, they are a law of God, or else, the will of private individuals is too degenerate to meet the good intentions of the administration halfway. And how perverse private individuals are! They grumble about the government when it places limits on freedom and yet demand that the government should prevent the inevitable consequences of that freedom!

The more powerful a state and hence the more political a nation, the less inclined it is to explain the general principle governing social ills and to seek out their causes by looking at the principle of the state, i.e. at the actual organization of society of which the
state is the active, self-conscious and official expression. Political understanding is just political understanding because its thought does not transcend the limits of politics. The sharper and livelier it is, the more incapable is it of comprehending social problems. The classical period of political understanding is the French Revolution. Far from identifying the principle of the state as the source of social ills, the heroes of the French Revolution held social ills to be the source of political problems. Thus Robespierre regarded great wealth and great poverty as an obstacle to pure democracy. He therefore wished to establish a universal system of Spartan frugality. The principle of politics is the will. The more one-sided, i.e. the more perfect, political understanding is, the more completely it puts its faith in the omnipotence of the will; the blinder it is towards the natural and spiritual limitations of the will, the more incapable it becomes of discovering the real source of the evils of society. No further arguments are needed to prove that when the ‘Prussian’ claims that ‘the political understanding’ is destined ‘to uncover the roots of social want in Germany’ he is indulging in vain illusions.

It was foolish to expect the King of Prussia to exhibit a power not possessed by the Convention and Napoleon combined; it was foolish to expect him to possess a vision which could cross all political frontiers, a vision with which our clever ‘Prussian’ is no better endowed than is his King. The entire declaration was all the more foolish as our ‘Prussian’ admits:

Fine words and fine sentiments are cheap, insight and successful actions are dear; in this case they are more than dear, they are quite unobtainable.

If they are quite unobtainable then we should acknowledge the efforts of everyone who does what is possible in a given situation. For the rest I leave it to the reader’s tact to determine whether the commercial jargon of ‘cheap’, ‘dear’, ‘more than dear’, ‘unobtainable’, are to be included in the category of ‘fine words’ and ‘fine sentiments’.

Even if we assume then that the ‘Prussian’s’ remarks about the German government and the German bourgeoisie – the latter is presumably to be included in ‘German society’ – are well-founded, does this mean that this segment of society is more perplexed in Germany than in England and France? Is it possible to be more perplexed than in England, for example, where perplexity has been
erected into a system? If workers' uprisings were to break out today all over England the bourgeoisie and the government would not have any better solutions than those that were open to them in the last third of the eighteenth century. Their only solution is physical force and since the efficacy of physical force declines in geometric proportion to the growth of pauperism and of the proletariat's understanding, the perplexity of the English necessarily increases in geometric proportion too.

Lastly, it is false, factually false, that the German bourgeoisie wholly fails to appreciate the general significance of the Silesian revolt. In a number of towns the masters are making attempts to associate themselves with the journeymen. All the liberal German papers, the organs of the liberal bourgeoisie, are overflowing with statements about the organization of labour, the reform of society, criticism of monopolies and competition, etc. All as a result of the workers' movements. The newspapers of Trier, Aachen, Cologne, Wesel, Mannheim, Breslau and even Berlin are publishing often quite sensible articles on social questions from which our 'Prussian' could well profit. Indeed, letters from Germany constantly express surprise at the lack of bourgeois resistance to social ideas and tendencies.

If the 'Prussian' were more conversant with the history of the social movement he would have asked the opposite question. Why does the German bourgeoisie attribute such relatively universal significance to sporadic and particular problems? How are we to explain why the proletariat should be shown such animosity and cynicism by the political bourgeoisie and such sympathy and lack of resistance by the unpolitical bourgeoisie?

[Vorwärts!, No. 64, 10 August 1844]

Now for the oracular utterances of the 'Prussian' concerning the German workers.

_The German poor_ (he observes wittily) _are no cleverer than the poor Germans, i.e. they never look beyond their hearth, their factory or their district: they remain as yet untouched by the all-pervading spirit of politics._

In order to compare the situation of the German workers with that of the English and French workers, the 'Prussian' should have compared the first formation, the beginnings of the French and English workers' movements with the new-born German
movement. He fails to do this. Hence his entire argument
amounts only to the trivial observation that, e.g., industry in
Germany is less advanced than in England, or that the start of a
movement looks different from its later development. He had
wished to speak of the specific nature of the German workers'
movement, but does not say a single word on the subject.

He should consider the matter from the correct vantage-point.
He would then realize that not a single one of the French and
English insurrections has had the same theoretical and conscious
character as the Silesian weavers' rebellion.

Think first of the Weavers' Song,12 that intrepid battle-cry
which does not even mention hearth, factory or district but in
which the proletariat at once proclaims its antagonism to the
society of private property in the most decisive, aggressive, ruthless
and forceful manner. The Silesian rebellion starts where the French
and English workers' finish, namely with an understanding of the
nature of the proletariat. This superiority stamps the whole
episode. Not only were machines destroyed, those competitors of
the workers, but also the account books, the titles of ownership,
and whereas all other movements had directed their attacks
primarily at the visible enemy, namely the industrialists, the
Silesian workers turned also against the hidden enemy, the bankers.
Finally, not one English workers' uprising was carried out with
such courage, foresight and endurance.

As for the German workers' level of education or capacity for
it, I would point to Weitling's brilliant writings which surpass
Proudhon's from a theoretical point of view, however defective
they may be in execution. What single work on the emancipation
of the bourgeoisie, that is, political emancipation, can the bour-
geoisie — for all their philosophers and scholars — put beside
Weitling's Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom? If we compare
the meek, sober mediocrity of German political literature with this
titanic and brilliant literary debut of the German workers; if we
compare these gigantic children's shoes of the proletariat with the
dwarf-like proportions of the worn-out political shoes of the Ger-
man bourgeoisie, we must predict a vigorous future for this
German Cinderella. It must be granted that the German prole-
tariat is the theoretician of the European proletariat just as the
English proletariat is its economist and the French its politician.
It must be granted that the vocation of Germany for social

12. Written by Heine.
revolution is as classical as its incapacity for political revolution. For just as the impotence of the German bourgeoisie is the political impotence of Germany, so too the capacity of the German proletariat — even apart from German theory — is the social capacity of Germany. The disparity between the philosophical and political development of Germany is nothing abnormal. It is a necessary disparity. Only in socialism can a philosophical nation discover the praxis consonant with its nature and only in the proletariat can it discover the active agent of its emancipation.

For the moment, however, I have neither time nor the will to lecture the ‘Prussian’ on the relationship between German society and the social revolution and to show how this relationship explains, on the one hand, the feeble reaction of the German bourgeoisie to socialism and, on the other hand, the brilliant talents of the German proletariat for socialism. He can find the first rudiments necessary for an understanding of this phenomenon in my Introduction to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right (in the Franco-German Yearbooks).

Thus the cleverness of the German poor stands in inverse ratio to the cleverness of the poor Germans. But people who make every object the occasion for stylistic exercises in public are misled by such formal activities into perverting the content, while for its part the perverted content stamps the imprint of vulgarity upon the form. Thus the ‘Prussian’s’ attempt to discuss the workers’ unrest in Silesia in formal antitheses has led him into the greatest antitheses to the truth. Confronted with the initial outbreak of the Silesian revolt no man who thinks and who loves the truth could regard the duty to play schoolmaster to the event as his primary task. On the contrary, his duty would rather be to study it to discover its specific character. Of course, this requires scientific understanding and a certain love of mankind, while the other procedure needs only a ready-made phraseology saturated in an overweening love of oneself.

Why does the ‘Prussian’ treat the German workers with such disdain? Because he believes the ‘whole problem’ — namely the problem of the plight of the workers — ‘to have been as yet untouched by the all-pervading spirit of politics’. He dilates on his platonic love for the spirit of politics as follows:

All rebellions that are sparked off by the disastrous isolation of men from the community and of their thoughts from social principles are
bound to be suppressed amid a welter of blood and incomprehension. But once need produces understanding and once the political understanding of the Germans discovers the roots of social need then even in Germany these events will be felt to be the symptoms of a great upheaval.

First of all, we hope that the ‘Prussian’ will permit us to make a stylistic comment. His antithesis is incomplete. The first half asserts: Once need produces understanding. The second half states: Once the political understanding discovers the roots of social need. The simple understanding of the first half of the antithesis becomes political understanding in the second, just as the simple need of the first half becomes the social need of the second. Why has our master of style weighted the two halves of his antithesis so unequally? I do not think that he has reflected on the matter. I shall reveal his correct instinct to him. Had he written: ‘Once social need produces political understanding and once political understanding has discovered the roots of social need’ no impartial reader could have failed to see that this antithesis was nonsensical. To begin with everyone would have wondered why the anonymous author did not link social understanding with social need and political understanding with political need as the most elementary logic would require? But let us proceed to the issue itself!

It is entirely false that social need produces political understanding. Indeed, it is nearer the truth to say that political understanding is produced by social well-being. Political understanding is something spiritual, that is given to him that hath, to the man who is already sitting on velvet. Our ‘Prussian’ should take note of what M. Michel Chevalier, a French economist, has to say on the subject:

In 1789 when the bourgeoisie rose in rebellion the only thing lacking to its freedom was the right to participate in the government of the country. Emancipation meant the removal of the control of public affairs, the high civic, military and religious functions from the hands of the privileged classes who had a monopoly of these functions. Wealthy and enlightened, self-sufficient and able to manage their own affairs, they wished to evade the clutches of arbitrary rule.

We have already demonstrated to our ‘Prussian’ how inadequate political understanding is to the task of discovering the source of social need. One last word on his view of the matter. The
more developed and the more comprehensive is the political understanding of a nation, the more the proletariat will squander its energies – at least in the initial stages of the movement – in senseless, futile uprisings that will be drowned in blood. Because it thinks in political terms it regards the will as the cause of all evils and force and the overthrow of a particular form of the state as the universal remedy. Proof: the first outbreaks of the French proletariat. The workers in Lyons imagined their goals were entirely political, they saw themselves purely as soldiers of the republic, while in reality they were the soldiers of socialism. Thus their political understanding obscured the roots of their social misery, it falsified their insight into their real goal, their political understanding deceived their social instincts.

But if the 'Prussian' expects understanding to be the result of misery why does he identify 'suppression in blood' with 'suppression in incomprehension'? If misery is a means whereby to produce understanding, then a bloody slaughter must be a very extreme means to that end. The 'Prussian' would have to argue that suppression in a welter of blood will stifle incomprehension and bring a breath of fresh air to the understanding.

The 'Prussian' predicts the suppression of the insurrections which are sparked off by the 'disastrous isolation of man from the community and of their thoughts from social principles'. We have shown that in the Silesian uprising there was no separation of thoughts from social principles. That leaves 'the disastrous isolation of men from the community'. By community is meant here the political community, the state. It is the old song about un-political Germany.

But do not all rebellions without exception have their roots in the disastrous isolation of man from the community? Does not every rebellion necessarily presuppose isolation? Would the revolution of 1789 have taken place if French citizens had not felt disastrously isolated from the community? The abolition of this isolation was its very purpose.

But the community from which the worker is isolated is a community of quite different reality and scope than the political community. The community from which his own labour separates him is life itself, physical and spiritual life, human morality, human activity, human enjoyment, human nature. Human nature

is the true community of men. Just as the disastrous isolation from this nature is disproportionately more far-reaching, unbearable, terrible and contradictory than the isolation from the political community, so too the transcending of this isolation and even a partial reaction, a rebellion against it, is so much greater, just as the man is greater than the citizen and human life than political life. Hence, however limited an industrial revolt may be, it contains within itself a universal soul: and however universal a political revolt may be, its colossal form conceals a narrow spirit.

The 'Prussian' brings his essay to a close worthy of it with the following sentence:

A social revolution without a political soul (i.e. without a central insight organizing it from the point of view of the totality) is impossible.

We have seen: a social revolution possesses a total point of view because – even if it is confined to only one factory district – it represents a protest by man against a dehumanized life, because it proceeds from the point of view of the particular, real individual, because the community against whose separation from himself the individual is reacting, is the true community of man, human nature. In contrast, the political soul of revolution consists in the tendency of the classes with no political power to put an end to their isolation from the state and from power. Its point of view is that of the state, of an abstract totality which exists only through its separation from real life and which is unthinkable in the absence of an organized antithesis between the universal idea and the individual existence of man. In accordance with the limited and contradictory nature of the political soul a revolution inspired by it organizes a dominant group within society at the cost of society.

We shall let the 'Prussian' in on the secret of the nature of a 'social revolution with a political soul': we shall thus confide to him the secret that not even his phrases raise him above the level of political narrow-mindedness.

A 'social' revolution with a political soul is either a composite piece of nonsense, if by 'social' revolution the 'Prussian' understands a 'social' revolution as opposed to a political one, while at the same time he endows the social revolution with a political, rather than a social soul. Or else a 'social revolution with a political soul' is nothing but a paraphrase of what is usually called a 'political revolution' or a 'revolution pure and simple'. Every
revolution dissolves the *old order of society*; to that extent it is *social*. Every revolution brings down the *old ruling power*; to that extent it is *political*.

The ‘Prussian’ must choose between this *paraphrase* and *nonsense*. But whether the idea of a *social revolution* with a *political soul* is paraphrase or nonsense there is no doubt about the rationality of a *political revolution* with a *social soul*. All revolution – the *overthrow* of the existing ruling power and the *dissolution* of the old order – is a *political act*. But without revolution *socialism* cannot be made possible. It stands in need of this political act just as it stands in need of *destruction* and *dissolution*. But as soon as its *organizing functions* begin and its goal, its *soul* emerges, socialism throws its *political* mask aside.

Such lengthy perorations were necessary to break through the *tissue* of errors concealed in a single newspaper column. Not every reader possesses the education and the time necessary to get to grips with such *literary swindles*. In view of this does not our anonymous ‘Prussian’ owe it to the reading public to give up writing on political and social themes and to refrain from making declamatory statements on the situation in Germany, in order to devote himself to a conscientious analysis of his own situation?

Paris, 31 July 1844
till now. The social power, i.e., the multiplied productive force, which arises through the co-operation of different individuals as it is caused by the division of labour, appears to these individuals, since their co-operation is not voluntary but has come about naturally, not as their own united power, but as an alien force existing outside them, of the origin and goal of which they are ignorant, which they thus are no longer able to control, which on the contrary passes through a peculiar series of phases and stages independent of the will and the action of man, nay even being the prime governor of these. How otherwise could for instance property have had a history at all, have taken on different forms, and landed property, for example, according to the different premises given, have proceeded in France from parcellation to centralisation in the hands of a few, in England from centralisation in the hands of a few to parcellation, as is actually the case today? Or how does it happen that trade, which after all is nothing more than the exchange of products of various individuals and countries, rules the whole world through the relation of supply and demand—a relation which, as an English economist says, hovers over the earth like the fate of the ancients, and with invisible hand allocates fortune and misfortune to men, sets up empires and wrecks empires, causes nations to rise and to disappear—whereas with the abolition of the basis, private property, with the communistic regulation of production (and, implicit in this, the abolition of the alien attitude of men to their own product), the power of the relation of supply and demand is dissolved into nothing, and men once more gain control of exchange, production and the way they behave to one another?
And, on the other hand, this development of productive forces (which at the same time implies the actual empirical existence of men in their world-historical, instead of local, being) is an absolutely necessary practical premise, because without it privation, want is merely made general, and with want the struggle for necessities would begin again, and all the old filthy business would necessarily be restored; and furthermore, because only with this universal development of productive forces is a universal intercourse between men established, which on the one side produces in all nations simultaneously the phenomenon of the “propertyless” mass (universal competition), making each nation dependent on the revolutions of the others, and finally puts world-historical, empirically universal individuals in place of local ones. Without this, 1) communism could only exist as a local phenomenon; 2) the forces of intercourse themselves could not have developed as universal, hence unendurable powers: they would have remained home-bred “conditions” surrounded by superstition; and 3) each extension of intercourse would abolish local communism. Empirically, communism is only possible as the act of the dominant peoples “all at once” and simultaneously, which presupposes the universal development of productive forces and the world intercourse bound up with them.*

[19] Moreover, the mass of workers who are nothing but workers—labour-power on a mass scale cut off from capital or from even a limited satisfaction [of their needs] and, hence, as a result of competition their utterly precarious position, the no longer merely temporary loss of work as a secure source of life—presupposes the world market. The proletariat can thus only exist world-historically, just as communism, its activity, can only have a “world-historical” existence. World-historical existence of individuals, i.e., existence of individuals which is directly linked up with world history.

[18] Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the now existing premise.*

* * *

* [Above the continuation of this passage, which follows on the next page of the manuscript, Marx wrote:] Communism.

---

* In the manuscript this paragraph was written down by Marx in a free space above the paragraph starting with the words: This “estrangement”. — Ed.
19) The form of intercourse determined by the existing productive forces at all previous historical stages, and in its turn determining these, is civil society. The latter, as is clear from what we have said above, has as its premise and basis the simple family and the multiple, called the tribe, and the more precise definition of this society is given in our remarks above. Already here we see that this civil society is the true focus and theatre of all history, and how absurd is the conception of history held hitherto, which neglects the real relations and confines itself to spectacular historical events. 20

In the main we have so far considered only one aspect of human activity, the *reshaping of nature* by men. The other aspect, the *reshaping of men by men*...*

Origin of the state and the relation of the state to civil society.*


20) History is nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which uses the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations, and thus, on the one hand, continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and, on the other, modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity. This can be speculatively distorted so that later history is made the goal of earlier history, e.g., the goal ascribed to the discovery of America is to further the eruption of the French Revolution. Thereby history receives its own special goals and becomes "a person ranking with other persons" (to wit: "self-consciousness, criticism, the unique", etc.), while what is designated with the words "destiny", "goal", "germ", or "idea" of earlier history is nothing more than an abstraction from later history, from the active influence which earlier history exercises on later history.

The further the separate spheres, which act on one another, extend in the course of this development and the more the original isolation of the separate nationalities is destroyed by the advanced

* [Marginal note by Marx:] Intercourse and productive power.

* The end of this page of the manuscript is left blank. The next page begins with an exposition of the conclusions from the materialist conception of history.—Ed.
fish of its medium of existence. The explanation that all such contradictions are inevitable abnormalities does not essentially differ from the consolation which Saint Max Stirner offers to the discontented, saying that this contradiction is their own contradiction and this predicament their own predicament, whereupon they should either set their minds at ease, keep their disgust to themselves, or revolt against it in some fantastic way. It differs just as little from Saint Bruno's allegation that these unfortunate circumstances are due to the fact that those concerned are stuck in the muck of "substance", have not advanced to "absolute self-consciousness", and do not realise that these adverse conditions are spirit of their spirit."

[III]

[1. THE RULING CLASS AND THE RULING IDEAS.
HOW THE HEGELIAN CONCEPTION OF THE DOMINATION
OF THE SPIRIT IN HISTORY AROSE]

[301] The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped as ideas; hence of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an historical epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch. For instance, in an age and in a country where royal power, aristocracy and bourgeoisie are contending for domination and where, therefore, domination is shared, the doctrine of the separation of powers proves to be the dominant idea and is expressed as an "eternal law".

The division of labour, which we already saw above (pp. [15-18])\(^b\) as one of the chief forces of history up till now, manifests itself also in

\(^a\) Bruno Bauer, "Charakteristik Ludwig Feuerbachs".—Ed.

\(^b\) See this volume, pp. 44-48.—Ed.
the ruling class as the division of mental and [31] material labour, so that inside this class one part appears as the thinkers of the class (its active, conceptive ideologists, who make the formation of the illusions of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), while the others' attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of this class and have less time to make up illusions and ideas about themselves. Within this class this cleavage can even develop into a certain opposition and hostility between the two parts, but whenever a practical collision occurs in which the class itself is endangered they automatically vanish, in which case there also vanishes the appearance of the ruling ideas being not the ideas of the ruling class and having a power distinct from the power of this class. The existence of revolutionary ideas in a particular period presupposes the existence of a revolutionary class; about the premises of the latter sufficient has already been said above (pp. [18-19, 22-23]).

If now in considering the course of history we detach the ideas of the ruling class from the ruling class itself and attribute to them an independent existence, if we confine ourselves to saying that these or those ideas were dominant at a given time, without bothering ourselves about the conditions of production and the producers of these ideas, if we thus ignore the individuals and world conditions which are the source of the ideas, then we can say, for instance, that during the time the aristocracy was dominant, the concepts honour, loyalty, etc., were dominant, during the dominance of the bourgeoisie the concepts freedom, equality, etc. The ruling class itself on the whole imagines this to be so. This conception of history, which is common to all historians, particularly since the eighteenth century, will necessarily come up against [32] the phenomenon that ever more abstract ideas hold sway, i.e., ideas which increasingly take on the form of universality. For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to present its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and present them as the only rational, universally valid ones. The class making a revolution comes forward from the very start, if only because it is opposed to a class, not as a class but as the representative of the whole of society, as the whole mass of society confronting the one ruling class. * It can do this

* [Marginal note by Marx:] (Universality corresponds to 1) the class versus the estate, 2) the competition, world intercourse, etc., 3) the great numerical strength

---

a See this volume, pp. 48-49 and 52-53.—Ed.
because initially its interest really is as yet mostly connected with the common interest of all other non-ruling classes, because under the pressure of hitherto existing conditions its interest has not yet been able to develop as the particular interest of a particular class. Its victory, therefore, benefits also many individuals of other classes which are not winning a dominant position, but only insofar as it now enables these individuals to raise themselves into the ruling class. When the French bourgeoisie overthrew the rule of the aristocracy, it thereby made it possible for many proletarians to raise themselves above the proletariat, but only insofar as they became bourgeois. Every new class, therefore, achieves domination only on a broader basis than that of the class ruling previously; on the other hand the opposition of the non-ruling class to the new ruling class then develops all the more sharply and profoundly. Both these things determine the fact that the struggle to be waged against this new ruling class, in its turn, has as its aim a more decisive and more radical negation of the previous conditions of society than [33] all previous classes which sought to rule could have.

This whole appearance, that the rule of a certain class is only the rule of certain ideas, comes to a natural end, of course, as soon as class rule in general ceases to be the form in which society is organised, that is to say, as soon as it is no longer necessary to represent a particular interest as general or the “general interest” as ruling.

Once the ruling ideas have been separated from the ruling individuals and, above all, from the relations which result from a given stage of the mode of production, and in this way the conclusion has been reached that history is always under the sway of ideas, it is very easy to abstract from these various ideas “the Idea”, the thought, etc., as the dominant force in history, and thus to consider all these separate ideas and concepts as “forms of self-determination” of the Concept developing in history. It follows then naturally, too, that all the relations of men can be derived from the concept of man, man as conceived, the essence of man, Man. This has been done by speculative philosophy. Hegel himself confesses at the end of the *Geschichtsphilosophie* that he “has considered the progress of the concept only” and has represented in history the “true theodicy” (p. 446). Now one can go back again to the producers of “the con-

---

5 G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*.—Ed.
cept”, to the theorists, ideologists and philosophers, and one comes then to the conclusion that the philosophers, the thinkers as such, have at all times been dominant in history: a conclusion, as we see, already expressed by Hegel.

The whole trick of proving the hegemony of the spirit in history (hierarchy Stirner calls it) is thus confined to the following three attempts.

|34| No. 1. One must separate the ideas of those ruling for empirical reasons, under empirical conditions and as corporeal individuals, from these rulers, and thus recognise the rule of ideas or illusions in history.

No. 2. One must bring an order into this rule of ideas, prove a mystical connection among the successive ruling ideas, which is managed by regarding them as “forms of self-determination of the concept” (this is possible because by virtue of their empirical basis these ideas are really connected with one another and because, conceived as mere ideas, they become self-distinctions, distinctions made by thought).

No. 3. To remove the mystical appearance of this “self-determining concept” it is changed into a person—“self-consciousness”—or, to appear thoroughly materialistic, into a series of persons, who represent the “concept” in history, into the “thinkers”, the “philosophers”, the ideologists, who again are understood as the manufacturers of history, as the “council of guardians”, as the rulers.* Thus the whole body of materialistic elements has been eliminated from history and now full rein can be given to the speculative steed.

This historical method which reigned in Germany, and especially the reason why, must be explained from its connection with the illusion of ideologists in general, e.g., the illusions of the jurists, politicians (including the practical statesmen), from the dogmatic dreamings and distortions of these fellows; this is explained perfectly easily from then practical position in life, their job, and the division of labour.

|35| Whilst in ordinary life every shopkeepera is very well able to distinguish between what somebody professes to be and what he really is, our historiography has not yet won this trivial insight. It takes every epoch at its word and believes that everything it says and imagines about itself is true.

* [Marginal note by Marx:] Man = the “thinking human spirit”.

a This word is in English in the manuscript.—Ed.
and: "depuis quelque temps il n'est plus question que de commerce, de navigation et de marine."a

The movement of capital, although considerably accelerated, still remained, however, relatively slow. The splitting-up of the world market into separate parts, each of which was exploited by a particular nation, the prevention of competition between the different nations, the clumsiness of production and the fact that finance was only evolving from its early stages — greatly impeded circulation. The consequence of this was a haggling, mean and niggardly spirit which still clung to all merchants and to the whole mode of carrying on trade. Compared with the manufacturers, and above all with the craftsmen, they were certainly big bourgeois; compared with the merchants and industrialists of the next period they remain petty bourgeois. Cf. Adam Smith.b—

This period is also characterised by the cessation of the bans on the export of gold and silver and the beginning of money trade, banks, national debts, paper money, speculation in stocks and shares, stockjobbing in all articles and the development of finance in general. Again capital lost a great part of the natural character which had still clung to it.

[4. MOST EXTENSIVE DIVISION OF LABOUR. LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRY]

The concentration of trade and manufacture in one country, England, developing irresistibly in the seventeenth century, gradually created for this country a relative world market, and thus a demand for the manufactured products of this country which could no longer be met by the industrial productive forces hitherto existing. This demand, outgrowing the productive forces, was the motive power which, by producing large-scale industry — the application of elemental forces to industrial ends, machinery and the most extensive division of labour — called into existence the third [51] period of private property since the Middle Ages. There already existed in England the other preconditions of this new phase: freedom of competition inside the nation, the development of theoretical mechanics, etc. (indeed, mechanics, perfected by Newton, was altogether the most popular science in France and England in the eighteenth century). (Free competition inside the nation itself had

---

a "For some time now people have been talking only about commerce, navigation and the navy" (ibid.). — Ed.
everywhere to be won by a revolution—1640 and 1688 in England, 1789 in France.)

Competition soon compelled every country that wished to retain its historical role to protect its manufactures by renewed customs regulations (the old duties were no longer any good against large-scale industry) and soon after to introduce large-scale industry under protective duties. In spite of these protective measures large-scale industry universalised competition (it is practical free trade; the protective duty is only a palliative, a measure of defence within free trade), established means of communication and the modern world market, subordinated trade to itself, transformed all capital into industrial capital, and thus produced the rapid circulation (development of the financial system) and the centralisation of capital. By universal competition it forced all individuals to strain their energy to the utmost. It destroyed as far as possible ideology, religion, morality, etc., and, where it could not do this, made them into a palpable lie. It produced world history for the first time, insofar as it made all civilised nations and every individual member of them dependent for the satisfaction of their wants on the whole world, thus destroying the former natural exclusiveness of separate nations. It made natural science subservient to capital and took from the division of labour the last semblance of its natural character. It altogether destroyed the natural character, as far as this is possible with regard to labour, and resolved all natural relations into money relations. In the place of naturally grown towns it created the modern, large industrial cities which have sprung up overnight. It destroyed the crafts and all earlier stages of industry wherever it gained mastery. It completed the victory of the town over the country. Its [basis] is the automatic system. It produced a mass of productive forces, for which private property became just as much a fetter [52] as the guild had been for manufacture and the small, rural workshop for the developing handicrafts. These productive forces receive under the system of private property a one-sided development only, and for the majority they become destructive forces; moreover, a great many of these forces can find no application at all within the system of private property. Generally speaking, large-scale industry created everywhere the same relations between the classes of society, and thus destroyed the peculiar features of the various nationalities. And finally, while the bourgeoisie of each nation still retained separate national interests, large-scale industry created a class which in all nations has the same interest and for which nationality is already dead; a class which is really rid of all the old world and at the same time stands pitted
against it. For the worker it makes not only his relation to the capitalist, but labour itself, unbearable.

It is evident that large-scale industry does not reach the same level of development in all districts of a country. This does not, however, retard the class movement of the proletariat, because the proletarians created by large-scale industry assume leadership of this movement and carry the whole mass along with them, and because the workers excluded from large-scale industry are placed by it in a still worse situation than the workers in large-scale industry itself. The countries in which large-scale industry is developed act in a similar manner upon the more or less non-industrial countries, insofar as the latter are swept by world intercourse into the universal competitive struggle.

* * *

These different forms [of production] are just so many forms of the organisation of labour, and hence of property. In each period a unification of the existing productive forces takes place, insofar as this has been rendered necessary by needs.


The contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse, which, as we saw, has occurred several times in past history, without, however, endangering its basis, necessarily on each occasion burst out in a revolution, taking on at the same time various subsidiary forms, such as all-embracing collisions, collisions of various classes, contradictions of consciousness, battle of ideas, political struggle, etc. From a narrow point of view one may isolate one of these subsidiary forms and consider it as the basis of these revolutions; and this is all the more easy as the individuals who started the revolutions had illusions about their own activity according to their degree of culture and the stage of historical development.

Thus all collisions in history have their origin, according to our view, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the form [53] of intercourse. Incidentally, to lead to collisions in a
country, this contradiction need not necessarily have reached its extreme limit in that particular country. The competition with industrially more advanced countries, brought about by the expansion of international intercourse, is sufficient to produce a similar contradiction in countries with a less advanced industry (e.g., the latent proletariat in Germany brought into more prominence by the competition of English industry).

[6. COMPETITION OF INDIVIDUALS AND THE FORMATION OF CLASSES.
CONTRADICTION BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR CONDITIONS OF LIFE. THE ILLUSORY COMMUNITY OF INDIVIDUALS IN BOURGEOIS SOCIETY AND THE REAL UNION OF INDIVIDUALS UNDER COMMUNISM.
SUBORDINATION OF THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE TO THE POWER OF THE UNITED INDIVIDUALS]

Competition separates individuals from one another, not only the bourgeois but still more the workers, in spite of the fact that it brings them together. Hence it is a long time before these individuals can unite, apart from the fact that for the purpose of this union—if it is not to be merely local!—the necessary means, the big industrial cities and cheap and quick communications, have first to be produced by large-scale industry. Hence every organised power standing over against these isolated individuals, who live in conditions daily reproducing this isolation, can only be overcome after long struggles. To demand the opposite would be tantamount to demanding that competition should not exist in this definite epoch of history, or that the individuals should banish from their minds conditions over which in their isolation they have no control.

The building of houses. With savages each family has as a matter of course its own cave or hut like the separate family tent of the nomads. This separate domestic economy is made only the more necessary by the further development of private property. With the agricultural peoples a communal domestic economy is just as impossible as a communal cultivation of the soil. A great advance was the building of towns. In all previous periods, however, the abolition [Aufhebung]a of individual economy, which is inseparable from the

---

*a Aufhebung—a term used by Hegel to denote the negation of an old form while preserving its positive content in the new, which supersedes it.—Ed.
abolition of private property, was impossible for the simple reason that the material conditions required were not present. The setting up of a communal domestic economy presupposes the development of machinery, the use of natural forces and of many other productive forces—e.g., of water-supplies. The supersession [Aufhebung] of town and country. Without these conditions a communal economy would not in itself form a new productive force; it would lack material basis and rest on a purely theoretical foundation, in other words, it would be a mere freak and would amount to nothing more than a monastic economy.—What was possible can be seen in the towns brought into existence by concentration and in the construction of communal buildings for various definite purposes (prisons, barracks, etc.). That the supersession of individual economy is inseparable from the supersession of the family is self-evident.

(The statement which frequently occurs with Saint Sancho that each man is all that he is through the state is fundamentally the same as the statement that the bourgeois is only a specimen of the bourgeois species; a statement which presupposes that the bourgeois class existed before the individuals constituting it.*)

In the Middle Ages the citizens in each town were compelled to unite against the landed nobility to defend themselves. The extension of trade, the establishment of communications, led separate towns to establish contacts with other towns, which had asserted the same interests in the struggle with the same antagonist. Out of the many local communities of citizens in the various towns there arose only gradually the middle class. The conditions of life of the individual citizens became—on account of their contradiction to the existing relations and of the mode of labour determined by this—conditions which were common to them all and independent of each individual. The citizens created these conditions insofar as they had torn themselves free from feudal ties, and were in their turn created by them insofar as they were determined by their antagonism to the feudal system which they found in existence. With the setting up of intercommunications between the individual towns, these common conditions developed into class conditions. The same conditions, the same contradiction, the same interests were bound to call forth on the

* [Marginal note by Marx:] With the philosophers pre-existence of the class.

a Max Stirner, Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum.—Ed.
whole similar customs everywhere. The bourgeoisie itself develops only gradually together with its conditions, splits according to the division of labour into various sections and finally absorbs all propertied classes it finds in existence * (while it develops the majority of the earlier propertyless and a part of the hitherto propertied classes into a new class, the proletariat) in the measure to which all property found in existence is transformed into industrial or commercial capital.

The separate individuals form a class only insofar as [55] they have to carry on a common battle against another class; in other respects they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors. On the other hand, the class in its turn assumes an independent existence as against the individuals, so that the latter find their conditions of life predetermined, and have their position in life and hence their personal development assigned to them by their class, thus becoming subsumed under it. This is the same phenomenon as the subjection of the separate individuals to the division of labour and can only be removed by the abolition of private property and of labour itself. We have already indicated several times that this subsuming of individuals under the class brings with it their subjection to all kinds of ideas, etc.

If this development of individuals, which proceeds within the common conditions of existence of estates and classes, historically following one another, and the general conceptions thereby forced upon them—if this development is considered from a philosophical point of view, it is certainly very easy to imagine that in these individuals the species, or man, has evolved, or that they evolved man—and in this way one can give history some hard clouts on the ear. One can then conceive these various estates and classes to be specific terms of the general expression, subordinate varieties of the species, or evolutionary phases of man.

This subsuming of individuals under definite classes cannot be abolished until a class has evolved which has no longer any particular class interest to assert against a ruling class.

The transformation, through the division of labour, of personal powers (relations) into material powers, cannot be dispelled by

* [Marginal note by Marx:] To begin with, it absorbs the branches of labour directly belonging to the state and then all [more or less] ideological professions.

a Regarding the meaning of “abolition of labour” (Aufhebung der Arbeit) see this volume, pp. 52-53, 80, 85-89.—Ed.
dismissing the general idea of it from one's mind, but can only be abolished by the individuals again subjecting these material powers to themselves and abolishing the division of labour.* This is not possible without the community. Only within the community has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; hence personal freedom becomes possible only within the community. In the previous substitutes for the community, in the state, etc., personal freedom has existed only for the individuals who developed under the conditions of the ruling class, and only insofar as they were individuals of this class. The illusory community in which individuals have up till now combined always took on an independent existence in relation to them, and since it was the combination of one class over against another, it was at the same time for the oppressed class not only a completely illusory community, but a new fetter as well. In the real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association.

Individuals have always proceeded from themselves, but of course from themselves within their given historical conditions and relations, not from the "pure" individual in the sense of the ideologists. But in the course of historical development, and precisely through the fact that within the division of labour social relations inevitably take on an independent existence, there appears a cleavage in the life of each individual, insofar as it is personal and insofar as it is determined by some branch of labour and the conditions pertaining to it. (We do not mean it to be understood from this that, for example, the rentier, the capitalist, etc., cease to be persons; but their personality is conditioned and determined by quite definite class relations, and the cleavage appears only in their opposition to another class and, for themselves, only when they go bankrupt.) In the estate (and even more in the tribe) this is as yet concealed: for instance, a nobleman always remains a nobleman, a commoner always a commoner, a quality inseparable from his individuality irrespective of his other relations. The difference between the private individual and the class individual, the accidental nature of the conditions of life for the individual, appears only with the emergence of the class, which is itself a product of the bourgeoisie. This accidental character as such is only engendered and developed by competition and the struggle of individuals among themselves. Thus, in imagination, individuals seem freer under the dominance of the

* [Marginal note by Engels:] (Feuerbach: being and essence). [Cf. this volume, pp. 58-59.]—Ed.
bourgeoisie than before, because their conditions of life seem accidental: in reality, of course, they are less free, because they are to a greater extent governed by material forces. The difference from the estate comes out particularly in the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. When the estate of the urban burghers, the corporations, etc., emerged in opposition to the landed nobility, their condition of existence—movable property and craft labour, which had already existed latently before their separation from the feudal institutions—appeared as something positive, which was asserted against feudal landed property, and, therefore, in its own way at first took on a feudal form. Certainly the fugitive serfs treated their previous servitude as something extraneous to their personality. But here they only were doing what every class that is freeing itself from a fetter does; and they did not free themselves as a class but individually. Moreover, they did not break loose from the system of estates, but only formed a new estate, retaining their previous mode of labour even in their new situation, and developing it further by freeing it from its earlier fetters, which no longer corresponded to the development already attained.

For the proletarians, on the other hand, the condition of their life, labour, and with it all the conditions of existence of modern society, have become something extraneous, something over which they, as separate individuals, have no control, and over which no social organisation can give them control. The contradiction between the individuality of each separate proletarian and labour, the condition of life forced upon him, becomes evident to him, for he is sacrificed from youth onwards and, within his own class, has no chance of arriving at the conditions which would place him in the other class.—

[58] NB. It must not be forgotten that the serf's very need of existing and the impossibility of a large-scale economy involved the distribution of allotments among the serfs and very soon reduced the services of the serfs to their lord to an average of payments in kind and labour-services. This made it possible for the serf to accumulate movable property and hence facilitated his escape from his lord and gave him the prospect of making his way as a townsman; it also created gradations among the serfs, so that the runaway serfs were already half burghers. It is likewise obvious that the serfs who were versed in a craft had the best chance of acquiring movable property.—

---

a This word is in English in the manuscript.—Ed.
Thus, while the fugitive serfs only wished to have full scope to develop and assert those conditions of existence which were already there, and hence, in the end, only arrived at free labour, the proletarians, if they are to assert themselves as individuals, have to abolish the hitherto prevailing condition of their existence (which has, moreover, been that of all society up to then), namely, labour. Thus they find themselves directly opposed to the form in which, hitherto, the individuals, of which society consists, have given themselves collective expression, that is, the state; in order, therefore, to assert themselves as individuals, they must overthrow the state.

It follows from all we have been saying up till now that the communal relation into which the individuals of a class entered, and which was determined by their common interests as against a third party, was always a community to which these individuals belonged only as average individuals, only insofar as they lived within the conditions of existence of their class—a relation in which they participated not as individuals but as members of a class. With the community of revolutionary proletarians, on the other hand, who take their conditions of existence and those of all members of society under their control, it is just the reverse: it is as individuals that the individuals participate in it. For it is the association of individuals (assuming the advanced stage of modern productive forces, of course) which puts the conditions of the free development and movement of individuals under their control—conditions which were previously left to chance and had acquired an independent existence over against the separate individuals precisely because of their separation as individuals and because their inevitable association, which was determined by the division of labour, had, as a result of their separation, become for them an alien bond. Up till now association (by no means an arbitrary one, such as is expounded for example in the *Contrat social,* but a necessary one) was simply an agreement about those conditions, within which the individuals were free to enjoy the freaks of fortune (compare, e.g., the formation of the North American state and the South American republics). This right to the undisturbed enjoyment,

* [The following is crossed out in the manuscript:] the individuals who freed themselves in any historical epoch merely developed further the conditions of existence which were already present and which they found in existence.

* Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Du Contrat social.*—*Ed.*
within certain conditions, of fortuity and chance has up till now been called personal freedom.—These conditions of existence are, of course, only the productive forces and forms of intercourse at any particular time.

Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all naturally evolved premises as the creations of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of the united individuals. Its organisation is, therefore, essentially economic, the material production of the conditions of this unity; it turns existing conditions into conditions of unity. The reality which communism creates is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals, insofar as reality is nevertheless only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals. Thus the Communists in practice treat the conditions created up to now by production and intercourse as inorganic conditions, without, however, imagining that it was the plan or the destiny of previous generations to give them material, and without believing that these conditions were inorganic for the individuals creating them.


[60] The difference between the individual as a person and whatever is extraneous to him is not a conceptual difference but a historical fact. This distinction has a different significance at different times—e.g., the estate as something extraneous to the individual in the eighteenth century, and so too, more or less, the family. It is not a distinction that we have to make for each age, but one which each age itself makes from among the different elements which it finds in existence, and indeed not according to any idea, but compelled by material collisions in life.

What appears accidental to a later age as opposed to an earlier—and this applies also to the elements handed down by an earlier age—is a form of intercourse which corresponded to a definite
the most part merely on their concentration and on the community. Taking is further determined by the object taken. A banker’s fortune, consisting of paper, cannot be taken at all without the taker’s submitting to the conditions of production and intercourse of the country taken. Similarly, the total industrial capital of a modern industrial country. And finally, everywhere there is very soon an end to taking, and when there is nothing more to take, you have to set about producing. From this necessity of producing, which very soon asserts itself, it follows that the form of community adopted by the settling conquerors must correspond to the stage of development of the productive forces they find in existence; or, if this is not the case from the start, it must change according to the productive forces. This, too, explains the fact, which people profess to have noticed everywhere in the period following the migration of the peoples, namely that the servant was master, and that the conquerors very soon took over language, culture, and manners from the conquered.

The feudal system was by no means brought complete from Germany, but had its origin, as far as the conquerors were concerned, in the martial organisation of the army during the actual conquest, and this evolved only after the conquest into the feudal system proper through the action of the productive forces found in the conquered countries. To what an extent this form was determined by the productive forces is shown by the abortive attempts to realise other forms derived from reminiscences of ancient Rome (Charlemagne, etc.).

To be continued.


In large-scale industry and competition the whole mass of conditions of existence, limitations, biases of individuals, are fused together into the two simplest forms: private property and labour. With money every form of intercourse, and intercourse itself, becomes fortuitous for the individuals. Thus money implies that all intercourse up till now was only intercourse of individuals under particular conditions, not of individuals as individuals. These conditions are reduced to two: accumulated labour or private
property, and actual labour. If both or one of these ceases, then intercourse comes to a standstill. The modern economists themselves, e.g., Sismondi, Cherbuliez, etc., oppose *association des individus* to *association des capitaux.* On the other hand, the individuals themselves are entirely subordinated to the division of labour and hence are brought into the most complete dependence on one another. Private property, insofar as within labour it confronts labour, evolves out of the necessity of accumulation, and is in the beginning still mainly a communal form, but in its further development it approaches more and more the modern form of private property. The division of labour implies from the outset the division of the *conditions* of labour, of tools and materials, and thus the fragmentation of accumulated capital among different owners, and thus, also, the fragmentation between capital and labour, and the different forms of property itself. The more the division of labour develops \([65]\) and accumulation grows, the further fragmentation develops. Labour itself can only exist on the premise of this fragmentation.

---

(Personal energy of the individuals of various nations—Germans and Americans—energy even as a result of miscegenation—hence the cretinism of the Germans; in France, England, etc., foreign peoples transplanted to an already developed soil, in America to an entirely new soil; in Germany the indigenous population quietly stayed where it was.)

---

Thus two facts are here revealed.* First the productive forces appear as a world for themselves, quite independent of and divorced from the individuals, alongside the individuals; the reason for this is that the individuals, whose forces they are, exist split up and in opposition to one another, whilst, on the other hand, these forces are only real forces in the intercourse and association of these individuals. Thus, on the one hand, we have a totality of productive forces, which have, as it were, taken on a material form and are for the individuals themselves no longer the forces of the individuals but of private property, and hence of the individuals only insofar as they are owners of private property. Never, in any earlier period, have the productive forces taken on a form so indifferent to the

---

* [Marginal note by Engels:] Sismondi.

---

\[a\] Antoine Elvisée Cherbuliez, *Riche ou Pauvre.*—*Ed.*
intercourse of individuals as individuals, because their intercourse itself was still a restricted one. On the other hand, standing against these productive forces, we have the majority of the individuals from whom these forces have been wrested away, and who, robbed thus of all real life-content, have become abstract individuals, who are, however, by this very fact put into a position to enter into relation with one another as individuals.

Labour, the only connection which still links them with the productive forces and with their own existence, has lost all semblance of self-activity and only sustains their life by stunting it. While in the earlier periods self-activity and the production of material life were separated since they devolved on different persons, and while, on account of the narrowness of the individuals themselves, the production of material life was considered a subordinate mode of self-activity, they now diverge to such an extent that material life appears as the end, and what produces this material life, labour (which is now the only possible but, as we see, negative form of self-activity), as the means.

[10. THE NECESSITY, PRECONDITIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE ABOLITION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY]

Thus things have now come to such a pass that the individuals must appropriate the existing totality of productive forces, not only to achieve self-activity, but, also, merely to safeguard their very existence.

This appropriation is first determined by the object to be appropriated, the productive forces, which have been developed to a totality and which only exist within a universal intercourse. Even from this aspect alone, therefore, this appropriation must have a universal character corresponding to the productive forces and the intercourse. The appropriation of these forces is itself nothing more than the development of the individual capacities corresponding to the material instruments of production. The appropriation of a totality of instruments of production is, for this very reason, the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves.

This appropriation is further determined by the persons appropriating. Only the proletarians of the present day, who are completely shut off from all self-activity, are in a position to achieve a complete and no longer restricted self-activity, which consists in the appropriation of a totality of productive forces and in the development of a totality of capacities entailed by this. All earlier revolutionary
appropriations were restricted; individuals, whose self-activity was restricted by a crude instrument of production and a limited intercourse, appropriated this crude instrument of production, and hence merely achieved a new state of limitation. Their instrument of production became their property, but they themselves remained subordinate to the division of labour and their own instrument of production. In all appropriations up to now, a mass of individuals remained subservient to a single instrument of production; in the appropriation by the proletarians, a mass of instruments of production must be made subject to each individual, and property to all. Modern universal intercourse cannot be controlled by individuals, unless it is controlled by all.

This appropriation is further determined by the manner in which it must be effected. It can only be effected through a union, which by the character of the proletariat itself can again only be a universal one, and through a revolution, in which, on the one hand, the power of the earlier mode of production and intercourse and social organisation is overthrown, and, on the other hand, there develops the universal character and the energy of the proletariat, which are required to accomplish the appropriation, and the proletariat moreover rids itself of everything that still clings to it from its previous position in society.

Only at this stage does self-activity coincide with material life, which corresponds to the development of individuals into complete individuals and the casting-off of all natural limitations. The transformation of labour into self-activity corresponds to the transformation of the previously limited intercourse into the intercourse of individuals as such. With the appropriation of the total productive forces by the united individuals, private property comes to an end. Whilst previously in history a particular condition always appeared as accidental, now the isolation of individuals and each person's particular way of gaining his livelihood have themselves become accidental.

The individuals, who are no longer subject to the division of labour, have been conceived by the philosophers as an ideal, under the name "man", and the whole process which we have outlined has been regarded by them as the evolutionary process of "man", so that at every historical stage "man" was substituted for the individuals existing hitherto and shown as the motive force of history. The whole process was thus conceived as a process of the self-estrangement [Selbstentfremdungsprozess] of "man",* and this was essentially

* [Marginal note by Marx:] Self-estrangement.
due to the fact that the average individual of the later stage was always foisted on to the earlier stage, and the consciousness of a later age on to the individuals of an earlier. Through this inversion, which from the first disregards the actual conditions, it was possible to transform the whole of history into an evolutionary process of consciousness.

* * *

Civil society embraces the whole material intercourse of individuals within a definite stage of the development of productive forces. It embraces the whole commercial and industrial life of a given stage and, insofar, transcends the state and the nation, though, on the other hand again, it must assert itself in its external relations as nationality and internally must organise itself as state. The term "civil society" emerged in the eighteenth century, when property relations had already extricated themselves from the ancient and medieval community. Civil society as such only develops with the bourgeoisie; the social organisation evolving directly out of production and intercourse, which in all ages forms the basis of the state and of the rest of the idealistic* superstructure, has, however, always been designated by the same name.

[11.] THE RELATION OF STATE AND LAW TO PROPERTY

The first form of property, in the ancient world as in the Middle Ages, is tribal property, determined with the Romans chiefly by war, with the [69] Germans by the rearing of cattle. In the case of the ancient peoples, since several tribes live together in one city, tribal property appears as state property, and the right of the individual to it as mere "possession" which, however, like tribal property as a whole, is confined to landed property only. Real private property began with the ancients, as with modern nations, with movable property. (Slavery and community) (dominium ex jure Quiritum).—In the case of the nations which grew out of the Middle Ages, tribal property evolved through various stages—feudal landed property, corporate movable property, capital invested in manufacture—to modern capital, determined by large-scale industry and universal competition, i.e., pure private property, which has cast

---

* I. e., ideal, ideological.—Ed.
* Ownership in accordance with the law applying to full Roman citizens.—Ed.