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Chapter II -- Marx's Transcendence of, and Return to, the Hegelian Dialectic

"Only that which is an object of freedom may be called an idea."

-- Hegel,

"It is a psychological law that the theoretical mind, having become free in itself, turns into practical energy."

-- Marx, 1839.

"I see, sir, you doubt my word. I about not conspiring in a slave insurrection in another county. But cannot you think that the same idea freedom prompted others as well as myself to this undertaking?"

-- Nat Turner, 1831

The year, 1831, when Hegel died in Berlin, a totally unrelated event -- Nat Turner's slave rebellion -- erupted in Southampton, Virginia, USA. Had these two far-apart worlds -- that of a bourgeois philosopher at the height of his influence, and that of a slave insurrectionary about to be hanged -- been known to a 13 year old boy in Trier, named Karl Marx, they still would have meant nothing. Yet, by the end of that decade, that teenager, grown to young manhood as a Left Hegelian, and completing his doctoral thesis, was projecting a Promethean vision of a new world, a new unity of reason and reality.

As can be seen from his enthusiastic response to the Silesian weavers uprising in 1844, Marx, in "turning outward," "engaging the world" -- he had broken with bourgeois society in 1843 -- was listening to new voices from below: "The wisdom of the German poor stands in inverse ratio to the wisdom of poor Germany ... The Silesian uprising began where the French and English insurrections ended, with the consciousness of the proletariat as a class."⁽¹⁾ Each of the four remaining decades of Marx's mature life would

(1) I'm using the translation which appears in Franz Mehring's biography of Karl Marx, in order to call attention to the fact that as late as 1918, when the biography was published, revolutionaries, and not just reformists, considered the young Marx, as philosopher and as revolutionary, as not the "scientist" he became with the analysis of the "iron" economic laws of capitalism.

be devoted to overthrowing the existing class society as well as its ideology, not alone in Germany but throughout Europe as well as in the United States, where the black dimension became integral to the Marxist theory of history.

From the very beginning, Marx, in his Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic, digs so deeply into its roots both in thought and in reality that it signalled, at one and the same time, a revolution in philosophy and a philosophy of revolution. Which is why, even in the brief so-called Feuerbachian stage, (2) Marx called his theory of history "a thoroughgoing Naturalism or Humanism which distinguishes itself both from Idealism and Materialism and is, at the same time, the truth uniting both ... capable of grasping the act of world history. (p. 313) (3) The key word is history, the concept that never changed, no matter how changed the philosophic "language."

Still, it was others, not Marx, who named his new discovery Historical Materialism, Dialectical Materialism. To Marx, what was crucial was that man was not only object, but subject, not only determined by history, but its creator; the act of world history is the self-development of labor, his class struggles. "All history is the history of class struggles."

(2) Nicholas Leobkowitz is one of the very few, both among non-Marxists and Marxists, who profoundly understands that Feuerbach's influence on Marx is "far less than is generally believed." See the chapter on "Feuerbach" in his Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx.

(3) I happened to have been the first to publish in English the three central essays of the 1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts. Except where otherwise noted, I will be using that translation: Appendix to Marxism and Freedom (1st ed., 1958). Since then many translations have appeared: by Martin Milligan, T.B. Bottomore (Marx: Early Writings), Loyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society). The latter is the most comprehensive edition and includes works from 1835 to 1847.

specifically Marx's historic dimension of November, 1917, Philosophic Manuscripts, 1844, were pried from the vaults of the German Social Democracy. But it is important not to forget that even without their discovery, and by no accident whatever, the first Marxist revisionist -- Eduard Bernstein -- knew what had to be done to transform Marxism into Evolutionary Socialism; as far back as 1895, he had proposed for the "removal of the dialectic scaffolding" from the materialist conception of history which is

It would take the outbreak of World War and the collapse of the Second International before revolutionary Marxists, or at least Lenin, would feel any compulsion to resume the study of the Hegelian dialectic. Before 1914, revolutionary Marxists, no more than the revisionists, grappled with the Hegelian dialectic. Thus, Plekhanov, who was most full of the word, dialectics and indeed invented the term, Dialectic Materialism, (4) himself studied the materialists of the 17th and 18th centuries rather than Hegel's basic works -- The Phenomenology or the Science of Logic. For the first time, in 1914, Lenin recognized what this failure meant. The Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts had not yet been discovered, but Lenin went directly to

(4) Engels coined the expression Historical Materialism. See Plekhanov, The Father of Russian Marxism by Samuel H. Baron for Plekhanov's use of the term, Dialectical Materialism. Marx himself preferred the more precise, though longer phrases such as "the mode of production in material life" or "material base", and "the dialectic method", or, simply, "revolutionary." In the essays under discussion here he calls his philosophy "Humanist," later it was "Communist", still later, "Internationalist," and, at all times, "revolutionary." Nevertheless, as a shorthand term, to express what Marx had meant by "material base", "dialectic method," "history and its process," we will use the term, Historic Materialism to designate that dialectic materialist conception of history which is specifically Marxian.

Hegel's Logic, and not only because it was "the point of origin" of Marxism, but because he needed the Hegelian dialectic as philosophic preparation for the revolutionary transformation of reality.

Whatever the discovery of the Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts, 1844, in the mid-1920's meant, its first full publication in 1932 when, on the one hand, Nazism was already on the horizon, and, on the other hand, the first Stalinist Five Year Plan was "completed", it was not a propitious moment for "abstract" philosophic discussions. Though after the Second World War, they were rediscovered by Western theologians and Existentialists, what brought the Manuscripts to the front center of the historic stage was the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

The fact that another state-power -- Mao's China -- urged the Russian military might to crush the Revolution, and then denounced the new revolutionaries as "revisionists" cannot undo the history of 1844 or 1917 or 1956, but it doesn't stop the counter-revolutionary attempt to rewrite history. The "West's" mindless acquiescence to the Communist labelling of its revolutionary opponents as "revisionists" further befuddles the matter.

Important as it is to set the record straight, what is of greater relevance to our subject is the present attempt to postdate (5) the birth of Historical Materialism from the 1840's to the 1850's -- the late 1850's when Marx became a "scientific economist" and first then "mature." This flies in face, not only of the 1844 Manuscripts, but of the incontrovertible, historic,

(5) Of all those who wish to postdate Marx's materialist conception of history, none displays greater casuistry and measureless pretension than the French Communist-Maoist philosopher, Louis Althusser. In his, For Marx, which more correctly, should have been titled Against Marx, he has recourse to pseudo-psychanalysis to express his veiled venom against Marx's Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic as "the prodigious 'abreaction' indispensable to the liquidation of his (Marx's) 'disordered' consciousness." (For Marx, p. 35)

political, revolutionary milestones, The Communist Manifesto (written in 1847), as well as the 1850 Address to the Communist League which projected the idea of permanent revolution. And, of course, we would have to ignore the historic masterpiece, The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, the very first word of which is "Hegel".

In a word, what is at stake is not only philosophy but reality, not only the dialectic of thought but of history, and not only of yesterday but of today. The lifeblood of the dialectic is the continuity of the movement of history. To see Marx's work in their totality will not only set the record straight, but will illuminate the reality of today. We propose, therefore to trace the development from the birth of historical materialism and of proletarian revolution, 1844-48, through the 1850's when the Grundrisse will reveal Marx, "not merely as economist", but as dialectical analyst of liberation from the pre-capitalist Orient through the industrial workers' battles with the machine, to the authorship of Capital, Marx's greatest theoretical, dialectical, historical, philosophical, as well as economic work, as it was elaborated under the impact, both of the Civil War in the US and the Paris Commune in the 1860's and 1870's, the period at which time he became international activist organizer as well as theorist of proletarian revolution.

Section I -- The 1840's: Birth of Historical Materialism

"Herr Lange * wonders that Engels, I etc. take the dead dog of Hegel seriously when Buchner, Langer, Dr. Duhring, Fechner, etc. are agreed that they -- poor dears, have buried him long ago. Lange is naive enough to say that I 'move with rare freedom' in empirical matter. He hasn't the least idea that this 'free movement in matter' is nothing but a paraphrase for the method of dealing with matter -- that is the dialectic method."

--Marx, June 27, 1870

1844 is the crucial year, the year of Marx's stay in Paris where he plunged in to a profound study of the French Revolution and of English political economy, (6) met with socialist workers as well as with intellectuals of other political tendencies, Proudhon being the chief among these, and published his Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (which he had written the previous Fall after he had broken with bourgeois society and had been expelled from Prussia.) Contrary to the postdaters of Marx's consciousness of proletarian revolution, this was the first essay in which Marx had singled out the proletariat for "heralding the dissolution of the existing order" and being capable of

* - Lange, Friedrich Albert, The Labour Question: Its Significance for the Present and Future.

- (6) A. Leontiev lists the political economists that Marx studied in 1844 -- Smith, Ricardo, Jean Baptiste Say, Sismondi, Buret, Pecqueur, Skarbek, James Mill, McCulloch ... Marx's Capital, p. 10. Labkovicz, op. cit., has estimated that Marx read some 10,000 pages of works on political economy at the time he wrote the 1844 Manuscripts and Holy Family. Even such a "purist" in economic theory as Joseph A. Schumpeter doesn't doubt that "the birth of the economic interpretation of history dates from 1844." ("The Communist Manifesto in Sociology and Economics", Journal of Political Economy, July, 1949). In any case, insofar as Marx is concerned, he considered his 1844 Manuscripts as preparatory for the book, "Critique of Political and National Economy" which he had contracted to do for a German publisher, Leske, in February, 1845.

achieving "full human emancipation." As in all the immense works of that year, Marx's essay turned out to be a critique not only of Hegel, but also of Hegel's critics, including "the materialists." Thus, he had no sooner written that "man makes religion; religion does not make man" that he moved away from atheism, as such, from philosophical materialism (Faurbach), and threw out a challenge to "the party":

The immediate task of philosophy, which is in the service of history, is to unmask human self-alienation in its peculiar form now that it has been unmasked in its sacred form ... It is with good reason that the practical political party in Germany demands the negation of philosophy. (Its error lies in thinking) .. that it can achieve this negation by turning its back on philosophy, looking elsewhere, murmuring a few trite and ill-humoured phrases ... you cannot abolish philosophy without realizing it. (7)

Marx decided he himself will meet the challenge and began working out what he was to call "my positive exposition" -- those momentous 1844 Manuscripts that were destined for a near-century's adventure (or oblivion, if you wish) (8) before being discovered and published.

(7) Battimore, p. 44

(8) Of all the academicians in America who tried to consign the young Marx to oblivion, none has achieved a mere instant vulgar materialism than Professor Donald Clark Hodges who writes: "In the manuscripts of 1844, alienation involves a specific economic transaction between an alienor and alienee." It is a sad commentary on the state of scholarship in Marx studies in the US that this instant vulgar materialism went unchallenged in a philonopic journal though Professor Hodges' pseudo-leftism about how Marx "outgrew" his "alleged (!) humanism" descended into "left" ideological McCarthyism which created an amalgam between the "revival of Marx studies in the US both with "corresponding economic and political development in the Soviet Union" and creating, out of "a salvage operation .. from Marx's own wastebaskets", a humanistic image .. congenial to the academic community." (See "The Young Marx -- A Reappraisal" by Donald Clark Hodges in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol. XXVII, December 1966, pp. 216-229) for the actual development of Marx studies see my "Marx's Humanism, Today", especially footnote 10, in the international symposium on Socialist Humanism, edited by Erich Fromm. For the official Maoist version of Marx's Humanism, read The Fighting Task Confronting Workers in Philosophy and the Social Sciences, 1963. Faking: "The modern revisionists and some bourgeois scholars try to describe Marxism as humanism and call Marx a humanism .. in the early stages of development of their thought, Marx and Engels were indeed influenced by humanist ideas .. But when they .. discovered the class struggle is the motive force of social development, they immediately got rid of this influence." That this attitude played no small part both in the Sino-Soviet conflict and in the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," will be further developed in Part III, below.

It is not clear whether even Engels had seen these Manuscripts. (9)

But what is beyond the peradventure of any doubt is that, whatever it was that Marx had been working on that fateful summer of 1844, that, when Engels had "again met Marx in Brussels in Spring, 1845, Marx had already worked out, the materialist conception, and put before me in terms almost as clear as those in which I have stated here." (10)

(9) What is clear is that Engels became impatient with Marx for not completing what they were then calling "Critique of Political and National Economy," and on January 20, 1845, wrote Marx "Try to finish your book on political economy even if in many respects it does not satisfy you." Engels' preoccupation was practical; they were then in contact with working class groups and Engels wanted Marx's views presented to them. Marx, on the other hand, put the whole idea of the book away because, as he wrote to his publisher on August 1, 1846: "...it seemed to me extremely important to lay the premise for my positive exposition of the subject by a polemical work." The polemical work Marx referred to was The German Ideology. It is this book which Marx consigned to the "knowing criticism of the press." (Preface to Critique of Political Economy, 1859)

(10) 1888 Preface to the English edition of the Communist Manifesto by Engels.

The three central essays of the 1844 Manuscript -- Alienated Labor, Private Property and Communism, Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic -- marked the birth of a philosophy of human activity, an integrality of philosophy and economics destined to be known as Marxism. The essays on economics -- Alienated Labor, Private Property and Communism -- make clear that it was not only Hegel that Marx was "standing right side up", or, more correctly, transcending. It was also classical political economy, as well as "quinté vulgare and unthinking communism" which is "merely the logical expression of private property", and which "completely negates the personality of man." Neither classical political economy nor vulgar communism understood the most fundamental contradiction of capitalism -- alienated labor. Neither saw that "In the alienation of the object of labor is only crystallized the alienation, the estrangement in the very activity of labor."

Deeply rooted as Marx's concept of Alienated Labor is in Hegel's theory of alienation, Marx's analysis is no simple inversion (such less a Feuerbachian inversion) of dealing with labor when Hegel was dealing only with Consciousness. Marx's hammering away also at classical political economy which did see labor as the source of value. To neither, however, was labor the Subject: "Political economy proceeds from labor as the real soul of production and, nevertheless, attributes nothing to labor, everything to private property ... When man speaks of private property, he believes he has only to deal with a fact outside man. When man speaks of labor, he has to deal directly with man. This new posing of the question already includes the resolution." Nor did Marx exclude the scientists from criticism. He called them "abstract materialists" who failed to perceive that "To have one basis for life and another for science is a priori a lie" (p. 300) as if he actually saw the state capitalists of our day who call themselves

Communists, be lashed out at the latter: "We should especially avoid establishing society as an abstraction opposed to the individual. The individual is the social entity." (p. 295) Vulgar communism's "sham universality" fails to comprehend that "the infinite degradation in which man exists for himself is expressed in the relationship to women."

Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that any kind of object is pure only when we have it, i.e., when it exists for us as capital, or when we possess it directly -- eat it, drink it, wear it, live in it, etc. -- in short use it ... in place of all the physical and spiritual senses, there is the sense of possession which is the simple alienation of all these senses ... Seeing, hearing, smell, taste, feeling, thought, perception, experience, wishing, activity, loving ... (p. 297)

The transcendence of private property is a necessity and in this sense "Communism is the necessary form and the energizing principle of the immediate future. But communism, as such, is not the goal of human development, the form of human society." (p. 303)

The integrality of philosophy and economics manifests itself most sharply in the fact that Marx's counterposition of his Humanist philosophy to that of Communism comes, not in the "economic essays, but in his Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic. This occurs, moreover, at the very point when, in opposition to Feuerbach's criticism of "the negation of the negation" as if it were mere mystification, an excuse for the philosopher to return to religion: Marx lays great emphasis on "the positive moments of the Hegelian Dialectic -- transcendence as objective movement", absolute negativity as the "moving and creating principle." This confrontation with absolute negativity is the moment when Marx writes that whereas "communism is humanism mediated by the transcendence of private property. Only by the transcendence of this mediation, which is nevertheless a necessary presupposition, does there arise positive Humanism, beginning from itself." (pp. 319-320).

To this day this is precisely what established Communism fears as its main enemy -- absolute negativity at work against capitalism in general, and state-capitalism calling itself Communism in particular. The overcoming of this "transcendence", called absolute negativity by Hegel, is what Marx considered the only way to create a truly human world, "positive Humanism, beginning from itself." None can match this vision. It is this integrality of second negativity with Marx's Humanism which would follow communism that was so worrisome a reality over 100 years after its conception that Stalin, from the start of his triumph over all other tendencies, felt the need to "eliminate" the negation of the negation. He simply didn't bother to list it among the "principles of the dialectic." (11)

Following the end of World War II, Marx's Humanist Essays still kept making history. (12) To Khrushchev they were even more alive than to Stalin as East Europe spelled "negation of the negation" out as revolution against Communism while the Communists themselves made the references to the young Marx's writings concrete. Once again the battle to separate "the young Marx" tainted by "Hegelianism" from the "mature economist."

Contradiction kept haunting Mao, too, despite all his attempts from the Yenan caves to Peking's Great Leap Forward fist to "appropriate" it for his

(11) Stalin's essay on Dialectical Materialism has gone through many editions. It was first included in his History of the Russian Communist Party (B)

(12) The three cornered debate between Communists, Existentialists, and Catholic Humanists could not, naturally, have the impact of the actual revolution in Eastern Europe, which compelled the Russian attacks on "Revisionism." The first theoretical attack on Marx's Humanist essays was by K.A. Karpushin in "Question of Philosophy", No. 3, 1955 (quarterly Russian journal)

own purposes. (13)

It was as if second nature was itself carrying on a relentless, never-ending battle. No wonder that "scientific materialism" labelled the young Marx "pre-Marxist", and refused to accept 1844 as the date of the birth of Historical Materialism. Communism's refusal may, on first sight, have appeared ironic since nowhere was Marx sharper in his attacks on Hegel than in these essays, and the fact of the birth of his materialist conception of history in 1844 was attested to by Marx himself: "The first work undertaken for the solution of the question that troubled me was a critical revision of Hegel's Philosophy of Law ... the general conclusion at which I arrived, and once reached, continued to serve as the leading thread to my studies may be briefly summed up as follows: ... The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual process of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness." (14)

As we saw previously, Marx's life-long collaborator, Frederick Engels, in the 1888 Preface to The Communist Manifesto, wrote that "...when I again met Marx in Brussels, in the spring of 1845, he had it already worked out ..."

What was at stake, in the controversy about the "young" and "mature" Marx was the philosophy of liberation that would brook no accommodation to an

(13) See Section on "Cultural Revolution" in Part III, Economic Reality and Dialectics of Liberation.

(14) Critique of Political Economy, p. 11

antagonistic reality just because it now bore a state-property form rather than the form of private property. One of the scholars who has done especially original work in demonstrating the continuity, throughout Marx's works, has done so through tracing through the basic philosophic categories of Alienation and Reification. (15) But, to this writer, the proof that Marx never jettisoned his Humanist vision when he allegedly became, "instead" a "scientific economist" is in the very process of becoming, of originating Historical Materialism in the 1844 Manuscripts and not only in philosophic categories, not even when they are as basic as Alienation and Reification. There is no philosophic category in Marx that is not at the same time an economic one, and there is no economic category that is not at the same time a philosophic one. We will show how true this is in both the Grundrisse and Capital. Here we wish to continue with the birth of Historical Materialism in the Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and show how "economic" this "strictly" philosophic essay is.

Marx states the materialistically obvious that sounds as if it were no more than a restatement of Feuerbach's narrow, philosophical materialism:

Hegel regards human essence, Man, as equal to self-consciousness. All alienations of human essence is, therefore, no more than alienation of self-consciousness, -- but elicits the contradiction within: 'the actual alienation, which appears as real, is ... nothing but the appearance of the alienation of actual human essence ...' (p. 311)

Despite the fact that Marx credited Feuerbach with "genuine discoveries" he didn't "fail to note the philosophic deficiency:

Feuerbach regards the negation of the negation only as the contradiction of philosophy with itself, as philosophy which affirms Theology (Transcendentalism) after it had denied it ... But that it is necessary to remember that since Hegel himself comprehends that immanent in the concept of 'the negation of the negation' is 'the only truly positive ... an act of self-manifestation of all being, to that end he has discovered, though only as an abstract, logical and speculative expression, the movement of history. (p.305)

(15) See Irving Fetscher, "The Young and the Old Marx" in the International Symposium, Marx and the Western World, edited by Nicholas Lobkovicz.

It is this movement of history that Marx saw in the dialectic. That is why he insisted that the dialectic, Hegel had discovered, was "the source of all dialectic." (16)

Having early separated himself from Feuerbach to point out the positive in Hegel (17), Marx at once hit out against Hegel as well, not merely as a Feuerbachian, but as the most original and specifically historical materialist that the young Marx was. First of all, states the Marx of 1844, Hegel is wrong because he failed to see the inhuman manner of "materialization" .. Etc

"regarded as the essence of alienation, which is posed and to be transcended, is not the fact that human essence materializes itself as inhuman manner in opposition to itself, but the fact that it materializes itself from and in opposition to, abstract thinking." (p. 309)

Once Marx criticized Hegel at his strongest point -- the theory of alienation -- Marx pointed to the great merit of Hegelian philosophy -- "its thoroughly negative and critical character ..." This does not save Hegelian philosophy from its fatal flaw inherent in a philosophy which appropriates objects only as thought and movements of thought, for

"hidden in embryo (is) the latent potentiality and secret of uncritical positivism and equally uncritical idealism ... philosophic disintegration and resurrection of extant Empiricism." (p. 311)

(16) Capital, Vol. I, p. 654

(17) "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism (that of Feuerbach included) is that the thing, reality sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object or of contemplation, but not as sensuous human activity, practice, not subjectively. Hence, in contradistinction to materialism, the active side was developed abstractly by idealism."

Thus continued Marx, despite the phenomenal achievement -- "the dialectic of negativity as the moving and creating principle" -- which enabled Hegel to grasp "the essence of labor and conceived objective man, true, actual man

as the result of his own labor" (p. 309); despite "the positive moment" -- "transcendence as objective movement" --, the limitations of abstract thought, the restriction of knowing only mental labor, the fact that "knowing is its sole act" -- all these lead to reducing transcendence to mere appearance.

"Thus, after transcending, for example, religion, after the recognition of religion as a product of self-alienation, he still finds himself confined in religion as religion etc. Man who has recognized that in law, politics, etc. he is leading an alienated life, pursues in this alienated life, as such, his true human life." (p. 317)

When now hammers away at "the life of his principles."

"Thus reason is at home in unreason as unreason."

In effect, what Marx is now saying is that the total dichotomy between the philosophic world where alienations were "transcended" and the actual world where they are as big as life, is proof enough that the philosophic world is bereft of practice, that existence didn't enter the world of essence. In the end, perhaps, Hegel's "Absolute", far from achieving a unity of thought and reality, only led Hegel to accommodation to reality. And the Other of that world is beautiful Reason, abstract rationalism is total irrationality of the true, existing world.

The manuscript breaks off before Marx has worked out the indication that "We will see later why Hegel separates thinking from the subject." (p. 323) But, in the process of his struggle with Hegel's concepts on Hegel's ground, he has pointed to how different the problems would be when "actual corporeal Man, standing on firm and well rounded earth, inhaling and exhaling all natural forces" becomes "subject" and the philosophy, Humanism, that has Man at its center, "capable of grasping the act of world history" finally moves to positive Humanism, beginning from itself.

The very idea of taking up the birth of "positive Humanism" as the result of the second negation after communism, in a defense of Hegel against Feuerbach who, at the beginning of the essay was credited with nothing short of having "transcended the old philosophy" is truly phenomenal. Here is Marx who had already broken with the Young Hegelians, who was so sharply antagonistic to Hegel's abstractions which cover up loopholes in his theory of alienation and transcendence for accommodation to the irrational world that Marx calls the key concept of Otherness, of absorbing objectivity as nothing short of the "lie of his principle"; here Marx finally stood Hegel "right side up" after having long before parted ways with him in the analysis of the actual world -- and yet it is at this fork in the road of philosophy "as such" that he turns to praise Hegel for his "insight" expressed within alienation, ... into the actual appropriation of his objective essence through its transcendence in its alienated existence." (p. 319) after which follows his settling of accounts with communism that he praises for transcending private property, but stresses that it is only after "transcendence of this mediation" that we will have a truly human society.

This essay is a work of such "seriousness, suffering, patience and labor of the negative" that, though the reader too "suffers" (since he is presented, not with ready-made conclusions, but with the act of creativity itself), he finds that he has been made witness to the origination of the Marxian dialectic, Historic materialism.

We have spent so much time on the 1844 Manuscripts, especially the Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic, because not only the ideas leading up to the Communist Manifesto and the actual 1844 Revolutions which will shake Europe to its foundations, but also all the ideas that he will spend a full quarter of a century developing, are in those Humanist essays in their natural state. Naturally, no single year is "responsible" for an epoch-making a

discovery as the materialist conception of history. Naturally no one can dispute the fact that Marx's theory of history, dialectics of liberation, not to mention the economic laws of capitalist development, its "law of motion" had all sprung full-blown from the head of Marx, be it in 1844, or even 1867, when Marx finally published Capital, as Marx testified in the French edition. (18)

In a word, we are not saying that Marx said all he wanted to say in 1844, or, for that matter, in the other works of the 1840's, including the Communist Manifesto. The very opposite is the case. All the ideas here, and many, many new ones will undergo phenomenal development. And this is true also of the transcendence of, as well as return to, the Hegelian dialectic, which, in fact, cannot be seen in its full development, except in "economics", in Marx's greatest theoretic work, Capital.

What we are stressing here is that the vision in the general principles of Historical Materialism -- the material, objective conditions of human existence, the self-development of labor as against any subjective development of mind; the historic processes as against any "eternal truths"; dialectical development through contradictions as against any mechanical, or abstract, static or merely empiric continuity of that which is -- that all these are as inseparable from the mature Marx as from the young. Indeed, nowhere is Marx more "Hegelian" than in the strictly economic Notebooks Marx wrote in 1857-8 after a full decade of concentration on economics and it is to the celebrated Grundrisse we now turn.

(18) In his note to the French reader, on April 28, 1875 (appended to the French edition of Capital, Marx wrote: "Having once undertaken this work of revision; I was led ... to give additional historical or statistical material, to add critical estimates, etc. ... it possesses a scientific value independent of the original and should be consulted even by readers familiar with the German language."

Section 2 - The Grundriss of the 1860's, a Century later

"The surplus labor of the masses has ceased to be the condition for the development of social wealth just as the idleness of the few has ceased to be the condition for the development of the universal capacities of the human mind. With this, the mode of production based on exchange value collapses and the immediate material process of production is stripped of its economic and its antagonistic form. ... The measure of wealth will then no longer be labor time, but leisure time." - Karl Marx

Simultaneous with announcing his economic discovery -- the theory of surplus value -- which was to make him world famous to our day, Marx complained about "the scurvy and erratic" shapelessness of the 1857-1858 Notebooks which were to become known, and celebrated a 100 years later as the Grundriss. "I have thrown over the whole doctrine of profit as it existed up to now", Marx wrote Engels on January 14, 1858. "In the method of treatment the fact that by mere accident I have again glanced through Hegel's Logic has been of great service to me."

Accidental or otherwise, it happened during the economic crisis of 1857 which Marx felt would have revolutionary consequences and therefore made it urgent for him to complete the economic studies he had amassed that numbered some 700 pages. As it turned out, however, Marx used but one chapter -- the one on Money -- which he prefaced with a totally new chapter, Commodities, that had not been part of his studies until he had written "Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy" which was published in 1859. The rest of the massive Notebooks were not to see the light of day until 1939-1941. The outbreak of World War II was hardly conducive to abstract economic discussions.

Under the impact of the Chinese Revolution in 1949, only one section -- Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations -- that was published in East

Berlin in 1952. (19) The following year, the Grundrisse in its entirety finally appeared, only in German, and again the discussion centered on pre-capitalist societies. It was to take nearly another decade before, under the impetus of Autontion, serious discussions finally developed also on Machinery.

Why the delay of a half-century since Engels' death before the heirs published so pivotal a work by Marx? Why the lapse of still another quarter of a century before serious discussions began on "other" (Oriental) than Capitalist societies? And nearly another decade before discussion revolved also around the sections on Machinery?

Before the publication of the Grundrisse, it was popularly believed (for so established Marxism had taught) that as soon as Marx "discovered" the class struggle and formulated the theory of historical materialism, Marx had dispensed with the Hegelian dialectic. After publication of the Grundrisse, which gave the lie to this claim, the tune, but not the attitude, was changed. A British Marxist historian attributed the neglect of the Grundrisse to the difficulties that modern students have with "Hegelianisms." (20)

It is certainly true that nowhere, not even in the "strictly" philosophic essays of the young Marx in Marx were "Hegelian" than in these "strictly" economic Notebooks which turn out to be sweeping historic sketches of mankind's, not just capitalism's, development. And it is this, just this,

(19) This continued to be the only section published in English with an introduction by Eric J. Hobsbawm. (London, New York, 1959)

(20) Ibid., p. 11. Hobsbawm here praises Marx's "brilliant analysis", yet holds on tightly to the view that Marx's unbroken idealist logic in historical development is not history "in the strict sense."

which backs professional historians as the empirics bothered the professional economists. Just as the latter couldn't grasp that economics was running a losing race with history, so the historians fail to see, as the young Marx put it early:

"History does nothing; it possesses no colossal riches, it 'fights no fight'. It is rather man -- real, living man -- who sets, possesses and fights everything. It is by no means 'History' which uses man as a means to carry out its ends as if it were a person apart; rather History is nothing but the activity of man in pursuit of his ends." (21)

The nature Marx, seeing that way to all history, destroys the fetishism of historians, and traces, instead, the movement of history, thereby disclosing man as part of "the absolute movement of becoming", as shapers of history. The failure to come to grips with the Grundrisse has little to do with "Hegelianism" and everything to do with the Marxism of Marx "refusing" to become either a dogmatism or a discipline, be it economic or historic, philosophic or sociological.

Unfortunately, even independent Marxist scholars who are not accused of "Hegelianism", have greeted the Grundrisse as "a most decisive link", the absence of which had hindered the perception of Marxism in its integral unity of philosophy and economy, theory and practice, have themselves failed to let Marx speak for himself unless using isolated quotations to bolster their analysis of today's reality can be considered presenting the Marx of the Grundrisse. (22)

(21) Marx, The Holy Family. (p.

(22) Ironically enough, both the Communists who whitewash their state capitalist regimes as "Communism" and critics of Communism who hold that technologically advanced countries produce one dimensional man have grabbed on to the section, Machinery, in the Grundrisse (see especially Professor David Lipinski's The Heritage of Marx: Social Effects of Automation in Polish Facts and Figures; and Herbert Marcuse's One Dimensional Man.)

Fortunately, because today's reality consists of such opposites as, on the one hand, the birth of a Third World (the technologically under-developed countries that freed themselves from the stranglehold of Western imperialism), and, on the other hand, the new Schwarzth (23) Automation, that dominates the technologically advanced lands, it compelled a confrontation with the pivotal sections of Grundrisse -- "Regressive Epochs of Economic Social Formation", and "Machinery" -- whether or not that epochal work of Marx's was available in all languages (24).

Significantly enough, the "shapelessness" (25) of the Grundrisse notwithstanding, it is during the discussion of the relationship of "free" labor as alienated to capital as not a "thing" (26), but an exploitative production relation that Marx posed the question that led to the excursion into

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(24) An Italian translation appeared in 1936. The French first appeared in 1955. To this day no full translation is available in English. We're publishing, as Appendix, a section on Machinery.

(25) This rough draft was not intended for publication. It was written as a series of manuscripts for himself. It consists of three uneven chapters: The Introduction, consisting of 43 pages, breaks off because he decided it should be written last, not first. The Chapter on Money consists of 103 pages which the one entitled "On Capital" goes on for 312 pages. We must bear in mind, however, that even when a decade later, it assumed final shape as Capital, that, too, was unfinished. Actually, the rough draft of the Grundrisse corresponds more closely to the ground he conceived his studies to cover: Capital, Landed Property, Wage Labor, State, Foreign Trade, the World Market. The historic sweep, as he called in the unfinished Introduction, was to extend to the relationship of Great art to "Modern Times" as well as to the question of war. The first three books became Capital plus Theories of Surplus Value. The rest were never worked out as separate studies. In a word, there is more to the heritage of Marx than the unpublished philosophic essays and Grundrisse, more than the published Manifesto, Capital, The Civil War in France and other historic works, and the voluminous Correspondence Marx is how Marx phrased it: "...The economists fix on the abstraction of capital as raw material and instrument of labor", wrote Marx, "in order to present capital as a necessary element of production. Even the socialists say we need capital, but not the capitalists. The capital appears as pure Sache (thing) not as production relation..." (p. 205)

(26)

pre-capitalist societies. In asking the question of the wage worker become free, Marx writes:

"His means, above all, that the worker must be separated from the land, which functions as his natural laboratory. This means the dissolution both of free petty land ownership and of the communal landed property, based on the Oriental commune." (p. 48)

This is the opening paragraph of the new most famous section of the work dealing with pre-capitalist societies which had been made so famous by the birth of a new Third World in general and of Communist China in particular. This is the section where the present becomes a point of intersection in history between future and past for the future that is embedded in the past that became present and which is embedded in the past to become a future is unifying vision, a tremendous world historic view of a new society based on expanding human forces in a century when the whole cultivated world thought only of expanding material forces. Marx, on the other hand, spoke of man yearning not "to remain something formed by the past but in the absolute movement of becoming."

No single idea of Marx has been more misrepresented than that which concerns the "Asiatic mode of production". (27)

(27) Professor Wittfogel has created a veritable "universal" called Oriental Despotism. Not satisfied with the originality of this creation, he tried attributing it to some other than Karl Marx "before" he supposedly "betrayed" these early insights. On the other hand, George Lichtheim who has made a substantial contribution in tracing Marx's development on the question, and showed how tremendous a contribution that was to theory, nevertheless is himself so overwhelmed by the uniqueness of the Germanic, i.e. European contribution to civilization, that he tries to dismiss some of Marx's writings in the daily press. Thus, while he treats the section in the Grundriss as "brilliant", he dismisses many of the articles in the New York Daily Tribune in praise of the "Chinese Revolution" as if this was done only for journalistic effect. He fails to explain why, then, did Marx bring reference to the T'iping rebellion into his greatest theoretical work, Capital; moreover, it was done as a footnote to a Chapter that had nothing whatever to do with China but a great deal with the fetishism of commodities. Now finally available in book form. Unfortunately, since the American edition entitled The American Journalist of Marx and Engels (New American Library, N.Y. 1965) the title falls to bits.

(cont.) footnote (27) The title fails to give the world sweep of Marx's journalism. They were written for an American journal but led little to do with the American scene.

Marx also opposed "advanced" capitalist production. Marx did not consider that there was nothing to the Oriental mode of production, except "feudal-wardens". As against the year in which he wrote the Communist Manifesto (1847), when he knew little of the Orient and extolled the bourgeois revolutions for breaking down the "Chinese walls of barbarism", Marx, in the 1850's, wrote with disdain about Western society, and the opium wars they forced upon China. He extolled also the great T'aiiping Rebellion. Here's how Marx analyzed the revolt (in the New York Daily Tribune ((June 14, 1853)):

"The chronic rebellions subsisting in China for about ten years past, and now gathered together in one formidable revolution, these order-mongering powers (England, France and America) which would attempt to support the warring Manchu dynasty, forget that the hatred against foreigners had become a political system only since the conquest of the country by the rule of the Manchu Tartars?"

The immobility of man in Ancient China, the state bureaucracy which resisted all change in enslaving its population was naturally something that Marx castigated mercilessly, but this did not mean that he was "for" the unique Germanic feudal regime which allowed for further development. What interests him in all these stages of development was when the contradiction between the productive forces and production relations reached the explosive point, "epochs of social revolution." The persistence of the Oriental mode of production, Marx explained in this way: "The Asiatic form necessarily survives longest and most stubbornly. This is due to the fundamental principle on which it is based, that is, that the individual does not become independent of the community; that the circle of production is self-sustaining, unity of agriculture and draft manufacture, etc. If the individual changes his relations to the community, he modifies and undermines, both the community and its economic premises; conversely, the modification of this economic premises -- produced by its own dialectic pauperisation, etc."

At the same time, while tracing the transition of the individual in the higher Germanic type of community, who comes in conflict with the community, escapes to the towns and in the conflict between town and country, escapes to the towns and in the conflict between town and country "the age of dissolution" as a MARKET was stripped of all qualities except work. The separation of the tiller from the land and herding him into the factory was no golden age of history and labor tried to resist it in every possible way:

"History records the fact that it first tried beggary, wage-bonds and crime, but was barred off this road on the narrow path which led to the labor market by means of gallows, pillory and whip. (Hence the REVENUES of Henry VII, VIII, etc., also appear as conditions for the existence of capital.)" (p. 111)

It is clear that the "new society" when it is the birth of capitalism, is no golden age for labor. The very opposite, of course, is true. There has never been any doubt about that in any of Marx's writings. For those who choose to doubt that the criticism of the oriental mode of production was not personal, and that this change of attitude to the Asiatic mode of production between the mid-1840s and mid-1850s, was not a "betrayal" but a real forward movement both in his knowledge and in his theories, should study the very last writings we have from his pen on the subject.

The urgent question of today as to the possibility of going from an "archaic mode of production" to socialism without going through capitalism and yet undergoing industrialization was precisely the questions that both the Narodniks and the Marxists (in Marx's day) raised regarding the future of Russia. Marx, who had considered the Slavic commune as but a sub-variety of the Asiatic mode of production, answered in a most prophetic manner: "If the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian commune ownership of land may serve as the starting point for a communist development." We will return to this subject in Part III.

Marx had already, in the Grundrisse, stressed that "Asian History is a kind of undifferentiated unity of town and country which, by combining agriculture and manufacture and thus being a 'self-sustaining unity' had little need for trade or individual development. Over and over again, he stressed that by combining agriculture and industry and thus being self-contained, these 'self-governing villages,' inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the foundation of Oriental despotism." It isn't, as we see, only Oriental despotism but the primitiveness of the commune which allowed for the rise of the "highest unity", the "Father, the despot." It is this which made it a closed society so that the community "as a state," the state as "supreme landlord," "the centralization of power through irrigation works run by the state, plus on the one hand, absence of private property, and on the other hand, the state bureaucracy having command over the surplus labor of the commune and thus perpetuating its rule.

Marx's point is that "man is only individualized through the process of history. He originally appears as a generic being, a tribal being, a herd animal ..." (p. 96)

All these profound observations were written by Marx and it is mere asides to Marx's main preoccupation -- the analysis of capitalist development. Though they could form the basis for a theory of underdeveloped countries, the Communists are merely twisting them to suit a political line arrived at by quite other considerations than either Marxist theory or world revolution. As for the professional anti-Communists, to the extent that any scholar was interested at all, it was only to elaborate a theory on Oriental Despotism the absolute opposite of Marx's, and then to accuse Marx of having "betrayed" his original insights.

As we see, the Economic Notebooks of 1857-58 during the period

Just as "history and its process" led Marx to decide to work a whole new section on the struggle for the shortening of the work day, so it led to a new concept of technology.

"It would be possible to write quite a history of the inventions made since 1830 for the sole purpose of supplying capital with weapons against the revolts of the working class." (29)

For, once, capitalism has moved from the need to extend the hours of the working day to extract unpaid hours of labor, to being able to extract the surplus within the same working day -- and it is the development of machinery that has achieved this feat. Marx followed hawk-like every strife of workers. Concrete, concrete, concrete -- this sums up the scrupulousness with which Marx followed the strife of the worker, making it inseparable from the concentration and centralization of capital as well as from the machine's development. "technology also discovered the few fundamental forms of motion... necessarily taken by every productive systematic action of the human body." (30) The automaton could now become an organized system of machines to which every motion is communicated by the transmitting mechanism from a central automaton,"(31) thereby becoming "objective" while "the laborer becomes a mere appendage to an already existing material condition of production." (32) Yes, what is to be watched is not so much the machine as the resistance of the worker to its "uniform motion" and "barrack discipline." (33)

We are in a very different world than the one where machines were described in the Grundrisse. (34) The Grundrisse is proof of the limitation but also the indispensability of the dialectic. The limitation is not caused by deficiencies in the dialectic "as method," much less the need to replace it with "structuralism," genetic or otherwise. Rather the limitation resides in the fact that the dialectic is not an "applied" science. It has

(29) Capital Vol. I. p. 436

(31) Ibid, p. 377

(33) Ibid, p. 423

(30) Ibid, p. 492

(32) Ibid, p. 382

(34) Ibid. p. 698n

to be recreated now as it spontaneously emerges from the developing "Subject". Until the "Subject", i.e., the proletariat in the 1860's acted (the new class struggles in Europe and the Civil War in the United States) so against the quiescent 1850's, the dialectical analysis would, of necessity, remain intellectualist, isolated from the actual movement of history, --the masses. Precisely for this reason, Marx saw everything in a quite different light in the 1860's, and decided to start Capital ab novo.

Throughout the ten sections of that single chapter, "Machinery and Modern Industry", Marx never lets go for a single instance the internal dialectic, the essential relation of subject to object, leading inexorably to the absolute, irreconcilable contradiction so that when he strikes out against the economists who contend that there can be no antagonisms since they cannot arise from the machinery "as such", we are left breathless that there would be any other view of machines than as capital, oppressive, dominating, exploitative, full of contradictions, perverse. But, far from thinking of Hegel, we think of the new world vision. Marx himself, however, a little later brings us back to Hegel when he laughs at John Stuart Mill for attempting "to annex" such irreconcilables as David Richards theory of profit based on labor as source of wealth to Nassau Senior's "remuneration of abstinence." "He is as much at home in absurd contradictions as he feels at sea in the Hegelian contradiction, the source of all dialectic. (35)

Marx would never have devoted more than a quarter of a century to what he called the "dismal science" of political economy, unless, in its Marxistically reconstructed form, it helped discern the law of motion of the capitalistic social formation. The reconstructed science meant, however, that not only did his original discoveries make the difference, but that these original economic categories were so philosophically rooted that it created a new unity

out of economics, philosophy, revolution. Because the historic rationality Marx discovered as immanent in the hopes of men meant, in turn, that it is living men who work out the meaning of philosophy by making the theory of liberation and the struggle to be free a unity. So much is free man the true subject of history that Marx called the period in which he lived, and the one in which we still live, the prehistory of mankind for man's true history does not begin until he is free and gets to develop in full, which is precisely what reunites us with the Grundriess, a magnificently unifying vision of what the future will be like after transcendence of the surplus value-oriented machine production.

"... when the narrow bourgeois form has been peeled away, what is wealth; ...if not the absolute elaboration of his creative dispositions, without any preconditions other than antecedent historical evolution of all human powers as such, unmeasured by any previously established yardstick - an end in itself? ... Where he does not seek to remain something formed by the past, but in in the absolute movement of becoming?" ... (p. 84-85)

It is impossible to read the Grundriess, without awareness that Marx is at work, cutting out from virgin rock, original theories not only as regards economics, but of mankind's development. It is as if we were hearing Marx think out loud and it is impossible not to be aware of the thoroughgoing dialectical nature of each of the parts of the Grundriess as it is the sum and substance of the whole. Without it, Marx's "economics" would have been shorn of its lifeblood: a philosophy not only of history but of revolution.

The Hegelian dialectic was the crucible wherein materialism was transformed into a world historic philosophy of freedom even as the proletariat as "Subject" of man's self-emancipation that put an end to all class societies transformed the dialectic development of the pre-history of man into the elicitation of all man's potentialities in an "absolute movement of becoming".

Once again as we see, instead of the mature Marx running away from Hegel's Absolute, he sees in the "absolute movement of becoming" the ever-present historic spirit, this future immanent in today's reality. Because, to Marx, "Materialism" or, to be more precisely Marxist in language, the conditions of material production, meant the production and reproduction of actual, social human existence, history was never "a lifeless collection of facts" as it was for those Marx called "abstract empiricists". It was masses in action, transforming reality, shaping history anew, and under the impact of these masses, including the black diaspora in the Civil War in the US, and the Parisian masses who "sterned the heavens" that Marx finally completed his economic studies as Capital, 1867-1875.