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Karl Marx's Study of Science and Technology

Pradip Baksi

Introduction

Images of famous persons formed over time become stable in public opinion. One such image identifies Engels with the study of the natural sciences and Marx with the humanities. Engels's contributions to the social sciences and philosophy are acknowledged. And lately, Marx's contributions to mathematics are also receiving attention (Mobasher 1996). But that is about all. Is there really a factual basis for such images?

On Marx's birthday, 5 May 1885, Engels wrote:

There was another intermission [in Marx's work on political economy] after 1870, due mainly to Marx's ill health. As usual, Marx employed this time for studies; agronomics, rural relations in America and, especially, Russia, the money-market and banking, and finally natural sciences such as geology and physiology, and above all independent mathematical works form the content of the numerous excerpt notebooks of this period. By the beginning of 1877 he had recovered sufficiently to resume his main work. (Engels 1997, 7)

How numerous are these notebooks? What do they contain? At different stages of the history of publication of the works of

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Marx and Engels, several persons have attempted to list the contents of their unpublished notes and manuscripts (Ryazanov 1923; Krinitskii 1948; Reiprich 1969, 1983; Senekina 1970; Kedrov and Ogurtsov 1978; and Baksi 1988–89).

The first edition of the collected works of Marx and Engels was published in twenty-nine volumes during the period 1928–47. The first attempt to publish their complete collected works began before World War II. Only fourteen of these volumes could be published. During the 1950s and 1960s, a second edition was brought out in forty-three volumes (forty-seven books). By 1981 the number of volumes was pushed up to fifty in a Russian edition. By mid-1997, forty-six volumes of the English edition had been published. All the other hitherto unpublished or separately published manuscripts (Marx 1964; Krader 1974, 1975; and Marx and Engels 1979) will be included in the projected hundred-volume academic edition begun in 1972 of the complete works of Marx and Engels in the original languages (*Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe*, Berlin: Dietz. With the dissolution of the GDR and USSR, this project, commonly referred to as the *MEGA*, is continuing, but a much slower pace.

It has been reported that the manuscripts and notes of Marx and Engels run into hundreds of large notebooks, containing approximately fifty-five thousand pages (Saha 1983, 13). If these were to fill the projected hundred-volume edition, then the 1981 fifty-volume edition has covered about fifty percent of it. Of the remaining fifty percent, some have been published separately, as already mentioned.

By matching the ground covered so far with the lists provided in the various reports mentioned at the outset, we may assume that roughly twenty-five thousand pages of notes and manuscripts still remain unpublished. Of these about ten percent are in Engels's hand and the remaining ninety percent are in Marx's. Engels's notes and manuscripts are related to his study of the histories of Ireland (about three-quarters of his unpublished papers), Germany, England, military science, and philosophy (Senekina 1970, 15). Marx's notebooks are mainly related to his study of the natural science and technology of his time (Krinitskii 1948).

The unpublished natural-science and technology notebooks of Marx are related to the second half of his life (1850–83) and are not merely confined to the period of ill health (1870–76) referred to by Engels in his preface to *Capital II*.

Marx was time and again drawn to the study of various fields of science and technology, while trying to unravel the structure and dynamics of the forces and relations of production under early industrial capitalism. But as in the case of his studies in mathematics and ethnology, here, too, the immediate requirements of his study of political economy of capitalism alone do not fully explain why and how he delved so deeply into the veritable oceans of science and technology. The separately published *Mathematical Manuscripts* (1968) and *Ethnological Notebooks* (1972) of Marx have demonstrated the correctness of Engels's assertion in his speech at the graveside of Marx on 17 March 1883 that

in every single field which Marx investigated—and he investigated very many fields, none of them superficially—in every field, even in that of mathematics, he made independent discoveries. (*MECW* 24:468)

The fields investigated in the hitherto unpublished manuscripts and notes of Marx are: agriculture, agricultural chemistry, biology, chemistry, geology, climatology, pathology, physiology, mining, mechanics, mechanical engineering, history of science and technology, and philosophy of science.

Marx's interests in these fields did not grow overnight. Nor did he study these disciplines merely in periods of ill health, as some sort of distraction. The emergence and development of these interests have definite and serious motivations behind them. They have a long history, spanning almost the entire first half of Marx's life.

In the present account we shall try to map the entire trajectory of Marx's journey through the science and technology of his time. We shall begin at the beginning.

Karl Marx's study of science and the technology of his time and the related philosophical and theoretical questions matured through the following stages (stages 1 to 3 constitute the prehistory of stage 4):

1. the gymnasium years (1830–35);
2. the years in the universities (1836–41);
3. the period of emergence of the general world outlook of scientific communism (1842–48);
4. the years devoted to the study of specific fields of contemporary science and technology (1850–83).

1. Study of science in the Trier gymnasium

As a student of Trier gymnasium, Karl Heinrich Marx studied natural science from the compendia prepared by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1790–1811; 1814). In Marx's day the gymnasium students of Trier were given a larger and thicker dose of natural science in comparison to the fare provided to such students elsewhere in Prussia (Monz 1973b, 154–9; and Simon 1825, 20–2). In Marx's gymnasium the classroom hours per week for the subjects taught were: mathematics and physics, 6; Latin, 2; Hebrew and French, 4; and German, 3. Some additional hours were devoted to unspecified subjects. The weekly classroom hours for St. Paul's School of Trier were: mathematics and natural science, 9; Latin, 6; religious instruction, 2; and German, 4. The courses on natural science included elementary mechanics, optics, chemistry, botany, zoology, geography, and geology. Those on mathematics included elementary arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, and algebra; these last two included the theory of logarithms and infinitesimals. In the lower classes natural science was taught in conjunction with practical crafts and fine arts. (These matters are discussed in Reiprich 1983.)

Marx's mathematics teacher, Nicolas Druckenmüller, conducted independent investigations in his own discipline (1835; 1837). So did his teacher of mathematics and natural science, Johann Steininger (Simon 1857). Steininger also conducted investigations in the history of philosophy (Steininger 1841). The rector of the gymnasium, Johann Hugo Wytttenbach, taught social and political history in light of the data and concepts gathered in the course of his own investigations into the history of natural science, geography, and philosophy (1806; 1823). The classroom teaching of Druckenmüller and Steininger was also inspired by the spirit of their own investigations. Rector Wytttenbach and teacher Steininger were both members of an

association that conducted research and development activities to meet the practical requirements of the Trier economy (Reidel 1975; cited in Reiprich 1983, 4). Druckenmüller began his professional life as an industrialist. He became the director of the gymnasium in Trier in 1846 (Zenz 1954, 63).

Under the guidance of teachers like Wyttenbach, the students not only got to know certain facts or constructs of natural science, but also learned to study the history of nature. Many of Marx's teachers in Trier were inspired by the ideals of the French and German Enlightenment. They questioned the doctrines and values prevalent in precapitalist and early capitalist France and Germany, supported the cause of emancipation of the individual in the interests of the coming age, and upheld the idea of universal human progress. In the realm of the sciences, the Enlightenment stood for unrestricted use of human reason and the experimental method. These ideas went into the formation of the intellect of the adolescent Karl. His natural science teacher, Steininger, was accused of preaching atheism. The ideological atmosphere of the Trier gymnasium in those days became so embarrassing to the Prussian state that the government appointed a second rector as a sort of political-ideological overseer (Monz 1973a, 283f).

Such was the intellectual climate that nurtured young Karl. He grew up as a critic of the rigidities of the gymnasium system and of the lifestyle and thought patterns of the Trier gentry. He understood that the real task of a person is to participate in the sociohistorical process, consciously and ethically; therein lies his strength (see Marx's essays as a gymnasium student in *MECW* 1:636–9). The results of his school-leaving examination and the tone of his school essays reflected his early romance with theological and sociohistorical studies and with the rising civic and humanist values. In consonance with these values, and in deference to the wishes of a lawyer father, he decided to study law.

2. Study of philosophy of nature in the universities

Marx studied law at the University of Bonn and the University of Berlin. At these universities he also studied Greek

and Roman mythology and literature, history of modern art, anthropology, logic, geography, and the Old Testament. At a personal level he studied a great deal of philosophy and came in contact with the young Hegelian movement (*MECW* 1:645–704).

In this period he became interested in the problem of regularities of historical progress. Until then, for him the history of human society was mainly the history of European society. With the aim of comprehending the core and spirit of that history, he concentrated on ancient Greek and Roman philosophy. These studies found their reflection in his University of Jena doctoral dissertation and in the notebooks preparatory to that research on some aspects of ancient Greek philosophies of nature and subsequent Roman commentaries (*MECW* 1:25–105, 403–509).

In this period he did scribble some things on Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* (*MECW* 513–24), but Hegel's ideas did not influence his doctoral dissertation. In it we find several references to the materialist thinker Gassendi, who tried to renovate Democritus's atomism and Epicurus's ethics in seventeenth-century France. Here Marx presented the history of ancient Greek atomism with remarkable exactitude and in all its diversities then known. In it the influence of Feuerbach's *History of Modern Philosophy* is discernible. Here, among other things, Marx discussed the evolution of the ancient Greek conception of an atom and its different interpretations, the relation of atoms to space, the properties of the atom, the relation of the categories of necessity and chance to the deviation of an atom from a rectilinear path, etc. (Reiprich 1983, 5).

Reiprich suggests that two ideas expressed in this dissertation provide us with a preview of the shape of things to come. These are:

1. the key toward an understanding of Democritus's and Epicurus's philosophy of nature lies in the content of the concept of an atom, but one cannot arrive at this concept through observations alone;
2. the investigations of nature must be conducted only in the light of nature's own logic.

Marx thus arrived at the philosophical understanding that nature must be studied in terms of its own inner regularities. This nature is not a mere object of observation. It is also an object of conceptual analysis. This understanding led him to the next stage.

**3. Transition to the world outlook of scientific communism:
A general discussion of the historical relations between people
and the rest of nature**

In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx presented what he then understood to be the relations between people and the rest of nature as expressed in the interrelationships of natural science, social production and reproduction, and the history of human society as a whole (see especially the chapters "Private Property and Communism," *MECW* 3:293–306, and "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole," *MECW* 3:326–46).

In a section of *The Holy Family* entitled "Critical Battle against French Materialism" (*MECW* 4:124–34), Marx discussed his view at that time of the interrelationships of natural science, philosophy of nature, and European philosophy in general.

While attempting in his polemics against the Christian religious world outlook to establish the reality of the historical process, Marx observed that the Judeo-Christian notion about the creation of this world by a so-called God is undercut when it confronts geology, which presents the emergence and development of the planet earth as a real historical process. The story of world's own development, as described by geology, effectively refutes the biblical story of Genesis (*MECW* 3:304–5 and the corresponding note 86).

The role played by eighteenth-century French materialism in the struggle against the Christian religious world outlook is well known. One of its currents emanated from Cartesian physics, which gradually spread into all the branches of the emerging modern natural sciences. The materialism of Bacon also made a major contribution to the growth of natural science by firmly opposing metaphysical speculation. In Marx's words:

The real progenitor of *English materialism* and all *modern experimental science* is *Bacon*. To him natural philosophy

is the only true philosophy, and *physics* based upon the experience of the senses is the chiefest part of natural philosophy. (MECW 4:128)

Marx, however, did not uncritically accept the eighteenth-century materialist credo about the unity of materialism and natural science. There existed a reductionist trend in the philosophy of nature of this period. This trend attempted to reduce all types of material change and movement, irrespective of their qualitative differences or orders of complexity, into the mathematical language of the then-emerging classical mechanics. Marx posed a different kind of problem for himself. He aspired to find out *the exact location of the rest of nature in the sociohistorical activities of human beings*.

In his attempt to uncover this location, he studied Strauss, Bruno Bauer, Hegel, and Feuerbach. He criticized Strauss for his Spinozistic point of view wherein human beings are first posited as nature wearing some metaphysical mask and are then separated from nature. The defect of Bruno Bauer's Fichtean outlook lies in its imposition of subjective ideas over nature. In Hegel's concepts the unity of the human being and nature was posited as its metaphysical parody. And finally, "Feuerbach . . . criticised *Hegel from Hegel's point of view* by resolving the metaphysical *Absolute* spirit into '*real man on the basis of nature*'" (MECW 4:139).

This journey through the Young Hegelian world of abstract philosophical concepts convinced Marx that the history of human society can be understood only in the light of the concrete material relations of people with the rest of nature. These relations become actualized theoretically in the natural sciences and practically in the social processes of production and reproduction based on cooperation and division of human labor. One cannot arrive at even the first steps of knowing historical reality if one omits the study of these theoretical and practical relations, i.e., omits the study of natural science and the social-production process (MECW 4:150).

The preconditions for the emergence and development of human relations with the rest of nature are created by the very

existence of nature. On the one hand, the human species is a natural phenomenon and entity, and, on the other, the existence of this entity becomes actualized only along the path of reconstruction of nature, which includes a continuous reconstruction of human nature too. Marx wrote, “*Nature* too, taken abstractly, for itself—nature fixed in isolation from man—is *nothing* for man” (1975, 345).

People transform nature through various social activities: production and consumption of food and use of tools and instruments, various types of energy, and other materials. Through these activities they maintain relations with the rest of nature. It is a process that at once humanizes nature and creates the pre-conditions for making humans natural. In Marx's words, “History itself is a *real* part of *natural history*—of nature developing into man” (1975, 303–4). The methodological significance of this statement is far-reaching. It announces the untenability of the natural science/social science dichotomy created in modern civil society. Marx was categorical when he asserted, “Natural science will in time incorporate into itself the science of man, just as the science of man will incorporate into itself natural science: there will be *one* science” (304). And once again, in the first version of the clean copy of *The German Ideology*, we read:

We know only a *single science, the science of history*. One can look at history from two sides and divide it into the history of nature and the history of men. The two sides are, however, inseparable; the history of nature and history of men are dependent on each other so long as men exist. (1976, 28–9; emphasis added)

Here, by *history of nature* Marx and Engels meant *natural science* (29).

In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, *The Holy Family* (1845), and *The German Ideology* (written in 1845–46), one comes across references to mechanics; to other parts of physics, chemistry, botany, zoology, geology, etc.; and to Newton, Dalton, and Priestley. But until then, in fact before the 1850s, there are no texts or notes of Marx pertaining to the direct study of natural science and technology.

As a student in the universities (particularly in the Jena phase), Marx had arrived at the abstract conclusion that it is both necessary and possible to study nature experimentally, theoretically, and philosophically. In the period under consideration this abstract conviction gave rise to a concrete question, *How* can natural science become the object of theoretical analyses?

The history of the emergence and development of Marxism shows that Marx and his comrades in scientific investigation sought the answers to this question along two mutually interrelated lines:

- a. by proceeding to unravel the nature and history of objectively existing nature, its inner dialectics, they investigated the regularities of cognition and recognition of nature and its history in the natural sciences of contemporary Europe; and
- b. by proceeding from the application of natural science mediated through technology of social production and reproduction, they investigated the sociohistorical roots and social role of natural science and technology.

They were trying to give shape to their *dream of a single science of history*.

Thus from the middle of nineteenth century, Marx and his comrades Daniels, Engels, Schorlemmer, and many others were already proposing concrete solutions to the internalist-externalist dilemma that haunts, even in the late twentieth century, many leading academic historians of science who are either blissfully unaware of, or have ideologically persuaded themselves not to study, the contributions of Marx and his colleagues in this field.

It is also an irony of history that though the results of the investigations of most of Marx's friends in these fields have been published, in some cases only in part, and others with much delay, most of Marx's own manuscripts and notes on natural science and technology still remain unpublished. Will these be lost like the majority of the reported manuscripts of Al-Beruni? Or remain discarded like many manuscripts of Leibniz?

With the hope that it will arouse the conscience of the devotees of science, and especially of those among them who are

trying to grapple with the spirit of Marx, let us now enter into the next phase of our account.

4. Study of the concrete fields of science and technology

During the 1850s Karl Marx began his study of the evolution of, and revolutions in, science and technology in connection with his legendary investigations on political economy.

What are the issues that agitated his mind? Describing some that were uppermost in Marx's mind in July 1850, Wilhelm Liebknecht wrote in his *Reminiscences of Marx*:

Soon we were talking about natural sciences and Marx scoffed at the victorious reaction in Europe who imagined that they had stifled the revolution and had no idea that natural science was preparing a new one. King Steam who had revolutionised the world the century before, had lost his throne and was being superseded by a still greater revolutionary—the electric spark. Then Marx told me with great enthusiasm about the model of an electric engine that had been on show for a few days in Regent Street and that could drive a railway train.

“The problem is now solved,” he said, “and the consequences are unpredictable. The economic revolution must necessarily be followed by a political revolution, for the latter is but the expression of the former.”

The way Marx spoke of the progress of science and mechanics showed so clearly his world outlook, especially what was later to be called the materialist conception of history, that certain doubts which I still entertained melted like snow in the spring sun. (Institute of Marxism-Leninism 1978, 64–5)

How contemporary do these words ring! Socialist theory and practice face the continuous task of grappling with the new developments in science and technology as they prepare the ground for new economic and political revolutions. The victorious reaction of today also imagines that it has stifled the revolution. And it too has no idea what the science and technology emerging in the late twentieth century have in store for it.

And, as in the days of Marx, the consequences are now also unpredictable. By taking our cues from Marx's study of science and technology, we too must develop the theory and practice of socialism in light of the new science and technology of our time. But that is a matter of the future. Now let us take stock of the past.

Marx's 1851 notebooks on political economy contain quotations from books on agricultural chemistry. The major portion of these notebooks consists of extracts from, and comments on, the works of Ricardo, Malthus, Hume, and others (Krinitskii 1948, 73).

In April and May 1851 Marx studied and discussed a manuscript on physiological anthropology by his friend and comrade Roland Daniels (1987).¹ He also discussed it with Engels. This manuscript (Daniels 1987) and the relevant letters of Daniels to Marx have come down to us, but the corresponding letters of Marx to Daniels are still untraced.

In July 1851 Marx began studying a book on the application of chemistry to agriculture and to physiology [Liebig 1842]² and finished it by August. He then took up an encyclopedia of agriculture [London 1831]. This was followed by study of agricultural chemistry and geology [Johnston 1842; 1847]. In this period he also studied a physical atlas of natural phenomena by Johnston [1848] (Krinitskii 1948, 73–5).

Marx was initially motivated to study the agrarian systems and the various agricultural sciences in the interests of his investigations on ground rent. This went in parallel with his interest in technology.

On 13 October 1851 Marx wrote to Engels:

Incidentally, during my recent visits to the library, which I continue to frequent, I have been delving mainly into technology, the history thereof, and agronomy, so that I can form at least some sort of an opinion on the stuff. . . .

If you happen to come upon the following book: Johnston, *Notes on North America*, 2 Vols., 1851, you will find all manner of interesting information in it. For this Johnston is the English Liebig. An atlas of physical geography by "Johnston," not to be confused with the above,

may perhaps be had from one of Manchester's lending libraries. It is a compilation of all the most recent as well as earlier research in this field. (MECW 38:476)

What is so special about Liebig? An outstanding figure of nineteenth-century chemistry, Justus von Liebig (1803–1873) was not merely concerned with the problems of agriculture in the narrow sense of the word. In his book excerpted by Marx in 1851, the problems of transformation of material bodies in nature and those of nutrition of plants and crops were posed in a general way. In those days in botany the humus theory of plant nutrition was in vogue. According to this theory, the principal supplier of nutrition to the plant world was decomposed biological matter turned into soil. Instead of this theory, Liebig propounded the view that the pride of place in plant nutrition goes to the mineral salts. He suggested that, apart from the organic-matter-producing elements such as carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, and oxygen, a very important role is played by phosphorous and potassium in plant nutrition. He also suggested that plants, just like air, water, and changes in temperature, also influence the mineral deposits of our planet earth. Acids secreted from the roots of living plants and the carbon dioxide and carbonic acid released by the decomposition of dead plants transform the minerals above and below the earth's surface. It is evident that Liebig's book provided Marx with an opportunity to study chemistry, biology, and mineralogy in their interconnections.

From John London's encyclopedia of agriculture [1831] Marx took notes about the history of agriculture. From James Johnston's books [1842, 1847, 1851] he excerpted passages about the quality of soils. In Johnston's book about North America, already mentioned in his letter to Engels (13 October 1851), he found some data concerning the destruction of ecosystems by agriculture and industrialization and about the neglect of the environment in civil society.

On 24 April 1851 Marx's friend Roland Daniels implored him to undertake a critical reconstruction of the definitions of physics in connection with a projected encyclopedia of the sciences (*Voprosy filosofii* 1983, no. 5:113; Baksi 1986, 48). This project remained unrealized, like Marx's "Draft Plan for a Work

on the Modern State” or his “Plan of the ‘Library of the Best Foreign Socialist Writers’” (*MECW* 4:666–7). In the same year, however, Marx read a series of books on the history of mathematics, applied physics, and technology by Poppe [1807–11, 1809; 1828; 1830] and Ure [1835]. After finishing these books Marx read a dictionary of technology by Ure [1843–4] and Beckmann’s history of inventions [1780–1805].

The interrelationship of soil fertility, agronomy, and chemistry continued to interest him. On 5 October 1853 he wrote to Adolf Cluss, engineer and architect by profession and one of the first propagandists of scientific communism in the United States:

The *fertility of the soil* . . . is something purely relative. Changes in soil’s fertility and its *degree* in relation to society, and that is the only aspect of fertility with which we are concerned, depend on changes in the science of chemistry and its application to agronomy. (*MECW* 39:382)

In pursuance of these interests toward the end of the 1850s, Marx again went back to the study of agrarian systems. This time he began with a book by James Anderson [1800]. Anderson discovered the modern theory of rent independently, although Malthus pretended that it was his discovery.

Proceeding from the studies on the theory of ground rent, in 1860 Marx took up another book by Liebig on the theory and practice of agriculture [1856], and also read Johnston [1856].

Marx read Charles Lyell’s book on the geological evidence of the origin of the human species [1863] as soon as it was published. He underlined many places on many pages of his notes of the nineteenth chapter of this book on the use of instruments in production. This input renewed his interest in the ongoing study of technology. In his letter to Engels dated 28 January 1863, Marx discussed some questions of mechanical engineering in considerable detail:

I have re-read all my note-books (excerpts [from Poppe, Beckmann, and Ure]) on technology and am also attending a practical (purely experimental) course for working men given by Prof. Willis (in Jermyn Street, the Institute of Geology, where Huxley also lectured). For me,

mechanics presents much the same problem as languages. I understand the mathematical laws, but the simplest technical reality that calls for ocular knowledge is more difficult than the most complicated combinations.

You may or may not know, for of itself the thing's quite immaterial, that there is considerable controversy as to what distinguishes a *machine* from a *tool*. After its own crude fashion, English (mathematical) mechanics calls a TOOL A SIMPLE MACHINE and a MACHINE A COMPLICATED TOOL. English technologists, however, who take rather more account of economics, distinguish the two (and so, accordingly, do many, if not most, English economists) in as much as in one case the MOTIVE POWER emanates from man, in the other from A NATURAL FORCE. From this, the German jackasses, who are great on little matters like this, have concluded that a *plough*, for instance, is a machine, and the most complicated JENNY etc., in so far as it is moved by hand, is not. However, if we take a look at the machine in its *elementary* form, there can be no doubt that the industrial revolution originates, not from *motive power*, but from that part of machinery called the WORKING MACHINE by the English, i.e. not from, say, the use of water or steam in place of the foot to move the spinning wheel, but from the transformation of the actual spinning process itself, and the elimination of that part of human labour that was not mere EXERTION OF POWER (as in treading a wheel), but was concerned with processing, working directly on the material to be processed. Nor, on the other hand, can there be any doubt that, once we turn our attention from the *historical* development of machinery to machinery on the basis of the present mode of production, the only decisive factor is the *working machine* (e.g. in the case of the sewing-machine). For, as everyone knows today, once this process is mechanised, the thing may be moved, according to size, either by hand, water or a steam-engine.

To those who are merely mathematicians, these questions are of no moment, but they assume great importance

when it comes to establishing a connection between human social relations and the development of these material modes of production.

Re-reading my technological and historical excerpts has led me to the conclusion that, aside from the invention of gunpowder, the compass and printing—those necessary prerequisites of bourgeois progress—the two material bases upon which the preparatory work for mechanised industry in the sphere of manufacturing was done between the sixteenth and the mid-eighteenth century, i.e. the period during which manufacturing evolved from a handicraft to big industry proper, were the *clock* and the *mill* (initially the flour mill and, more specifically, the water mill), both inherited from Antiquity. (The water mill was brought to Rome from Asia Minor in Julius Caesar's time.) The clock was the first automatic device to be used for practical purposes, and from it the whole theory of the *production of regular motion* evolved. By its very nature, it is based on a combination of the artist-craftsman's work and direct theory. Cardan, for instance, wrote about clock-making (and provided practical instructions). German sixteenth-century writers describe clock-making as a "scientific (non-guild) handicraft," and, from the development of the clock, it could be shown how very different is the handicraft-based relation between book-learning and practice from that, e.g., in big industry. Nor can there be any doubt that it was the clock which, in the eighteenth century, first suggested the application of automatic devices (in fact, actuated by springs) in production. It is historically demonstrable that *Vaucanson's* experiments in the field stimulated the imagination of English inventors to a remarkable extent.³

In the case of the *mill*, on the other hand, the essential distinctions in the organism of a machine were present from the outset, i.e. as soon as the water mill made its appearance. Mechanical motive power. *Primo*, the motor for which it had been waiting. The transmission mechanism. Lastly, the working machine, which handles the material, each existing independently of the others. It was

upon the mill that the theory of *friction* was based, and hence the study of the mathematical forms of gear-wheels, cogs, etc.; likewise, the first theory of measurement of the degree of motive power, the best way of applying it, etc. Since the middle of the seventeenth century almost all great mathematicians, in so far as they have concerned themselves with the theory and practice of mechanics, have taken the simple, water-driven flour mill as their point of departure. Indeed, this was why the words *Mühle* and MILL, which came to be used during the manufacturing period, were applied to all driving mechanisms adopted for practical purposes.

But in the case of the mill, as in that of the press, the forge, the plough, etc., the actual work of hammering, crushing, milling, tilling, etc., is done from the outset *without* human labour, even though the MOVING FORCE be human or animal. Hence this type of machinery is very old, at least in its origins, and, in its case, mechanical propulsion proper was applied at an earlier date. Hence it is virtually the only kind of machinery that occurs during the manufacturing period as well. The *industrial revolution* began as soon as mechanical means were employed in fields where, from time immemorial, the final result had called for human labour and not therefore—as in the case of the above-mentioned tools—where the actual material to be processed had *never, within living memory*, been directly connected with the human hand; where, by the nature of things and from the outset, man has not functioned purely as POWER. If, like the German jackasses, one insists that the application of animal POWERS (which is just as much *voluntary motion* as the application of human powers) constitutes machinery, then the application of this form of locomotor is far older than the simplest of manual tools in any case. (MECW 41:449–51)

This rather long quotation should provide the reader with a ring-side view of Marx's brain working on the interrelationship of classical mechanics and mechanical engineering in early

industrial capitalism, studying some concrete moments of the interfaces linking natural science, technology, and social science (see also Marx 1968).

About a year and a half later, 4 July 1864, we find yet another interesting letter written to Engels. Here Marx writes:

My nose, mouth etc., still bunged up with influenza so that I can neither smell nor taste.

During this time, being utterly incapable of work, have read Carpenter, *Physiology* [1839], Lord, ditto [1855], Kölliker, *Gewebelehre* [1863], Spurzheim, *The Anatomy of the Brain and the Nervous System* [1826], and Schwann and Schleiden, on the cells business [1847; 1850]. In Lord's *Popular Physiology*, there's a good critique of phrenology, although the chap's religious. One passage recalls Hegel's *Phenomenology*; it reads:

They attempt to break up the mind into a number of supposed original faculties, such as no metaphysician will, for a moment, admit; and the brain into an equal number of organs, which the anatomist in vain asks to be shown, and then proceed to attach one of the former unadmitted suppositions as a mode of action to one of the latter undemonstrated existences.

As you know, 1. I'm always late off the mark with everything, and 2. I invariably follow in your footsteps. So it's probable that I shall now devote much of my spare time to anatomy and PHYSIOLOGY and, in addition, attend lectures (where there will be practical demonstrations and dissection). (*MECW* 41:546–7)

That is how Marx cogitated on the interface of life sciences and philosophy. Lucio Colletti once spoke of the existence of two Marxes: the Marx of theoretical economics, “who developed and completed political economy as a science after it had been founded by Smith and Ricardo,” and Marx the critic of political economy, who “intertwined (and overturned) the arguments of Smith and Ricardo with a theory of alienation of which the economists know nothing” (1975, 21–22). I think this statement applies to Marx in all his incarnations. And why only two? There are many moments in each case. He is indeed our one-person army! And then there is the phalanx!

While preparing the manuscripts of the first volume of *Capital* in 1865, Marx read a new edition of Liebig's book [1862], which he had read once in 1851. Then he read yet another book on agricultural chemistry by the same Liebig [1855].

In 1866, apart from Liebig, he also studied the work of Christian Friedrich Schönbein (1799–1868) on agricultural chemistry in general and on the problem of nitrogen fixation in soil through combustion in particular. Schönbein discovered and named ozone [1840]; was the first person to describe nitrocellulose (guncotton); investigated the passivity of iron, properties of hydrogen peroxide, and catalysis. On 13 February 1866 Marx wrote to Engels in this connection:

I have been going to the [British] Museum in the day-time and writing at night. I had to plough through the new agricultural chemistry in Germany, in particular Liebig and Schönbein, which is more important for [the theory of ground rent] than all the economists put together, as well as the numerous amount of material that the French have produced since I last dealt with this point. (*MECW* 42:227)

And again on 20 February 1866:

The fact which Liebig had denounced and which prompted Schönbein's investigations, was this:

The *upper* layers of the soil always contain more ammonia than the *deeper* ones, instead of containing less of it as they would have to do if they had lost it through cultivation. The fact was recognised by every chemist. Only the cause was *unknown*.

Hitherto, decay was considered to be the sole source of ammonia. All chemists (including Liebig) denied that the nitrogen in the air could serve as a nutrient for plants.

Schönbein proved (by experiment) that any flame burning in the air converts a certain quantity of the nitrogen in the air into ammonium nitrate, that every process of decomposition gives rise to both nitric acid and ammonia,

that the mere evaporation of water is the means causing the formation of both plant nutrients.

Finally, Liebig's "jubilation" at this discovery:

The combustion of a pound of coal or wood restores to the air not merely the elements needed to reproduce this pound of wood or, under certain conditions, coal, but the process of combustion *in itself* (note the Hegelian category [Marx's insertion—P.B.]) transforms a certain quantity of nitrogen in the air into a nutrient indispensable for the production of bread and meat.⁴

I FEEL PROUD OF THE GERMANS. IT IS OUR DUTY TO EMANCI-
PATE THIS "DEEP" PEOPLE. (232)

Marx and Engels's correspondence on chemistry continued in 1867. Engels read Hofmann 1866⁵ on modern chemistry and communicated his impressions to Marx on 16 June 1867:

Have read Hofmann. For all its faults, the latest chemical theory does represent a great advance on the old atomistic theory. The molecule as the smallest part of matter *capable of independent existence* is a perfectly rational category, "a nodal point," as Hegel calls it in the infinite progression of subdivisions, which does not terminate it, but marks a qualitative change.⁶ The atom—formerly represented as the limit of divisibility—is now but a *state* although Monsieur Hofmann himself is forever relapsing into the old idea that indivisible atoms really exist. For the rest, the advances in chemistry that this book records are truly enormous, and Schorlemmer says that this revolution is still going on day by day, so that new upheavals can be expected daily. (382–3)

In his reply dated 22 June 1867 Marx wrote back:

You are quite right about Hofmann. Incidentally, you will see from the conclusion to my chapter III, where I outline the transformation of the master of a trade into a capitalist as a result of purely *quantitative* changes—that *in the text* there I quote Hegel's discovery of the *law of the transformation of a merely quantitative change into a qualitative one* as being attested by history and natural science alike.

In the *note* to the text (I was as it happened attending Hofmann's lectures at that time) I mention *the molecular theory*, but not Hofmann, who has discovered *nothing* in the matter except contributing general *direction*; instead I do mention Laurent, Gerhardt and Wurtz, the latter being *the real man*.⁷ Your letter struck a faint chord in my memory, and I therefore, looked up my manuscript. (385)

Here Marx is referring to Laurent 1854, Gerhardt and Chancel 1862, and Wurtz 1864. Engels differed with Marx's estimation of the contributions of Laurent and Gerhardt in the molecular theory of modern chemistry, basing himself on Kopp 1864 and Schorlemmer 1879 (see Marx's and Engels's footnote comments on this in *Capital I* (35:313 n. 2)).

On 24 June 1867 Engels wrote to Marx:

Regarding the molecular theory, Schorlemmer tells me that Gerhardt and Kekulé [1861–67] are the chief figures involved, and that Wurtz has only popularised and elaborated it. He is going to send you a book setting out the historical development of the subject. (42:387–8)

On 7 December 1867 Marx informed Engels that he has taken an extraordinary liking to Schorlemmer's compendium (42:495).⁸ The reference is to Roscoe 1867.

On 9 November 1871 Marx himself instructed Nikolai Danielson, who was preparing the Russian translation of *Capital I*, to omit the reference to Wurtz (44:240). This is indicative of Marx's own reassessment of Wurtz's contributions to the molecular theory in chemistry.

His interest in agricultural chemistry remaining unabated, he wrote to Engels on 1 January 1868:

I would like to know from Schorlemmer what is the latest and best book (German) on agricultural chemistry. Furthermore, what is the present state of argument between the mineral-fertiliser people and the nitrogen-fertiliser people? (Since I last looked into the subject, all sorts of new things have appeared in Germany.) Does he know anything about the most recent Germans who have written

against Liebig's soil-exhaustion theory? Does he know about the alluvion theory of Munich agronomist Fraas (Professor at Munich University)? (507)

And again on 14 March 1868 Marx informed Engels, "I looked at things by Fraas, etc., on agriculture" (548).

Marx made a special study of Karl Fraas's investigations on the evolution of climate and the plant world over time [1847], on the nature and history of agriculture [1848; 1852; 1857], and on agrarian crisis and its remedies [1866].

On 25 March 1868 Marx wrote to Engels:

Very interesting is the book by Fraas (1847): *Klima und Pflanzenwelt in der Zeit, eine Geschichte beider*, namely as proving that climate and flora change in *historical* times. He is a Darwinist before Darwin, and admits even the *species* developing in historical times. But he is at the same time agronomist. He claims that with cultivation—depending on its degree—the "moisture" so beloved by the peasants gets lost (hence also the plants migrate from south to north), and finally steppe formation occurs. The first effect of cultivation is useful, but finally devastating through deforestation, etc. The man is both a thoroughly learned philologist (he has written books in *Greek*) and a chemist, agronomist, etc. The conclusion is that cultivation—when it proceeds in natural growth and is not *consciously controlled* (as a bourgeois he naturally does not reach this point) leaves deserts behind it, Persia, Mesopotamia, etc., Greece. So once again an unconscious socialist tendency!

This Fraas is also interesting as a German case-study. First Dr. med., then inspector and teacher of chemistry and technology. At present head of Bavarian veterinary services, university professor, head of state agricultural experiments, etc. In his latest writings you see his advanced age, but he is still a dashing fellow. He has been around a lot in Greece, Asia Minor, Egypt! His history of agriculture is also important. He calls Fourier this "pious and humanist socialist." . . .

We must keep a close watch on the recent and very latest in agriculture. The *physical* school is pitted against the *chemical*. (558–9)

On 17 April 1868 Marx wrote to Ludwig Kugelmann that it cost him a great effort to read Virchow's *Cellularpathologie* [1858], "particularly because of the way it was written" (43:13).

This interest in biology continued. On 18 November 1868 Marx wrote to Engels:

Büchner's clumsy work [1868] is of interest to me in as much as it quotes most of the German research in the field of Darwinism—Prof. Jäger (Vienna) [1864] and Prof. Haeckel [1866, 1868]. According to them the cell has been abandoned as the *primaeval* form; instead a formless but contractile particle of albumen is taken as *STARTING POINT*. This hypothesis was later confirmed by the discoveries in Canada (later also in Bavaria and *SOME OTHER PLACES*). The *primaeval* form must naturally be traced down to the point at which it may be produced chemically. And it appears that the way to this point has been found. (43:162)

In 1869 the unusual phosphorus compound, nuclein, was isolated from pus cells. In later years, complex acid materials containing phosphorus were isolated from different kinds of cells. It appeared that these were chemically similar to nuclein, and were called nucleic acids. These acids provide the genetic materials of cells and direct the process of protein synthesis. But that was still a matter of future knowledge. And together with the practicing early biochemists, Marx was dreaming about its chemical synthesis, at the dawn of this discipline.

On 8 November 1868 Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–95), a close associate of Charles Darwin and popularizer of his teachings, delivered a lecture "On the Physical Basis of Life" in Edinburgh [1869a]. On 12 December 1868, before its publication in February 1869, Marx wrote to Engels:

In his latest speech in Edinburgh, in which Huxley again took a more materialist stand than in recent years, he

opened up another loophole for himself. As long as we really observe and think, we can never escape materialism. But all this is reduced to the relationship between cause and effect, and “your great compatriot Hume” has already proved that these categories have nothing in common with the things in themselves. (183–4)

Here Marx’s powerful lateral thinking was already making forays into the philosophy of biology. His study of chemistry continued. On 20 March 1869 Marx informed Engels that he planned to reread the second part, organic chemistry, of the second edition of Roscoe [1867] (243).

On 10 June 1869, Marx wrote from Manchester to his daughter Jenny that he had made the acquaintance of the English geologist John Roche Dakyns, who became a member of the International (291–292). He said that Dakyns gave him an article by Huxley [1869b], in which Huxley merrily thrashes the English positivist philosopher Richard Congreve [1869], and added, “Dakyns is also a declared enemy of the Comtists or Positivists. He is of my opinion that there is nothing positive about them except their arrogance” (293).

During the 1860s he again read Johnston on North American agriculture [1851]; excerpted from Passy on ground rent [1853]; Morton on soil fertility [1838] and history of agriculture [1855]; Lavergne on the rural economy of England and Scotland [1855] and on the interrelationship of agriculture and rural demography [1857]; Hamm on the use of machinery in English agriculture [1856]; and Maron on the Japanese method of intensive farming [1859]. All the excerpts contain his own comments (Krinitskii 1948, 78–81).

Early in 1870, Marx again refers to Huxley, this time first in connection with political ethnology [Huxley 1870]. He wrote to Engels on 10 March 1870, “Have you read the stuff by Huxley about the lack of difference between ANGLO-SAXON (*vulgo* ENGLISHMEN) and CELT? He is giving his 2nd lecture on the subject next Sunday. LITTLE Dakyns has sent us TICKETS for this” (43:454).

Huxley's philosophy of biology again engages Marx's attention in April the same year. On 14 April 1870 he wrote to Engels:

Apropos. Stirling (Edinburgh) [1865], the translator of Hegel's *Logic*), and heading the British SUBSCRIPTION for the Hegel monument—has written a small pamphlet against Huxley and his *protoplasm* [Stirling 1869]. As a Scotsman, the fellow has naturally adopted Hegel's false religion and Idea-istic mysticism (so induced Carlyle to declare publicly his conversion to Hegelianism). But his knowledge of Hegel's dialectic allows him to demonstrate Huxley's weakness—here he indulges in philosophising. His business in the same pamphlet against Darwin comes to the same as what as what the Berliner [Franz Eilhard] Blutschulze (Hegelian OF THE OLD SCHOOL) said some years ago at the natural scientists meeting in Hanover.⁹ (481–2)

Darwinism and its fate continued to engage Marx's attention. On 18 April 1870 he wrote to Paul Lafargue, "In Germany people would much wonder at Verlet's appreciation [1870] of Büchner [1855]. In our country he is only considered, and justly so, as a *vulgarisateur*" (486). Marx was referring here to Büchner's use of the survival-of-the-fittest concept to legitimize the destructive consequences of competitive capitalism.

During the 1870s Marx's study of agricultural chemistry continued further. He read Engelhardt [1872a], once again went back to Johnston [1856], and studied the problems of the agrarian systems in Russia [Engelhardt 1872b]. His study of geology developed in parallel [Johnston 1856] and now took up a greater part of his time. This was but natural; geology provides the chemical keys to soil fertility, which is the earthly basis of agriculture.

In the second half of the 1870s Marx read quite a few books on biology and physiology, in part repeating the cycle of studies referred to in his 4 July 1864 letter to Engels, quoted earlier. He went through Schwann [1847] and Schleiden [1850] all over again. He also read Ranke's treatise on human physiology [1875].

In his preface to the second volume of *Capital* (Marx 1997),

Engels referred to these studies during the period of Marx's ill health from 1870 to 1876.

In the year 1878 Marx moved from human physiology to the study of human prehistory. He read two books by Dawkins, one on humans in antiquity [1878]¹⁰ and the other on early human presence in Britain [1880] as soon as the books were published. He also read Geikie's books on Scotland [1865] and prehistoric Europe [1881].

These studies merged with those on ethnology beginning with Kovalevskii [1879, chap. 1]¹¹ and Morgan [1877], at a time when modern anthropology was just being born (Krader 1974, 2). From the philosophical anthropology of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* to the descriptive anthropology of the *Ethnological Notebooks* was indeed a long journey in one lifetime.

But that was one among many. In the very same period, mathematics, chemistry, biology, and geology continued to pre-occupy Marx. In 1878 he read Jukes's textbook on geology [1872]. The excerpts and notes on geology are devoted to many interesting themes:

history of origin of the earth; formation of rock clusters and mountains—studied by a long line of persons interested in *lithogenesis* from Carl Linnaeus onwards; the influence of the atmosphere, heat, mechanical motion and chemical reactions on the transformation of earth's crust; the study of fossils; mineralogy; the laws governing mineralization; crystallization and the corresponding chemical reactions; geological and biological investigations into the origin of life on earth—in their interrelations; and finally—the role of humans in transforming the geophysical environment of earth, to be studied as the emergence and development of the *noosphere* in the years to come. (Reiprich 1983, 10)¹²

In these later years Marx also studied Preyer's book on the origin of life [1873] and Grant Allen's article on the interrelationships of geology and history [1881].

The practical use of geological information in mining also drew Marx's attention. Back in 1857–58 he read Reitemeier on the history of mining and metallurgy in antiquity [1785]. He also read Hull on the coalfields of Great Britain [1873], Ramsay on physical geography and geology in Great Britain [1863] and Smyth on coal and coalmining [n.d.].

Toward the end of 1870s Marx returned to the encyclopedia devoted to the theoretical problems of the natural sciences edited by Schleider and Schmidt [1850]. Late in 1870s or in the first years of the 1880s, Marx read Podolinsky on the interrelations of human labor and conservation of energy [1876]. Toward the end of 1882 he read Hospatalier on the uses of electricity [1881].

Marx died on 14 March 1883, leaving a series of unfinished notes and manuscripts in all these disciplines behind. His unfinished manuscript on Taylor's Theorem was lying on his desk, perhaps indicating that on that day he had been cogitating on this theorem, basic to the differential calculus, the language of classical mechanics and of all the later mathematized disciplines that use classical analysis.

Karl Marx's manuscripts and notes on the natural sciences, mathematics, social science, and technology pertaining to the period 1850–83 show that although he was initially drawn to these disciplines in connection with his studies on political economy, everywhere, without exception, the horizons of his interests widened continuously. He was pursuing his dream of one single science—the future science of history. From the study of the concrete disciplines, he went over to the study of their history and from there to the theoretico-philosophical investigations of the various concepts and issues of these concrete disciplines, reversing direction from time to time to trace back their development.

He studied Babbage on management [1832]; Caspari on Leibniz's contributions to science and philosophy [1870]; the works of Leibniz [1840], especially the famous Leibniz-Clarke correspondence on the philosophical significance of Newtonian mechanics; Du Bois Reymond on Leibniz's philosophy of science [1871]; Descartes on aspects of physics and mathematics [1701]; Fick on the forces of nature in their interrelations [1869]; and Darwin [1859] in the original (Krinitskii 1948, 86–7).

While discussing the role of natural sciences in the processes of production and reproduction in civil society, he compared the emergence of specialization in human social production with that in the rest of nature in the light of Darwin's findings. While studying the use of chemistry in agriculture from Liebig [1842] and Hodges [1848], he was drawn to the history of organic chemistry and switched over to Schorlemmer [1879] and from there to Roscoe and Schorlemmer [1877–82]. From investigations into the relations of natural science with technology he went over to investigating the impact of technology on the health of laboring people, pioneered by, among others, his friend Daniels in 1850; he also read Ramazzini [1700], Ferguson [1767], and Reich [1868]. This interest overlapped with that on the emergence and development of property relations in different socio-economic formations and he therefore read Maurer [1854].

Marx was continually moving from the abstract to the concrete, and from the concrete to the abstract. Even a neo-Kantian opponent of materialism and socialism like Friedrich Albert Lange conceded that Marx moved with rare freedom in empirical matters. In Marx's own words, "This free movement in matter is nothing but a paraphrase for the *method* of dealing with matter—that is, the *dialectical method*" (1965, 240).

While discussing Maurer, Marx commented:

The history of mankind is like palaeontology. Owing to a CERTAIN JUDICIAL BLINDNESS, even the best minds fail to see, on principle, what lies in front of their noses. Later, when the time has come, we are surprised that there are traces everywhere of what we failed to see . . . and surprised to find what is newest in what is oldest. . . .

And we are all very much in the clutches of this JUDICIAL BLINDNESS. (*MECW* 42:557)

Public opinion, or even specialist opinion, that identifies Marx with the humanities, mainly with political economy, politics, or philosophy in the narrow sense of the words, is indeed under the clutches of a judicial blindness. This blindness has prevented many of even the most gifted disciples of Marx from seeing what was always in front of our noses, namely, that

although the encyclopedia of sciences proposed by Daniels to Marx was never born,¹³ it is out there already kicking in the placental fluid, surrounded by the gigantic output of Karl Marx and his friends.

As was already mentioned, work on the hundred-volume *MEGA* edition of the works of Marx and Engels is continuing, but at a slow pace. Moving this *MEGA* project forward should be the collective responsibility of all of us. Let us close our ranks and leave no stone unturned to get the remaining manuscripts of Marx and his friends published! We have nothing but our incomplete understanding of Marxism to lose.

Calcutta, India

NOTES

1. For Daniels's letters to Marx on *Mikrokosmos Entwurf einer physiologischen Anthropologie*, see *Voprosy filosofii* 5:100–26 (1983); Baksi 1986, 17–84; Elsner 1987.

2. The square-bracketed citations are books and articles referred to by Marx in his manuscripts and letters. These and other square-bracketed insertions in the quotations and many of the publication details for the Reference List are based in part on the Indexes of Quoted and Mentioned Literature, footnotes, and endnotes in *MECW*, further supplemented by library catalog searches. As this issue of *NST* was going to press, a copy of Griese and Sandkühler, *Karl Marx: Zwischen Philosophie und Naturwissenschaften* [Karl Marx: Between Philosophy and Natural Sciences] (1997), arrived, containing discussion and bibliographic material of interest to readers of this article. See also the earlier *NST* article by Griese and Pawelzig (1995).—ed.

3. Jacquesde Vaucanson, 1709–82, French mechanic, improved the design of looms; inventor of automatic toys.

4. Cited in English translation by *MECW* as coming from Liebig 1862, 77–8.

5. Based on lectures delivered at the Royal College of Chemistry, London. Marx attended these lectures.

6. In Hegel's *Science of Logic* the *Knoten*—nodal points—are certain moments in movement when a sudden qualitative leap takes place as a result of a gradual quantitative change.

7. Editors' note 444 in the *MECW* edition of *Capital I* (35:651) reads as follows:

Marx is referring to Chapter III of the first edition of Volume One of *Capital*, in the second and subsequent editions it corresponds to five

chapters (V–IX) of Part III and in the English edition of 1887 to chapters VII–XI (see present edition vol. 35).

The note to the text of the first edition that is mentioned here stated that the molecular theory was advanced by Auguste Laurent and Charles Frédéric Gerhardt, and Charles Adolphe Wurtz was the first who scientifically elaborated it. Later on Marx made an additional study of the history of the problem and omitted his reference to Wurtz in the second German edition of Volume One of *Capital* (1872); in the third edition of the volume (1883) Engels also made a more precise assessment of the role that had been played by Laurent and Gerhardt. (See the English edition of 1887, Part III, Chapter XI, and the present edition, Vol. 35[:313])

8. About 2,000 pages of Schorlemmer's unpublished manuscripts on the history of chemistry are lying in the archives of Manchester University; on this see Kedrov and Ogurtsov 1978, 481.

9. "A reference to the congress of German natural scientists, researchers and medical men held in Hanover on 18–23 September 1865. At one of its sessions, Schulze made an attempt to disprove Darwin's theory" (*MECW* editors' note, 42:651, n. 610).

10. A search in the British Library (August 1997) failed to find a book by Dawkins with this title. Perhaps the material to which Marx was referring can be found in Thomas M. Hughes, "The present state of the evidence bearing upon the question of the antiquity of man," paper, Victoria Institute, with remarks by . . . W. Boyd Dawkins, etc., edited by William M. F. Petrie, London: E. Stanford, 1879–ed.

11. Description of land tenure systems in Spanish America, French Algeria, and English East Indies.

12. All translations from Russian sources are by the author.

13. "What do you think of an encyclopedia of the sciences? (I have the real sciences in view.)" (Letter from Roland Daniels to Marx, 12–13 April 1851, , cited in Russian translation from the original German in *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 5 (1983): 110. A second letter dated 24 April 1851 reads:

About the encyclopedia, the general point of view, that is the purpose, for which the work is to be done, must be clear to all the contributors. After the publication of your political economy, you would be able to convince many naturalists and technicians of Germany about their revolutionary role, and then, possibly, it would be easier to distribute the responsibilities with regard to this encyclopaedia. So far we do not have the people for this job.

In this reconstruction it will be desirable in the case of physics to reconstruct especially critically the old definitions, which you would do best. It would be very useful, if after the work on economics, you devote yourself entirely to the natural sciences and technology. (113)

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History of Philosophy, Philosophy of History, and Ontology in Hegel's Thought

José Barata-Moura

1. Introduction

For Hegel, historicity is inscribed in the very heart of effective reality. *Actuality* (*Wirklichkeit*) is understood as the *concrete manifestation* of an *absolute* that is *being constructed*. This constituent action—this fundamental *action* always in question—is determined in the course of a process, *one* woven of synchronic and diachronic multiplicities that mark its terms.

Deployed in a world of events and thoughts, this *absolute* is attained and arranged in forms enriched by accrued self-consciousness: “As this movement of exposition, a movement which carries itself along with it, as a way and manner which is its absolute identity-with-self, the absolute is manifestation not of an inner, nor over against an other, but it *is* only as the absolute manifestation of itself for itself. As such it is *actuality*” (1969, 536).

The thesis that I propose to defend here is thus the following: According to Hegel, the *history of philosophy* returns to a *philosophy of history*, which in turn goes back to an *ontology* that reveals to us *being*—(τὸ ὄν), that which is—in its thought concretion, as *Geist*, as “*the mind*.”¹

Philosophy *has* a history. Philosophy *is* thought about what *in* history arrives, sets down, transforms, and sets itself off. The

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being that thought welcomes and gathers as its notion sublates and envelops the finished status of simple *objectness* in order to be fundamentally transformed into a self-fulfilling *subject* in effective reality.

Despite all the ineffaceable idealism of its architecture and its presuppositions, this Hegelian doctrine contains a clear *ontological* intention. Reworked, it becomes, perhaps, capable of nourishing and inspiring new itineraries upon which to embark in our historical horizon.

2. How can philosophy have a history?

Custom and convenience lead us to speak often of *the* philosophy. It is certain, however, that from the beginning there is diversity in our outlook. The philosophy envisioned at first glance soon shows us *several philosophies*—an ensemble and a series of different historical figures in and by which it is determined.

In the framework of the philosophical regime instituted by Hegel, a first question, somewhat troubling, soon arises: how can philosophy, which is an exposition of the absolute and, therefore, of that which is removed from the obsolescence of the “historic,” have a history?²

The problem is explicitly addressed in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*—notably in his different versions of the introduction. According to the edition of Karl Ludwig Michelet, “The thought, of which essential thought is, is in and for itself, eternal. . . . Now how does it happen that the world of thought, therefore, comes to have a history?” (1971, 23–4, n. 10).³ According to notes of the Berlin lectures of 1819, “Why is there a history of philosophy? Why does it [philosophy] occur in history, in the external?”⁴

3. Neither an “assortment of opinions,” nor an “external history”

A fruitful breakthrough toward answering these questions requires that two points be clarified first of all, for they allow us to discern better the contours of the vector of historicity at work in this problem.

First of all, it is necessary to move away from the current representation of philosophy as a simple assemblage of

contingent opinions or intelligent sallies that follow one another and pile up as circumstances dictate. The history of philosophy is not “a gallery of opinions” (Hegel, 1993 [SM1820], 18) or an “assortment” of opinions ([SK1820/21], 15).

Opinion is not raised to the rank of the universal; it never crosses the domestic boundaries of “mine.”⁵ Philosophy, in turn, reaches toward the concept; it holds on to thoughts.⁶ Historicity, which penetrates and impregnates philosophy, does not flow simply from subjective and fortuitous stakes.

Moreover—and this is the second preliminary remark to keep in mind—it is just as necessary to safeguard the distinction that needs to be established between “the history of the external fate” of a given knowledge and the “history of an object itself” (Hegel, 1993 [SM1823], 10). Philosophy surely shares with other knowledge the vicissitudes of an “external history” (1993 [SM1823], 11), but it is in the history of *its very object* that a fundamental difference—one that is problematic—intervenes.

While the Christian religion presents a dogmatic kernel that maintains itself unchanged for the most part (which could bear witness to the abstract “permanence” of the absolute), or while the individual sciences progress “by juxtaposition” (which could justify the cumulative necessity to support its lasting quality), things happen differently in regard to philosophy:

The history of philosophy to the contrary shows neither the permanence of a simple content without admixture nor the course of a peaceful addition of newer treasures to that already acquired, but it appears more like a drama of ever recurring changes. (1993, [SM1823], 12)

The persistence of “that which is” is not the enemy of “dispersal,” because dispersal is not the very substance of the transformations that the whole undergoes or gives itself over to, and only by means of which, in renewing itself, it makes manifest and affirms the concrete becoming of its identity—itsself a process in which the “same” and the “other” engage in their dialectical games—in search of expression and encounter with the self.

4. *The history of the thing itself*

We touch here the very heart of the historicity that is lodged in the innermost depths of philosophy and works away at it from the inside.

Philosophy is not a simple account of what happens in the circle of ideas; it is an effort to know the *truth* of what is disclosed in what happens, and what thought gathers in.⁷

Philosophy does not have only a history, because its own processes of the apprehension of the truth are submitted to the empire of finitude and bear the mark of its lasting nature. It is *the history of the truth* itself that takes possession of philosophy.

Philosophy is thus a grasping of the mind by the mind, and the mind—in order to *be* and to *know itself*—needs to *produce itself*, to make and to make itself in the test of time: “its being is its action” (Hegel 1993 [SM1820], 30).

There is no reasoning that is not the result of thought;⁸ this brings us back to saying from now on that it is necessary to conceive “the rational” “as something that has a history” ([SM1820/30], 315).

5. *The thought of the history of the whole*

As to the sense of the multiplicity in the becoming of the constituted philosophies, their meaning and their import, “their meaning” flows from their enrollment and their involvement in the concrete process of all that they belong to: “The meaningful in history is its relationship, its interconnection, with a universal. . . . The individual pieces, in fact, have their great value through their relation to the whole” (Hegel 1971, 25 n. 10).⁹

Therefore, philosophy, through all its multiple forms of phenomenal interpretation, is “an organic progressive whole” (Hegel 1993 [SM1823], 4) “system in development” (1993 [SM1820], 25). It is not a question of the simple incidental revelation of something already reached at an earlier time, but of a true *realization* of the history of that which its very being is self-actualizing by self-developing.

The becoming of thought that the history of philosophy exposes and that philosophy reveals brings us straight back to the

becoming that is thought about (to history pure and simple) and still more basically to the very becoming of that which arrives in history, that is, to the *becoming of being*, which, being mind, must go out into the domain of exteriority in order to be then able to retake possession of itself in a knowledge mediated by itself.

What is really in question in this whole process in which philosophy takes root as a moment of science and consciousness is precisely the *production of the mind*.

In my opinion, it is from this aspect that we must search for the reason Hegel stresses that the answer to the question, “How can philosophy have a history?” is enmeshed in a metaphysics of time, or forces a whole consideration of its “being in time” (Hegel 1993 [SM1820], 29–30).

In order to *be*, the mind—because it is such—needs to *know itself*. And in order to be able to accomplish this task it is absolutely necessary for it to objectify itself in a framework of exteriority, from which, after a necessary schism and splitting in two, it can return to itself enriched by its own journey, by the intervention of a thought which puts it in communion with itself.

Not only the circle of nature—“the self-externality of the Notion” (Hegel 1969, 608)—*time* also turns out to be a vector and a modality in this external field of manifestation, steeped in, inwardly penetrated by, its lasting nature. One of the modes of self-externality is time (Hegel 1993 [SM1820], 30), or, to recall the well-known formula of the *Phenomenology of the Mind*, “Time is just the notion definitely existent (Hegel 1967, 584).

6. Of temporality at the heart of ontology

The Hegelian conception of philosophy and history thus spills over straight into a *philosophy of history*—“The philosophy of history coincides with philosophy” (Hegel 1993, [SK1823/4], 140).

That which in the order of this discourse, and in that of the reflection that sets it in motion, might appear as an opening to valorization, or as a consequence at which one must arrive, presents itself retrospectively as the site of birth, as the condition of the blossoming of philosophy itself. Without real history as the soil of implantation, there is no philosophy.

And the road of return to a land of foundations is never as such completely traveled. There still remains one step to climb.

By means of a whole series of mediations, this return from the history of philosophy to a philosophy of history reveals an *ontology of temporality*—or perhaps, strictly speaking, an inscription of *temporality* at the very heart of ontology. Rather than happening *in* history, being cannot do without history.

7. An engagement in the thought of its own time

The history of philosophy leads us to a *philosophy of history* in a constituent manner because each philosophy, in its particular determinations, is no more than *its own time* recaptured in a thought that gathers together and elaborates its conceptual characteristics: “Philosophy is the notion of the entire form of historical life at a given time” (Hegel [SK1819], 125); “Philosophy is fully identical with the spirit of its time. It therefore does not stand above time, but is the consciousness, knowledge, of what is substantial at the time, that is, it is the thoughtful knowledge of that which is at the time” (Hegel 1993 [SK1825/26], 237).

Assuredly, the handling of these propositions mobilizes some inferences and also conditions certain implications. This approach to philosophy presupposes, in particular, that philosophy is the “supreme flowering” of the mind at each epoch (Hegel 1993, [SK1827/28], 295), and consequently that all philosophies are mortal in regard to the very letter of their doctrines, only able to survive in that which relates to their principles (cf. Hegel 1995, 1:46). It could just as well be that the prohibitions touching the future flow out of them.

However, I think that this Hegelian association of a philosophy determined at a given time does not incorporate a uniquely restrictive design, not a turning of the gaze to the simple flow of past events. Quite the contrary: a whole horizon of *present* responsibilities comes to the foreground.

This intrinsic temporal junction of philosophies places each philosophy in front of the unavoidable task of being involved in a thought of its own time, in the most serious manner—“in this regard, it is especially needful to make once again a serious

business of philosophy” (Hegel 1967, 125)—and especially alerts them to the processes and temptations of only rehashing dated and irreparably recycled philosophemes: “Mummies” when brought amongst living beings cannot there remain” (Hegel, 1995, 1:46–7).

The novelty of the questions that history never ceases asking us must bring forth new answers from a thought that is watchful—“Philosophy is not sleepwalking” (Hegel 1993 [SK1820/21], 34)—and always living, ready to take up the challenge:¹⁰ “The mind pacifies itself only in the knowledge of its originality” (Hegel 1993 [SM1820], 50).

8. The human mediation of a patient but troubling labor

Let us come back, however, to the philosophy of history.

A thoughtful, philosophic consideration of history discovers there an immense and patient work of the mind (Hegel 1967, 89–91),¹¹ impassioned and passionate (the passion is not there for nothing¹²), that human beings perform throughout successive generations: “The inner architect of history, the eternal absolute Idea, . . . realizes itself in humanity (Hegel 1975, 1065).¹³

World history is not circumscribed by the single spectacle of a many-colored collection of discrete and contingent events; it is the plateau or the stage on which the mind *produces itself*, in the double meaning that it *exhibits* and *makes* itself there: “The mind, however, is in the theater in which we view it, in world history, in its most concrete reality (Hegel 1970d, 29).

It is about a performance that engages, that connects, and that reveals the multiple universe of human activities, in the concretization of their contradictions, of their sufferings, of their hopes, of their experiences:

This immeasurable mass of wills, interests, and actions are the tools and means of the world spirit, its goal to accomplish, to bring it into consciousness, and make it a reality. (Hegel 1970d, 40)

The “reason” that clears the paths of realization in history is woven and entwined with these drives, these pulses, these advances, and these retreats. The history of the mind is not a

quiet walk without surprises: it experiences fierce struggles, changes, revolutions;¹⁴ it endures the existence, often prolonged, of evil and of the irrational;¹⁵ it knows the detours and the retreats (Hegel 1993 [SK1819], 116); in the course of its changeable development, it has wounds to dress (Hegel 1967, 676).

9. “*That which is*”

We are approaching the place where the *ontological* resolution of this whole problem of history is revealed in the most gripping manner.

To tell the truth, what *is*, what *is there*, what *is in process*, what philosophical thought has to seize through the intervention of an elevation to the rank of the “notion” known through concrete truth (Hegel 1969, 437–8)—it is this becoming one and many, structured and moving, of *being* (understood not in the technical Hegelian sense of *Sein*, as in indeterminate immediate [Hegel 1969, 81], but in the wider sense in which we discern it), where the action and the knowledge of human beings are inscribed as basic ingredients and historical “agencies” of mediation that gives its determined aspect to the change.

The *philosophy of history*, the thought of what arrives and perfects itself in the trials of time, opens up on an *ontology* in which, in Hegelian terms, *that which is*, that which *is in process*, is the mind, is reason. From now on we are in the position to comprehend better the historic and ontological import of well-known (and often abstractly used) words from the introduction to the *Philosophy of Law* of 1821: “*That which is* to be understood is the task of philosophy, and that *which is* is reason” (Hegel 1970d, 26).

“*That which is*” is clearly not “that which *exists*.” Hegel once again stressed this in his last courses of 1831, the notes of which taken by David Friedrich Strauss are available to us: “not everything that exists is real, the bad is in itself broken and nothing (Strauss 1974, 923).

The determined “existences,” in their subsistence and their tensored encroachment, all the while being constituents of *being* in different aspects and with the marks of its rationality that negativity fashions, are still not either the interrupted figure nor its

concrete expression. History crosses and breaks down the limits and barriers of immediate positivity that it surmounts and is engulfed in new constellations.

That which is—that is to say, the mind in its “absolute actuality” (cf. Hegel 1970a 101)¹⁶—is immersed in time. It digs the furrow and the vector of history that humans work, fill, and complete, coming to the end of a task that, at each step, concerns them, enlists them, and overwhelms them. Nevertheless, it is always true that the assistance of their intervention remains irreplaceable: “What is, is *in itself* rational, but not yet *for* humans, for consciousness; only through action and motion of thought will the rational be true for them” (Hegel 1970c, 405–6). It is by means of a history humanly wrought and conceived that the mind is able to complete itself, that being is formed and transformed from the inside itself.

10. The lesson of Hegel

It is high time to conclude. Let us extract certain results which flow from the reflection that we have just described and point us toward other tasks to follow and undertake.

The great lesson of Hegel on the subject of the philosophy of history

—is not the research and the reconstruction of its intelligible agency by way of logical derivation from the series of conceptual determinations of the idea (cf. Hegel 1993 [SM1820], 27);

—is not the grandiose narrative of the global odyssey of the Logos, reclothed in justificatory traits of a secular theodicy (cf. Hegel 1970d, 540);

—is not the solemn proclamation of a next perfection of history as a Western apotheosis of freedom (cf. Hegel 1970d, 134);

—is not the final dissolution of the materiality of being in the concrete ideality of a mind that by definition produces, sustains, and encompasses everything (cf. Hegel 1969, 154–6).

The great lesson of Hegel, which cannot be measured or

followed except by going beyond Hegel, is this return from history to an ontology in construction, of which we humans are the theoretical and *practical* mediators in a rational design of inscription of humanity in being.

It is indeed this lesson that we have to learn again under transformed conditions and in the course of the transformations that are ours.

History is not only to tell and render intelligible what was once mastered in its details but shrouded in the limits of the past (cf. Hess 1980, 82–3); history is no longer to be supplemented by reassuring claims for the future, or a postponed and damaging fatalism coupled with a refreshing rhetoric of “action” and of more or less disguised “historio-sophic” exercises of “historio-pneusty” (cf. von Cieszkowski 1981, 43–4).

An adventure of its past with multiple paths and gaps in its prospective present, history is also an affair *to be made*, an undertaking in progress in determined and transformable conditions, and it is from inside this “work piece,” already begun, that space must be hollowed out again—now more than ever required before (if you will permit the rather resounding expression)—for thought.

Because it is surely not a question of problems of pure, abstract theory, because our interest is involved, because our intervention is concerned, let us know how to raise and pursue this challenge of thought. It will not have the last word, but its words are necessary and may count for something, provided that they contribute to enlightening the unavoidable work of the real and transformative possibilities.

In its general contours, the task is not essentially different from the one that Marx alluded to in a well-known letter to Arnold Ruge, where the whole bearing of the program resonates:

Thus we do not confront the world dogmatically with a new principle, proclaiming: Here is the truth, kneel down before it! We develop for the world new principles out of the principles of the world. (1979, 32)

Of course, all this still presupposes that, despite the efforts that some display to achieve the end of history, history is nevertheless not at an end. We do not need to remember Ludwig

Feuerbach to draw up the report and to avow that “today is not doomsday, the present is not the end of history” (1984, 202–3).

The precise examination of these developments would definitely demand an entirely different paper and another framework, that is to say, a more detailed analysis of how every philosophy of history only offers us a vision of the past from the starting point of a prior understanding of the present, from which the production of the effects directed toward the future is in no way excluded.

Department of Philosophy
University of Lisbon
Lisbon, Portugal

Translated from the French by April Ane Knutson
Department of French and Italian
University of Minnesota

NOTES

1. Going back to Aristotle’s well-known formula, Hegel tells us that in the science of what is, insofar as it is, ontology is what we call logic (1995, 2:137–8). Strictly, for Hegel, ontology, sometimes identified as the “former metaphysics,” becomes an “objective logic” encompassing the figures of being and essence that a “subjective logic” or “Notion” would in turn envelope (1969, 63–4).

In the categorial framework being used in the present article, “ontology” gathers together in general terms all thought of “that which is,” independently of the determined content that has come to be assigned to it in the viewpoints of the various doctrines.

2. In philosophy we are not dealing with “that which either first was or will be, but with that which *is* and eternal is, with reason” (Hegel 1970d, 114—translated from the German by the editor)

3. Quotations from works with German titles in the Reference List were translated by the editor.

4. Cf. also Hegel 1993 [SM1820], 13.

5. “Opinion” is called chance thought. It can be deduced from “mine.” It is a concept of which mine is, and thus is no universal” (Hegel 1993 [SK1827/28], 281).

6. “In the content, however, that philosophy has, there are no actions and external occurrences of emotions and luck, but there are thoughts” (Hegel 1993, 29).

7. "But philosophy is not meant to be narration of happenings but a cognition of what is *true* in them, and further, on the basis of this cognition, to *comprehend* that which, in the narrative, appears as a mere happening" (Hegel 1969, 588).

8. "There is nothing rational that is not the result of thought. The free thought is the thought which draws upon itself" (1993 [SK1825/26], 209).

9. For a perception of the whole, see Hegel 1995, 3:552–3.

10. "We must not expect to find questions of our consciousness and the interest of the present world responded to by the ancients" (Hegel 1995, 1:45). "The mind takes on tasks that were not tasks for an older philosophy" (Hegel 1993, [SK1827/28, 293]).

11. For a basic framework, see Hegel 1970d, 19–20.

12. "Nothing great in the world is accomplished without passion" (Hegel 1970d, 29).

13. This theme and metaphor are, of course, present in many other texts.

14. "The new emerges only in the changes that occur on the mental ground" (Hegel 1970d, 74).

15. "A sick body also exists, but it has no truthful reality" (Hegel 1970b, 429).

16. "The universal spirit does not stand still" (Hegel 1993 [SM1820], 7).

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Corporate Ideology and Literary Criticism: How the New Right Pushes the Ideology of Exploitation in the Field of Literary Studies and What to Do about It

Grover C. Furr

The thesis of this paper is that the program of the New Right in literary studies is to promote critical theories that legitimate capitalist exploitation.

Much excellent research has been done on how the academic Right is funded by right-wing corporate foundations with an explicitly procapitalist agenda. But there is little or none about why these sources now also fund literary organizations. I intend to explore this connection briefly, moving from the financial ties (which are clear) to the ideological ones (which are little discussed). I will concentrate on the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics (ALSC). It is unique, or virtually so, among groups funded by right-wing corporate foundations and promoted by explicitly right-wing ideological groups, like the National Association of Scholars (NAS), in that it claims in its bylaws that its sole purpose is “to promote excellence in literary criticism and scholarship” (*ALSC Newsletter* 1995, 9). One of its founders, Norman Fruman (professor of English at the University of Minnesota), claims in the group’s first newsletter that

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the organization is open to all those with a genuine interest in the study of literature. While accepting support from individuals, institutions, and foundations that share its concerns, it is not and will not be identifiable with any ideological position or political agency. (1995, 7)

No one who has read the ALSC newsletters, however, could be under the slightest doubt that this is a fraudulent claim by the ALSC leadership, for these newsletters pullulate with hostility toward any criticism centered on their unholy trinity of “gender/race/class,” and lament “the disintegrating state of literary studies,” “the gloomy state of literary studies,” “the growing menace political correctness posed to free speech and academic freedom,” and so on. Fruman himself admits that

a new literary society was needed, one whose primary focus would be on literature as literature and not as something else (surely the basic principle of the New Criticism), an organization that would provide those who had not lost faith in the unique value of literature with a sense of solidarity. (*ALSC Newsletter* 1995, 5)

Steven Balch, the NAS president, was “present at the creation” of ALSC, and the seed money came—for expensive advertisements in *The New York Review of Books* and elsewhere—from the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation. Harry Bradley, a John Birch Society member and contributor to the *National Review* (People for the American Way, n.d.), set up this foundation with his electronics fortune. Its president, Michael Joyce, is former president of the Olin Foundation, whose activities are “intended to strengthen the economic, political, and cultural institutions . . . upon which private enterprise is based.” Another former Olin Foundation president is William Simon, Nixon’s friend and former secretary of the treasury, who wrote in his book *Time for Truth*:

Funds generated by business . . . must rush by the multimillion to the aid of liberty . . . to funnel desperately needed funds to scholars, social scientists, writers and

journalists who understand the relationship between political and economic liberty. (Parry 1996)

Bradley is one of the “four sisters,” the major right-wing foundations that the National Committee on Responsive Philanthropy has found to be supporting “free markets” and “freedom for business” (Parry 1996). Ellen Messer-Davidow has published an excellent compendium of information about the corporate funding for the so-called “cultural conservatives.” I would like to acknowledge its help and recommend it to you all.

As for the ALSC’s claim that the source of its funds will not affect its views, listen to Michael Lind, former conservative propagandist, in his book *Up From Conservatism*:

By the early 1990s, . . . almost all major conservative magazines, think tanks, and even individual scholars had become dependent on money from a small number of conservative foundations. (cited by Parry 1996)

As noted by Robert Parry, Lind watched conservative writers develop a “reflexive self-censorship,” avoiding topics that might offend the foundations. “Good team players would advance, from grant to grant, in the manner of superstars Charles Murray and Dinesh D’Souza; troublemakers would . . . have their funding cut off” (1996).

In the case of ALSC, the pretense of being apolitical is a paper-thin disguise. But it is certain that many of the ALSC’s members do not fully recognize the extent to which they have affiliated with a wing of the militant Right’s campaign to promote the corporate agenda of elitism and censorship in literary studies and, as I will argue below, the same values in the larger society.

Recall that Fruman’s inaugural article in the *ALSC Newsletter* decried the “growing menace” of “political correctness.” As has been demonstrated time and again, “political correctness” is a myth—a lie, pure and simple. Study after study—most recently, John K. Wilson’s *The Myth of Political Correctness* (1995)—has demonstrated that the horror stories that made the term famous are either completely or largely lies. It is in the interest of the Right to use this lie, but anyone who reads what is written about it cannot be ignorant of the mendacity involved.

The ALSC is founded on exclusion: certain critical approaches are in reality declared off limits, regardless of the language of the by-laws (*ALSC Newsletter* 1995, 9). This is also obvious from the harsh language used to describe the Modern Language Association (MLA). The ALSC founders bemoan the decline of the New Criticism, and have declared that they would like to reinstate something very much like it.

The ALSC leadership is now trying to lead the organization toward political activism to promote its conservative cultural goals. At its Boston convention in August 1996, many in attendance were opposed to the notion, advocated by ALSC president Roger Shattuck, that the organization should pursue “a measured increase in activism.” The leadership managed to get the convention to pass a statement opposing the Standards for the English Language Arts of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). The convention statement includes the ominous line: “Literary criteria are subverted by a relentless and misguided intellectual egalitarianism.” It also endorses the leadership’s proposal for an “examination and critique” of composition and freshman English courses. President Shattuck averred that “we must not abandon those students to essentially non-literary programs and approaches” (*ALSC Newsletter* 1996, 12–13).

As always, the ALSC leadership arrogates to itself the sole authority over what is, and what is not, “essentially literary.” Finally, the group will also conduct “an inquiry into the present state of training in doctoral programs in literature.” There can be little doubt that the ALSC leadership will use the results of these “studies” to advocate the exclusion—in other words, censorship—of “essentially nonliterary programs and approaches” (*ALSC Newsletter* 1996, 12–13).

What we have here is hypocrisy, or, to use a better term, a “hidden agenda” on the part of the ALSC leadership. They use the bait of “pure” formalism to appeal to humanists who are sick of cultural studies, postmodernism, Marxism, and explicitly political (as opposed to implicitly political, à la New Criticism) approaches to literature. But now they are trying to use their audience’s desire for formalism to create, not a “refuge from the politicization of literary study” (12–13, 9), but an activist

organization with a truly authoritarian agenda: expunging critical and multicultural material from composition textbooks, changing NCTE standards to eliminate “egalitarianism,” and attacking the direction of graduate study. No pure researchers after literary form are they (12–13, 7, 6)!

At least one other organization of cultural conservatism, the journal *New Criterion*, has long been issuing attacks on what it has termed the “academic political left,” including the ALSC, the MLA, and Teachers for a Democratic Culture, while supposedly opposing “the politicization of scholarship.” Harvey Mansfield, another conservative recipient of right-wing foundation funds, has conceded: “It’s ironic that conservatives have to use politics to rid the campus of politics, but we do” (Messer-Davidow 1993, 67).

You will never read a more aggressively political book (or a more dishonest one, filled with lies that have by now been thoroughly documented) than Dinesh D’Souza’s *Illiberal Education*, which also attacks multiculturalism for being “political” (see Wilson 1995, 15, 69–72, and *passim*). The New Criticism, with which ALSC founders have associated themselves and their aims, was itself a reaction to the socially and historically engaged criticism of the “Red decade” of the 1930s, inspired mainly by the Communist movement. Alan Filreis of the University of Pennsylvania reminds us that the anti-Communism of the 1950s is the essential background for understanding the “anti-P.C.” Right today, as it is for understanding the hegemony of New Criticism and of closely similar, formalist critical movements like the Chicago Neo-Aristotelians (1995). John K. Wilson’s book points out that the attack on P.C. is anti-Marxist first and foremost (1995, 14).

The MLA is attacked because, for the past fifteen years or so, it has provided a space for diverse, multicultural, and more explicitly political critical approaches, including—almost unique in U.S. higher education today—Marxist criticism. This space is what the Right believes must be wiped out, in the name of combating P.C. To the right-wing academics who were instrumental in forming the ALSC, “diversity” is a code word for subversion. Nothing shows more clearly their essentially totalitarian nature,

as Wilson has demonstrated by quoting National Association of Scholars president Steven Balch, Roger Kimball, and George Will (1995, 22).

All these cultural conservatives—individuals, associations, and organizations—decry “politicization” while they themselves propagate and proselytize a heavily political agenda. And all—*New Criterion*, Dinesh D’Souza, the NAS, the ALSC, and many other groups and individuals engaged in the same project—are funded by the same small group of fabulously wealthy corporate foundations.¹

Let me stress once again that many of ALSC’s rank-and-file members do not share the culturally conservative political aims of its leadership. Its Graduate Student Caucus expressed these fears very clearly, as reported in the *ALSC Newsletter* (1996, 14). The same source acknowledged that the rush towards activism on the leadership’s part became “the chief topic of contention” at the business meeting.

* * *

The task remains of dealing seriously with the connection between the New Right’s goals in the sphere of literature and those of the “free market” capitalists who fund them. This connection is not hard to find, but it is too rarely made explicit. The ALSC pushes corporate ideology in the field of literature just as other organizations funded by the corporate Right push it in other fields (e.g., the law and economics movement in legal studies). Lawrence Soley’s study, *Leasing the Ivory Tower: The Corporate Takeover of Academia*, shows with devastating thoroughness how higher education has caved in to corporate values in virtually every other field (1995). He makes a compelling case that it is this move towards accommodating corporations (“privatizing” is the euphemism often employed) that has marginalized teaching and raised tuition to the detriment of student interests. The NAS and the ALSC represent an ongoing attack on language and literature, for these are just about the only fields of study where dissident viewpoints, including Marxism, are still tolerated.

I will not repeat here the thorough demonstrations by other scholars of how New Criticism and similar critical schools are

essentially authoritarian and elitist, and how any attempt to depoliticize literature (or any human activity) is a promotion of passive acquiescence in status quo economic and power relations. I wish to emphasize, however, that this is what constitutes corporate ideology in the field of literature.²

By *ideology* I mean a false consciousness engendered by the capitalist system due to the fact that relations of exploitation are masked by exchange, the “cash nexus” Marx analyzed.³ Studying and thinking about the support for purportedly “apolitical” literary criticism, “traditional” research, and New Critical values by such heavy-handedly political organizations as the NAS and foundations like Bradley should teach us what they already know: not only that these approaches and values serve the purposes of exploitation, but how they do so. “Traditional,” “apolitical” literary criticism abets and furthers exploitation ideologically by reinforcing authoritarian ideas and institutions that encourage working people to accept their exploitation or even to embrace it.

The conservative political agenda can be stated simply: lower the cost of labor. This is what William Simon and Michael Joyce, quoted above, are talking about. In fact, this is what the anti-Communism of the thirties, the fifties, and the present is all about, too. This is why this kind of criticism is authoritarian, undemocratic, anti-working class, and beloved by capitalists.

Lowering the cost of labor means lowering the standard of living of almost everyone who works for a living except cops, top-level managers, and coupon-clippers—the rich. Every policy the “conservatives” support serves this goal by either (1) directly lowering the cost of labor and the standard of living of working people; or (2) supporting values that justify inequality and exploitation and that attempt to pit one section of the working population against another—in other words, ideologies that justify lowering the cost of labor. Thus, conservatives concentrate on “values” purely to promote values that facilitate the subordination of working people to their bosses.

An excellent example is NAS’s spearheading of the attack on affirmative action in California. It is very clear that “reverse ‘discrimination’” is a myth. But racism is profitable, getting cheaper labor from Blacks, Hispanics, and other “minorities,”

who have been used as cheap labor by employers since the inception of slavery. Many conservatives came from the South, where the elite were able to keep labor costs and living standards low for most whites by telling working-class whites that anything Blacks got would be taken from them. The conservatives are doing the same thing today. Better for them that white and Black workers blame each other for their lower living standard than that both white and Black blame those really responsible—the corporations.

Once understood as a more aggressive version of capitalist ideology—justification for exploitation and subordination—the politics of conservative criticism can be exposed as a part of the generalized attack on the working class by corporate interests.

Since the Vietnam War, U.S. capitalism has faced a greater threat of competition from other major capitalist powers, lowering the rate of profit. At the same time, no effective movement for reform, much less for revolution, exists, like the mass, Left-led movement based on the working-class of the thirties and forties that constituted the material basis for mildly redistributive reforms aimed at saving capitalism from revolution. No current force has been strong enough to oppose the recent corporate onslaught.

It is essential to recognize the connection between corporate funding of corporate capitalist ideology to justify exploitation, and the right-wing ideological attack, including that in literary studies, for another reason: it points up the primacy of class as an analytical category. Only a Marxist class analysis really threatens exploitation. Feminism and affirmative action are attacked in this corporate strategy because women and nonwhites have historically been, and remain, a source of superexploitation essential to capitalist profits, as well as because sexism and racism are elitist ideologies that prevent working-class unity. But we can see that only class analysis is really oppositional, if we understand (rightly) the opponent to be a corporate ideology that exists primarily to rationalize the self-interest of the ruling class.

An aside on “oppositionality”: opening up the canon and focusing on issues of gender/race/class are also attempts at emancipatory activity. At the same time, however, critical theories that privilege the first two categories have also arisen out of

anti-Communism, as a result of cynicism about class as an analytical paradigm—a cynicism caused by the failure of avowedly Marxist societies to build free, nonexploitative, egalitarian societies based on the working class. This anti-Communism and cynicism explain why *class* is the part of the gender/race/class triad that is usually ignored. Or when it is not ignored, it is treated as one more *subject position*, in the manner of identity politics. To quote Neilson and Meyerson, this liberal view is

a perception of class not as a structural property designating one's position in the mode of production but as an individual property. Class is reduced to a matter of income, status, and life-style. (1996, 244)

Class is thus not seen as the fundamental analytical category the use of which is necessary for the accurate understanding of capitalist society.

What do we do?

We should be under no illusions: the corporate ideological assault on socially and politically engaged approaches to literature will be stepped up. This is guaranteed by the Right's success in pushing justifications for exploitation in all other academic areas, and by its virtually bottomless pockets. Some response is necessary, therefore, and in fact has already begun. Here is a modest draft of what we should do.

1. Stop acting as though debate is the way to meet and defeat this attack. The advice of Gerald Graff (1992) and others to "teach the conflict" is appealing to many, but it is dangerously naive, because it ignores the extent to which this battle is not over misunderstanding, but over power. Gregory Jay writes:

For academics, debating the right's foundation intellectuals is bound to be an exercise in frustration, since they do not abide by the standards of research and scholarly integrity demanded on campus. Since the goal of a D'Souza or a Cheney is power and influence, not a better understanding of the world, their factual errors and misrepresentations are regularly recirculated no matter how often they are disproved. The danger of the cultural right . . . lies not so

much in their ideas as in the establishment of a well-funded industry for producing, disseminating and legitimating them . . . The careful and often tedious scholarly process for producing and evaluating ideas has been junked. In its place is a reckless publicity machine that subordinates truth and facts to the political interests of a power elite. . . . The delegitimation of higher education, like the delegitimation of public education as a whole, belongs to a larger effort to privatize American life and so shift the power over culture to those who can pay for it. Thus everyone gets diverted arguing about political correctness or tenured radicals, while ignoring the real news: the transfer of intellectual power from the public sphere to an alternative intellectual universe of privately funded special-interest organizations. (1996)

2. Stop playing Clinton to the Dole of the academic—and the corporate—Right. Do not “move toward the right” in a completely futile attempt to placate these critics, as the MLA Executive Council is doing in pushing proposals to make the taking of political stands by the MLA harder and harder.⁴

This is just what the “cultural conservatives” and their corporate capitalist sponsors want, because more Vietnams and more mass murders like those in Guatemala and El Salvador, pushed by U.S. capitalists in order to secure sources of cheap labor and impoverish us, our colleagues, and our students, are on the way. The cultural conservatives, and the corporate interests bankrolling them, do not want the campuses to be bases of political opposition as they have been so often in the past.

Furthermore, since the conflict of interest between working people—including ourselves—and employers is absolute, those who are pushing the employers’ agenda are implacable: they will never be satisfied. Take the route of compromise or retreat, and you will either end up one of them, as not a few former radicals and liberals have—witness Frank Lentricchia’s essay in *Lingua Franca* (1996), excerpted with glee in the *ALSC Newsletter* (1996)⁵—or, by the time you decide to fight, you will have ceded too much.

3. Forget the idea of the “media as site of contestation.” Michael Bérubé (1994) and Henry Giroux (1995) are among the opponents of the right-wing upsurge in the academy who have fallen prey to the comforting illusion that the Left can fight the Right by becoming more “media-savvy,” better at PR. The mass media are big business, tightly controlled. Left, class-conscious voices that expose the corporate agenda and fight it will never be anything but a marginal presence there, because it is against the corporate interest. Nor is “talk radio” a venue we can triumph in, or the mass media generally (see Bagdikian 1992).

4. Historicize and, above all, demystify. Expose the relationship between the cultural (as well as the social) agenda of the Right and exploitation. This is a field on which we can win our students, and many others. Cultural conservatism can be exposed for what it is: an attack on all working people—the vast majority of our students—but only if we make the connections tirelessly and clearly between exploitation and the attacks on affirmative action, feminism, homosexuality, and, especially, on the working class. Because it is the conflict of interest between employers and employees, bosses and workers, which is the fundamental issue the Right wants to hide. Because exploitation—profit—is first and last what is at stake, class is first and last the issue we must speak to. No class analysis—no demystification.

Many of our colleagues who have good intentions are very uncomfortable with this kind of analysis, and would much rather appeal to vaguer, humanistic values, or to ideas of pluralism, diversity, respect for the minority, etc. But none of these alternate ways of valorizing or justifying the opening of the literary canon and the teaching of dissident critical perspectives really speaks to the essential contradiction, to exploitation. Therefore, we must not water down, much less abandon, our exposure of the basis of the conservative cultural and social onslaught in the desire to further and justify exploitation, and to drastically lower the standard of living of working people for the sake of raising profits.

5. Finally, we must “bell the cat.”⁶ We must talk about capitalism. The inhuman system of capitalism is the root cause of all these horrors. Everything goes back to that. The power to exploit, and make people sit still for it—or at least not fight to get rid of

the system that makes exploitation possible—is the essence of this struggle over values, including literary values.

Many people—many of our friends, colleagues, students—feel uneasy talking about capitalism, because the old Communist movement talked about capitalism—often very convincingly—yet finally failed to build the egalitarian, nonexploitative societies for which it aimed. We must overcome this reluctance. No clear alternative to capitalism will be possible until we have convinced millions—starting with ourselves—of that truth to which all analysis points: capitalist exploitation is at the root of these horrors.

We have to point out tirelessly that capitalism is no more “justifiable” or “humane” than was slavery or feudalism. We must constantly expose it. And, when our students and colleagues ask us: What’s the alternative? we must say: A society free of exploitation; one run by those who work; a society that does not try to justify inequality and poverty for many in order to justify abundance for a few. This is the age-old ideal of the majority of the human race, after all. That the Bolsheviks and the Comintern failed to realize it is no reason for us to give in and accept exploitative capitalism as eternal.

Only one hundred sixty years ago—when my own great-grandfather was already an adult—chattel slavery seemed an eternal part of human nature, as Aristotle had claimed. It had existed since before the earliest historical records. Yet in a century this ancient institution, this form of exploitation, had all but vanished. Like chattel slavery, wage slavery is a function of specific forms of social organization, of definite historical forms of exploitation. Capitalism has a history: a beginning, and also—and inevitably—an end.

History shows that the competition between powerful capitalist/imperialist states—of which “cultural conservatism” is a product and a reflection—ultimately lead to wars of massive destruction. Already they have led to the military adventures in Central America, Kuwait/Iraq, Somalia, and most recently in the former Yugoslavia. The “culture wars” are a prelude to the real wars, and the accompaniment of the devastation of working- and middle-class communities at home.

The economic crisis in the profession is constantly before us as an example of the real consequences of this system for junior faculty, adjuncts, part-timers, and students. The fight against the Right in the field of literature is a part of this larger fight, and it is worth fighting to win.

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English Department
Montclair State University
Upper Montclair, New Jersey

NOTES

1. See, e.g., *People for the American Way* (n.d.) and Messer-Davidow 1993.

2. An early, historical account of how the reactionary, racist Southern Agrarian movement spawned the New Criticism is given in Karanikas 1966, chap. 10: “The New Criticism.” Since then Karanikas and many other scholars have identified and analyzed the reactionary and Cold War politics of the New Critics and the New York Intellectuals—groups also linked by Karanikas. See Foley 1984. Lawrence Schwartz, Geraldine Murphy, and others have shown how New Critical values were applied to reread central figures in U.S. literature (see Murphy 1988 and 1994, and Schwartz 1988). On the reactionary critical affinities between New Criticism and postmodernism, see Lentricchia 1980 and Graff 1979. A succinct analysis is in Ohmann 1996, 79–90.

3. This is one common understanding of the term “ideology,” though it combines the fifth and sixth definitions offered by Terry Eagleton (1991, 30).

4. In the late 1980s the MLA came under attack from the academic Right centered in the NAS. Instead of responding in kind, the MLA leadership retreated, and has continued to do so. Several years ago the MLA membership, at the leadership’s prompting, changed the constitution so that resolutions on issues other than those directly related to the profession cannot be considered. Resolutions against the Vietnam War or racism, unless narrowly tied to professional interests, would be ruled out of order. At the 1994 MLA convention in Toronto, a resolution against the U.S. invasion of Somalia was ruled out of order on these grounds.

In 1995 the MLA leadership went to extraordinary lengths to defeat a motion sponsored by Barbara Foley of the Radical Caucus that would have called for a vote on whether or not the constitution could be amended to its old form (which did permit political resolutions). In 1996 the MLA leadership used

the *Newsletter* to lobby for the viewpoint of the Yale administration and against the resolution, passed by the Delegate Assembly, in support of the Yale teaching assistants' strike. They lost anyhow, but angered many MLA members by their partisan stance.

At the 1996 convention in Washington, D.C., the MLA leadership tried various measures to change the resolutions process, succeeding with a measure to allow the Executive Council to hold up any resolution and bring it before the Delegate Assembly again the following year. This gives the leadership a tool with which to block any action against unjust treatment on any worksite issue, and makes quick action—exactly what made the Yale resolution important—almost impossible.

5. It is a contradictory piece, valorizing “enjoyment” of literature in the fashion of the New Criticism, but tracing Lentricchia's own love for reading to his discovery of Willard Motley's novel *Knock on Any Door*, a realist work of social criticism in the spirit of Richard Wright's *Native Son*. Motley himself was close to the Communist Party. This is far from the kind of high culture valued by New Critics or ALSC leaders.

Stanley Fish's recent work, while claiming to reject “the neo-conservative assault on the humanities, an assault made up of equal parts of ignorance and malice” (1995, x), fallaciously identifies “close reading” as the essence of literary criticism, and then identifies these skills as “new-critical style” (69). The whole work is a good example of the fundamental affinities between New Criticism and postmodernism.

6. In *Piers Plowman*, this story is used to refer to the attempt of the Commons to impose limits on royal power.

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Marx's Theory of Labor Exploitation

Greg Godels

John E. Roemer, a prominent figure in what has come to be called analytical Marxism, has left such an indelible mark on thinking about exploitation that many writers have lost touch with Marx's seminal and original views on the subject. A surprisingly large and quite influential group of academics believe that Roemer and his colleagues have (1) absorbed Marx's thinking on exploitation and (2) constructed a new and improved theory that outstrips the Marxian model. They are wrong on both counts. Moreover, uncritical acceptance of the new thinking on exploitation has tempted authors like Gilbert L. Skillman in his article "Marxian Value Theory and the Labor-Labor Power Distinction" (1996) to jettison important elements of Marx's position—like the labor-labor power distinction—without appreciating its essential role in the argument proffered by Marx.

To understand Marx's views on exploitation one must notice that the word had little currency before the middle of the nineteenth century. Steven Marcus (1974) notes that the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists 1847 as the first usage of the verb "exploit" in the relevant sense, though he mistakenly dates the first citation

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of the noun, “exploitation” in same sense to 1803. Nevertheless, the idea of exploitation predates the word’s English usage; working-class advocates were wrestling with various explanations for the extremes of poverty and enrichment brought on by the England’s rapid industrial growth at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century.

As Noel Thompson’s excellent study (1984) demonstrates, early theories of exploitation reached far and wide for an understanding of the factory system and its consequences. Writers saw the paper money system, taxation, restrictions on free labor, and other factors restrictive of the market or manipulative of prices as the basis for the exploitation of the workers in the factories. Of course, what all these theories shared was the ultimate potential for repair or reform of the system: if the money system were changed, if the taxes were removed, if the restrictions were lifted, or if the manipulations were stopped, then exploitation would cease. To quote Thompson’s vivid metaphor, “Radical writers [of the time] perceived the economic world as an aquarium in which all goes on swimmingly, or would except for the constant presence of a cat which periodically dips a paw to extract those material delicacies which best suits its palate” (1984, 121).

The cat, of course, was an opportunistic capitalist. Exploitation, like the cat’s intervention from outside the aquarium, was foreign to the normal operation of the economic system. Thus, the remedy for labor exploitation was to oil the economic engine, free it from all brakes or fetters, and let it perform for all.

With the popularization of classical political economy, supporters of the working classes found the conceptual tools to connect exploitation to the actual workings of the economic engine; to continue Thompson’s metaphor, exploitation was not a cat outside the aquarium, but a shark preying within. The tool, of course, was the labor theory of value, the idea that the value of all things, or minimally all human-made things, sprang from human effort, from labor. As an unintentional gift to advocates of labor, the labor theory of value was composed of two propositions. (1) A theory of value is central to an understanding of economic matters; determining what makes things valuable exposes the basis of producing, exchanging, and consuming. (2) Of those things that

could determine value, labor is the only candidate or the best candidate. Accepting both propositions, the working-class partisans recognized two consequences of the labor theory of value that seemed to be set against one another. Wealth is entirely, or for the most part, created by the laboring class and much of the wealth goes to the owning class. These advances placed the problem of labor exploitation in a new light. Instead of the capitalist deriving a tenuous advantage from historical contingencies like state intervention, taxes, or paper money, the labor theory of value exposed the systemic nature of capitalist exploitation. While the laborers created the wealth, the capitalist system rewarded the idle owners of capital. Thus was born a theory of exploitation that recognized that workers did not get their due even when the system functioned properly.

Thanks to this theoretical foundation borrowed from classical political economy, writers like Hodgskin, Gray, Thompson, and Bray—called by some “Ricardian socialists,” and called by Noel Thompson “Smithian socialists”—explored the meaning of labor exploitation from the perspective of labor’s fair share. Where the labor theory of value brought light to the question, it also brought a puzzle. How could the value of a commodity, a product of the capitalist mode of production, be an expression of the labor used in its production and yet those contributing their labor systematically receive value equivalents that are less than their contribution? Or, put another way, if the congealed and active labor engaged in producing a commodity and the commodity itself are exchanged value for value, what is the source of surplus value? How does the capitalist accrue a profit? To escape this quandary, these early socialists saw only unequal exchange as a source for labor exploitation; exploitation occurred precisely because commodities were not exchanged value for value, but rather in an unfair, unequal fashion—the capitalist bought and sold commodities below and above their value.

While the labor theory of value demonstrated that labor was not rewarded with its fair share, it failed to demonstrate how labor could be denied its due. Labor’s advocates were forced to maintain that the capitalists engaged in unequal exchange with either their suppliers, their workers, or with the consumers—in

short, exploitation was reduced to cheating; to make a profit, the capitalist must exchange less than value to acquire raw materials, machinery, or labor and/or exchange more than value in disposing of the product. Clearly, labor exploitation is, according to this view, a kind of cheating—not of the suppliers or the consumers, but of the workers. In chapter 5, *Capital I*, Marx addresses the issue of unequal exchange, completely rejecting it as the source of surplus value and thus demolishing the theories of exploitation constructed on unequal exchange harnessed to the labor theory of value. Unless there is a class that only buys (or only sells), “if equivalents are exchanged, no surplus value results, and if non-equivalents are exchanged, still no surplus value. Circulation, or the exchange of commodities begets no value.” (1996, 174). The substance of this argument is that if an economic actor can sustain an advantage over value in exchange, that actor will lose that advantage as other actors follow suit in their economic activity. Otherwise, appropriation of surplus value simply reduces to stealing. Or, taking the capitalist class as a whole, if they make their profit because all sell for more than the cost of production, then, asks Marx, mockingly quoting Destutt de Tracy, “to whom do they sell?” “In the first instance,” answers Destutt de Tracy, “to one another” (Marx, 173–4, n. 2). When everyone systematically steals from each other, stealing becomes meaningless. Thus, at the end of the day, one cannot have a coherent theory of labor exploitation within the framework of classical political economy.

But a new day dawns when Marx introduces into the framework of classical political economy an ingenious distinction. Rather than view labor as a unitary commodity both bought and sold in the market place and constitutive of value, let us separate labor’s role as a commodity, valued at the cost of its maintenance and reproduction and the power of that labor as it is used in the production of commodities. On the one hand, labor is the substance of value—a substance Marx invites us to call “labor value”; on the other hand, the capitalist purchases a different substance—dubbed “labor power”—which is itself a commodity with its own labor value. Thus, Marx’s theory of labor exploitation in *Capital I* offers the following features: it purports to locate exploitation within the economic system; exploitation is part of

the mechanism of capitalism and not an exogenous factor shaping or influencing that system; it purports to be scientific insofar as it is explicable within the framework of classical political economy and stands firmly within the bounds of the economics of his time; and it adds to the conceptual armory of classical political economy with the labor value–labor power distinction, allowing an understanding of exploitation without the untenable notion of systematic exchange above or below the value of commodities or the muddy moral and metaphorical notions of “cheating,” “stealing,” or the workers’ “fair share” or “due.”

The foregoing account of Marx’s theory of exploitation enjoys two virtues not acknowledged in Gilbert Skillman’s recent article, “Marxian Value Theory and the Labor–Labor Power Distinction (1996–97).” Firstly, my summary nests Marx’s theory in a historical context, locating the labor–labor value distinction within the framework of an intense nineteenth-century debate within the working-class movement over the nature of exploitation. Skillman’s easy dismissal of value theory and the labor–labor power distinction as “neither necessary nor adequate . . . in explaining capitalist exploitation” (428) does violence to that history. Failing to concede the terms of the historic debate leads Skillman to make the puzzling claim that, “contrary to Marx’s assertion, however, a coherent account of capitalist exploitation and profit need not proceed [quoting Marx] ‘in such a way that the starting-point is the exchange of [value] equivalents’” (429). But Marx only assumes exchange of value equivalents to demonstrate that exploitation could occur even when equal values are exchanged; he was not wedded to equal exchange, but committed to challenging those who believed that exploitation was simply a result of unequal exchange. Thus, we repeat, without labor–labor power distinction, “if equivalents are exchanged, no surplus value results, and if non-equivalents are exchanged, still no surplus value. Circulation, or the exchange of commodities, begets no value” (Marx, 1996, 174).

Secondly, my account affirms Marx’s theory as a substantial theory of capitalist labor exploitation and not merely a formal analysis of a general term. Marx, unlike many of his critics, understood that exploitation was a many-faceted, historically

shaped idea. While the idea emerged and achieved currency with the dawning of class consciousness in industrial England, exploitation could, by extension, be broadened to describe the expropriation of a surplus in any earlier society, preindustrial or protoindustrial. Moreover, in our time, exploitation has been extended beyond the bounds of labor exploitation to include sexual, racial, and other exploitations. While these extensions may suggest a need for a general, formal analysis of exploitation, this was not the project that engaged Marx. Rather, he sought a theory that would explain a particular, historically bound variety of exploitation—that associated with commodity production and the advent of labor as a commodity.* It was the existence of labor exploitation where labor was purchased and sold in the labor market that Marx found in need of elucidation in *Capital I*. Thus, to maintain, as Skillman does, following Roemer, that “alternate vehicles for surplus value” exist is surely interesting, but beside the point. The mere existence of labor exploitation outside of labor markets or in circumstances of ill-formed or nascent labor markets gives little or no clarity to our understanding of labor exploitation where labor is fully developed as a commodity. As Karl Polanyi observed, “The market for labor was, in effect, the last of the markets to be organized under the new industrial system. . . . Industrial capitalism as a social system cannot be said to have existed before that date [the emergence of a labor market]” (Polanyi, 1944, 77, 83). And it was industrial capitalism—the factory system that drew Marx’s attention in *Capital I*. His theory of exploitation developed in volume one was to fit that system and not another; it was not a general theory of exploitation, nor a general theory of labor exploitation, nor a theory of preindustrial labor exploitation, nor a theory of protoindustrial labor exploitation, but a theory of capitalist labor exploitation in the era of the factory system.

Indeed, Skillman’s argument takes a strange twist when he cites Berg’s point that “domestic and workshop manufacture . . . were based on the intensive exploitation of labor, . . . an exploitation at least equal to that suffered under the factory system” (Berg 1985, 19). While this is meant to show that there may be exploitation without a labor market, it also recognizes the

important distinction between exploitation grounded in a pre- or protocapitalist system and exploitation in a capitalist system. More importantly, in her later chapter, "Models of Manufacture," Berg carefully delineates Marx's model—it is exemplified by the engineering workshop, the *machine-factory* "which displayed the division of labor in manifold gradations—the file, the drills, the lathe having each its different workmen in the order of skill." "Marx's model of 'manufactures,'" she offers, "seems to have been a large workshop in the hands of a capitalist and organized on the basis of wage labour" (75). Clearly, Berg correctly takes Marx's sights to be on commodity production with labor itself a commodity—precisely the target of Marx's theory of exploitation.

Finally, we must address the claim that there are "alternative vehicles" better suited than Marx's theory to account for capitalist labor exploitation. Skillman regards John Roemer's well-known theory, derived from reviewing various possible world scenarios of exploitation, as an adequate alternative to Marx's theory. Does Skillman's rendition of Roemer's theory, that "the essential basis of capitalist exploitation is *differential ownership of relatively scarce productive assets*" accurately capture capitalist exploitation (Skillman 1996, 433; Roemer 1982, 21; Skillman's emphasis)? Is differential ownership necessary and/or sufficient for capitalist exploitation? Clearly, differential ownership of relatively scarce productive assets is not a sufficient condition for capitalist exploitation if those with a lack of productive assets (workers) withhold their labor and refuse to accept exploitation as their fate. In other words, wealth in assets alone—without the acquiescence of the workers—cannot produce capitalist labor exploitation. It is not the mere possession of greater assets that suffices for the capitalist to exploit workers, but what the capitalist can do by pressing that advantage.

Nor is differential ownership a *necessary* condition of capitalist labor exploitation. Exploitation occurs even when exploiter candidates enjoy no ownership advantage over workers in the case that workers agree to work for employers who are capital poor, yet perhaps effective snake-oil salesmen; it is not the advantage of assets that is necessary for exploitation, but the promise of employment and the worker's agreement to endure the

work that places him or her in a position to be exploited.

The problem with the Skillman/Roemer theory resides in the conflation of exploitation with inequality. Inequality may stimulate exploitation or be the result of exploitation, but it is surely not constitutive of exploitation any more than theft is a kind of inequality. Exploitation, like stealing, is an activity determined by historically evolved institutions and practices. Asset inequality—“differential ownership” to Skillman and Roemer—unlinked to these institutions and practices explains neither thievery nor exploitation.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

NOTE

*Marx (with Engels) does allow himself to speak of exploitation in general, formal, and abstract terms in a long polemic against Max Stirner in *The German Ideology* (Marx and Engels 1976, 408–14). There, a difficult, but richly suggestive, argument links exploitation to utility.

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The “Mutation” of the French Communist Party

April Ane Knutson and Erwin Marquit

The main document adopted at the Twenty-Ninth Congress of the French Communist Party, 18–22 December 1996 has been published by the Party organ *Cahiers du communisme* under the title “La politique du Parti communiste français” [The Policy of the French Communist Party]. At its previous congress in 1994, the Party declared itself a “Communist party of a new type.” At this latest congress the party completed what it calls “La Mutation,” which it describes as “a mutation in the sense that our conception of the society, of the world, of the revolution, of our role, is no longer that which for a long time inspired our action” (9). A reading of the document will indeed show that the Party has broken nearly all of the principal ideological linkages to the heritage of revolutionary Marxism launched by Marx and Engels in 1848 with the publication of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. In particular, this “mutation” represents the abandonment of that heritage of revolutionary Marxism that distinguished the Communist movement from social democratic reformism, reformism that has proved not only unable, but also unwilling, to transform society from capitalism to socialism in every case in which it has won enough parliamentary seats to form a government.

Although retaining the name “Communist,” the French CP rejects the “model” according to which the working class has a historic mission to abolish capitalism, no longer acknowledges the class character of the state, ceases to regard itself as a party

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of the working class, drops the concept of socialism as a transitional stage between capitalism and communism, and replaces the goal of the abolition of capitalism with the “overcoming of capitalism” without any change in property relations. The Party thereby eliminates Marxism as its ideological basis. It also discards the Leninist organizational principle of democratic centralism by identifying deformations of this principle with the principle itself, and so abandons the idea of unity of action that has been the historic source of strength of the Communist movement. The French CP is thereby transforming itself into a pluralist, non-Marxist organization, while still preparing to don the mantle of the principal bearer of the heritage of the Communist Manifesto on the occasion of its 150th anniversary in 1998.

It will be helpful for our critique to restate certain key elements in the theory rejected by the French Communist Party congress. We shall then be in a position to analyze critically the reasons the Party offers to justify its “mutation.”

In describing the basis of the historic vitality of the Communist movement, the Marxist-Leninist philosopher Hans Heinz Holz writes that

Communists, as Marxist-Leninists, distinguish themselves from other supporters of socialism in that their conceptions of the future social order and the path leading to it are based upon a theory of history, historical materialism, the essence of which was worked out by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. . . .

As a theory of history (drawing upon a comprehensive understanding of the processes of nature and the relationship between nature and history, upon dialectics of nature and dialectical materialism), Marxism-Leninism, by its very essence, cannot be a dogma, but a theory that assimilates history. Where it became mere dogma it very quickly lost touch with reality. Loss of creative theoretical development led to errors in the development of its practice and false conclusions. The communist movement has experienced such errors in its theoretical development even while its creative development continued. . . .

That a theory is capable of development does not mean that it can be changed in any *arbitrary* way. Marxism-Leninism would no longer be itself if it were to discard the recognition that all history is a history of class struggles. The basis of its scientific analysis of historical processes is the insight that the decisive driving force in history is the development of productive forces and their corresponding production relations, and that the development of productive forces proceeds in ever-present contradiction with the institutionalized stable form of production relations. (1993, 32–3)

Marx also characterized production relations as property relations. Marx demonstrated that the primary source of capitalist profit is the appropriation of surplus value, that is, that portion of the product of the labor of the working class that is not returned to workers directly and indirectly as wages. These production, or property, relations are therefore the basis of class relations. Marxist political economy considers as members of the working class all wage earners whose labor generates surplus value appropriated by their employers.

Marx concluded that this class has a direct interest in ending this form of exploitation. There are other classes—for example, small-farmers, small-scale entrepreneurs, and the self-employed—who, despite their ownership of the means of production, are exploited by big capital, primarily through the control of monopoly capital over the market and the credit institutions. Nevertheless, the class interest of the working class has a special character. The class interest of the working class,

at whose expense and against whose self-interest social wealth is created, lies in the alteration of property relations—and, because it is the only class that is opposed to these structures of appropriation, the establishment of a new social order is its *historic mission*. The opposition between capital and labor establishes the identity of the *working class* (regardless of the differences in the character of the work performed) as the class that is in a position to abolish the capitalist relations of production. To

materialize itself in activity as a *class* (and not just a sum of individuals) and thereby become the subject of this historical mission, it must acquire consciousness of the situation in which human beings in general and members of the working class in particular find themselves, that is, a *class-consciousness*. Various levels of class-consciousness will obviously arise from different experiences and not at all solely through theory; but class-consciousness must always be grounded on the theory of class society and class struggle. (Holz 1993, 34–5)

The key to the recognition of this historic mission is the understanding that there is an irreconcilable conflict of interest between labor and capital, that capital will always attempt to expand its exploitation of labor. A victory in struggle in one sector of the class struggle will inevitably give rise to efforts by capital to make up for its loss by increasing its exploitation in other areas.

The recognition of the need to support the development in the working class of a socialist consciousness and an awareness of its historical mission is a principal feature that distinguishes a Communist party from other parties that claim a socialist orientation and is the source of its vanguard character. Its vanguard character expresses itself only to the degree that the party succeeds in linking its participation in the day-to-day struggles of the working class to improve the conditions of its existence under capitalism to the goal of socialist transformation. The historic strengths and accomplishments of the Communist parties have always been associated with the organizational principle of democratic centralism, a principle enabling the party to display a remarkable unity of purpose and action. The essential elements of this principle involve (a) the election of a central leadership at a convention of elected delegates, (b) accountability of the elected bodies to those that elected them, (c) the acceptance of decisions adopted by majority vote, and (d) the disciplined implementation of decisions of higher bodies taken after appropriate consultation with the lower bodies affected by them. Local autonomy is respected and local initiatives encouraged as long as they are not in conflict with the unity of action of the party as a

whole. Party members are free to discuss and debate all matters of interest insofar as they do not obstruct the activities resulting from the implementation of decisions.

We shall now turn to the French CP congress document to examine its arguments in support of its mutation. The document states that the model that had previously inspired its activities

takes as a determining reality for the evolution of society the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class—the exploiting class and the exploited class. The working class thus has as “its historic mission” undertaking the guidance of society—for, in liberating itself, it would liberate the entire society—to abolish capitalism and to transform it into a socialist, and subsequently, communist society. All this implied the conquest, and then the exercise, of state power by the political party of the ‘working class, the Communist Party, and by allies grouped around it. This conception obviously had important consequences for the way in which we conceived our own role, for our relations with society, for our rules of behavior.

It permitted us to free ourselves from social democracy, to refuse to submit to the dominant forces, to defend the exploited and the oppressed—constants in our action. Such were the characteristics of our Communist identity that we want to preserve and promote in all circumstances.

But this model of thought clashed in many ways with the original French conception of citizenship, of politics, of the Republic, inherited from the Revolution of 1789—a conception that the Communists knew how to preserve in the great moments of our history by going beyond the constraints of this model. And it failed. Historical experience teaches that no social transformation can be brought about on behalf of the people that is not decided, guided, and controlled by them. And in such a transformation the ends and means must be in harmony. (9–10)

The last paragraph here evidently concludes that if the working class were to fulfill its historic mission to abolish capitalism and

guide the transformation of French society from capitalism to socialism, the right of the people as a whole to decide, guide, and control social transformations in France would be violated. Two fundamental questions are involved here. One, to which we shall return shortly, is whether or not the majority of the French population can be considered to be part of the working class. The second and perhaps more fundamental question is whether the working class, as the class that in emancipating itself will emancipate all other victims of oppression in a given country, has the right to proceed to its own emancipation.

By the storming of the Winter Palace on 7 November 1917 the Russian working class liberated itself. It ended capitalism. With the decree on nationalization of the land the next day, it ended the oppression of the peasantry. The peasantry had been unable to guide this process itself and accepted the leadership of the working class. Neither the successful slave revolt in Haiti, which transformed the slaves into free peasants a century before, nor the briefly successful Taiping peasant revolution of 1850 in China, was able to lead to the liberation of the peasantry from class oppression. The Chinese and Vietnamese national-liberation struggles that led to socialist transformations of their countries were (like the October Revolution in Russia) led by Communist parties based in the working class. Indeed to cite the Revolution of 1789 in order to challenge both the right and obligation of one class to guide a social transformation for other classes is rather strange. No one can claim that the French bourgeoisie in the Revolution of 1789 shared leadership with the French peasantry, who at that time constituted the overwhelming majority of the population.

The particular role of the working class in the revolutionary transformation from capitalism to socialism lies at the basis of the historical-materialist analysis of Marx and Engels and is the principal feature distinguishing scientific from utopian socialism. This distinction already forms the theoretical basis for the *Communist Manifesto*. The French CP document makes no explicit statement that it is dropping its Marxist worldview as the basis of its political and socioeconomic analyses. It has been doing that piecemeal since the midseventies, but the complete break

becomes clear when it rejects the basic conclusions of historical materialism concerning the historical role of the working class. The idea that the working class in liberating itself, would liberate the entire society is derived from the *Communist Manifesto*. "The proletarians cannot become the masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of existence" (Marx and Engels 1976, 495). The roots of this idea can be traced back to 1844 when Marx was considering why the German bourgeoisie, unlike the French bourgeoisie, lacked the resolve to overthrow feudalism. "What then is the *positive* possibility of a German emancipation?" asked Marx. And he concluded that the proletariat constitutes "the sphere, finally, which cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all other spheres of society and thereby emancipating all other spheres of society" (1975, 185). Marx, then, foresaw that the particular consequence of a working class liberating itself from oppressive property relations would be the liberation of all other classes oppressed by various types of property relations.

Whether or not the electoral process is open, Communist parties must and do form alliances to the extent possible so that the vast majority of the population can rally behind support for the revolutionary process. Communists cannot become the leading force simply by declaring themselves the vanguard. They will only be acknowledged as the vanguard by their allies on the basis of the respect they win by their actions. In some anticolonial struggles, the working-class elements led by Communists were in the vanguard, while in many others it was the national bourgeoisie. An outstanding achievement of historical materialism was that it could explain the inability of the peasantry even to play an equal role in leading national-liberation struggles.

To further justify its abandonment of the model, the French CP document asserts: "And it failed." It is legitimate to ask: "Did the model fail because of the way the revolution was carried out? Or did socialism collapse because of shortcomings in the sociopolitical-economic models of socialist construction under conditions of political, economic, and military aggression from imperialism? The fact that socialism lasted seventy years in the

USSR, forty-five years in the European socialist countries, and continues in China, Cuba, Vietnam, and North Korea favors the latter explanation. This will still be true even if shortcomings in the models of socialist construction lead to a further collapse of socialism in one or more of these last four countries.

To justify its abandonment of the Marxist understanding of the historical mission of the working class, the French CP document resorts to a dogmatically rigid concept of class that conveniently ignores the Marxist political-economic theory on which Communist parties normally base their class analyses. Here is how the French CP document does this:

This model proceeds from a vision of society that is no longer that of today. Not that the capitalist class has disappeared! On the contrary, its power, and thus its ability to harm, has never been greater. Not only the working class (*classe ouvrière*), but the immense majority of the world of labor, of which 90% are wage earners (*salariés*) suffer from the social relation of exploitation and alienation, though naturally, under different forms and different degrees; the equilibrium and future of the entire society are affected by the choices of deregulation, by precarious existence, by exclusion; the nation itself, its sovereignty, its identity, its republican values, are put in peril by the project of the French and European ruling forces. Thus, the class struggle takes on new dimensions and contours. To take another path from the one traced by the current logic of capitalism implies not privileging the interests of a particular class, but gathering around this objective all those who, in their diversity, are affected by this logic.

Even more so, because what constituted the working class as the only revolutionary class, that is to say, the relations of association, of cooperation—as opposed to relations of competition and war that characterize the capitalist class—these relations have become major requirements for humanity, necessities for labor and society, aspirations more and more widely shared. (11)

The distinction made here between *working class* and *wage earners*, the latter allegedly including a much larger group of people, can only mean that the French CP document is restricting the term *working class* to manual workers in industry and using this restriction to justify dropping the Party's class basis. The statement asserts that a party based on the working class would have too narrow a basis since it would exclude from its class basis all wage earners who were not manual industrial workers and who together with the working class now embrace ninety percent of the working people.

True, prior to Marx's discovery of surplus value as the source of capitalist profit, the term *working class*, (or equivalently, *proletariat*) was used by the Communist movement to refer to manual workers in industry. With Marx's discovery of surplus value as the sole basis of capitalist profit at the end of the 1850s, the concept of working class had to be extended to include all wage earners employed by capitalists primarily for the creation of surplus value.

Marx did not attribute the potentially revolutionary character of the working class to its "relations of association, of cooperation" as the French CP document asserts, but to the irreconcilability of the conflict between capital and labor. The class that would liberate all other oppressed spheres of society by liberating itself would be that class of people who to liberate themselves would have to end those property relations that allowed the private appropriation of the surplus product. The relations of association and cooperation that result from the socialization of the labor process open the path to the development of class-consciousness in the class struggle and lead initially to trade-union consciousness, as Lenin pointed out, but will lead to a socialist consciousness when the working class learns that it can liberate itself only by ending the capitalist property relations that are the source of its oppression. By ignoring the question of the irreconcilability of the conflict between labor and capital, the French CP document clears the path for dropping the abolition of capitalism as a goal of the Party.

Marx's primary focus in the first volume of *Capital* was on the wage labor of the industrial proletariat. But he also discussed

at length the production of surplus value by the British and Irish *agricultural proletariat* (1976, 665–703). In the preparatory work on *Capital*, he studied in detail the difference between what he called *productive* and *nonproductive* workers. “Since the direct purpose and the *actual product* of capitalist production is *surplus value*, only *such labour* is *productive*, and only such an exerter of labour capacity is a *productive worker*, as directly *produces surplus value*” (Marx 1994, 442). He pointed out that productive workers were not only industrial workers: He gave as examples a “literary proletarian who produces books . . . at the instructions of his publisher,” “a singer . . . engaged by an entrepreneur,” “a schoolmaster who is engaged as a wage labourer in an institution along with others,” in brief, people who are employed for wages to perform services that are turned into material or nonmaterial commodities in order to provide surplus value to the person or establishment that employs them (442–52).

Marx, however, cautioning against giving too much weight to such capitalist investments, noted, “Here capitalist production is applicable on a very restricted scale” (451). Today, of course, capital investments in the employment of wage labor for providing material services as commodities (for example, for-profit hospitals and nursing homes, hotels and motels, restaurants and fast-food providers) and various forms of nonmaterial services and products (private schools, computer software, consultancies, systems management) make up a significant portion of all new capital investment. The overwhelming majority of wage earners in the industrialized countries, despite the changes in the character of labor, remain productive workers, and as such are part of the working class. Consequently, Communist parties have had, in general, no problem in recognizing the working-class character of wage laborers employed in the production of nonmaterial commodities and services.

The level of class militancy and potential for development of a socialist consciousness of workers in the service industries can often match those of industrial workers. Every branch of the national economy has its own historically and culturally conditioned tradition of class struggle that differs from region to

region, and country to country. The scale of socialization of labor, however, when measured in terms of the number of workers concentrated in a given economic unit, is still generally much higher in industry than in the services and production of nonmaterial commodities. Therefore Communist parties will attach greater significance to the class struggles in industry, since these are still the most decisive battleground for defending the interests of the entire working class.

Technically speaking, French workers in the publicly owned Renault auto plant are not productive workers since they are not direct producers of surplus value for capitalist employers. Yet the degree to which they identify their interests with that of the working class does not appear to differ at all from auto workers in the private sector, and the French CP would not consider them as standing apart from the working class. Similarly, other public-sector wage earners have common interests with private-sector workers engaged in comparable work. Marx, in this same discussion of productive and nonproductive labor, pointed out the wage levels of nonproductive workers are largely determined by the wage levels of workers doing comparable work in the productive sector. Only a rigidly dogmatic concept of working class would lead today to the rejection of the working-class basis of a Communist Party.

The French CP document states further:

The overcoming of capitalism implies the overcoming of all that constitutes it, notably, of all forms of domination over society and individuals. Historically, statism has proved that it cannot accomplish this mission: it has, as a keystone, state intervention and, as a corollary, the leveling and subordination of individuals. Far from abolishing alienation with respect to the means of production, powers, and knowledge, it maintained it in another form. This system of thought and of management of society has likewise made possible that monstrous deformation of the hopes of October 1917 that was Stalinism. (11)

The term *statism* here obviously refers to what the French CP document rejected earlier as the "the conquest of and then the

exercise of state power by the political party of the working class, the Communist Party, and by allies grouped around it." Perhaps the most important ideological difference between revolutionary Marxism and (left or right) social democratic reformism is the reformist unwillingness to acknowledge the class character of the state. In Marx's materialist conception of history, the social function of the state is to maintain the stability of property relations. This function is quite distinct from administrative governmental functions such as air-traffic regulation. The tolerance of the bourgeoisie for parliamentary democracy is conditioned on their ability to continue their control over the courts, the police and the military, and to maintain the legal protections necessary to preserve the dominance of capitalist relations of production in the national economy. Borrowing from the cry of the French proletariat in 1848 to replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with a dictatorship of the proletariat, Marx characterized the essential content of the state as a dictatorship of the class that dominates the economic life of the country. Its form can be that of a parliamentary democracy, absolutist monarchy, fascist oligarchy, etc. The existence of a large public sector, as is the case in Austria, does not change the class character of the state. A bourgeois state can tolerate a limited public sector, just as a working-class state can tolerate a limited capitalist sector. But a revolutionary transformation in which social ownership of the means of production becomes the dominant character of the economy cannot occur without state intervention to effect the necessary changes in the ownership and control of the means of production and to restrict the activity of the capitalist sector.

The French CP document seizes upon the subjective factors in the administration of a socialist state that led to the distortion of socialist construction in the USSR and Eastern Europe and identifies them with the objective class character of the transformation to socialism. Many factors contributed to the downfall of socialism. Violations of the principles of democratic centralism led to the suppression of democratic procedures within the Communist parties; failure to delineate the distinct roles of, and relationship between, the Party and the state, and the Party and the mass organizations led to the extension of undemocratic and

even criminal practices in the functioning of the state and the mass organizations. Under these conditions, it proved impossible to solve the principal theoretical problems necessary for economic management of a socialist economy under conditions that could still amount to imperialist encirclement. The destruction of the historic accomplishments of the socialist countries, such as full employment, education, health care, advances in the rights of women and previously oppressed nationalities—not a mention of which is made in the French CP document—has opened the way for the current unprecedented attacks on the social safety net won by the workers in the industrialized capitalist nations. To no small degree these gains for the workers of the capitalist countries were acceded to as concessions to the working class to turn them away from the socialist alternative.

Communist parties throughout the world, including those of socialist China, Cuba, and Vietnam, have been examining the factors that contributed to the collapse. They hope to learn from them so that their continuing efforts and future attempts at socialist construction will not repeat the same errors.

An obvious consequence of the rejection of the class character of the state is the French CP document's explicit abandonment of the communist goal of ending capitalist relations of production in France. The document replaces the goal of abolition of the capitalist mode of production with the "overcoming of capitalism" and all its "forms of domination over society and individuals" without ever identifying the capitalist mode of production, the capitalist control of the state, the corporate ownership of the means of production, or the capitalists' appropriation of surplus value as the principal expressions of capital's domination over the working class and the source of the workers' alienation from the means and product of production. Here is how the document justifies this:

We speak of "overcoming capitalism" to characterize this new conception of the revolution. "Overcoming" is not "adaptation": It is not a question of abandoning the objective, which is to pass to another organization of society. Nor is it an abrupt "abolition" by decree, which history

has shown to be neither a protection against the defects of the old order, nor against its restoration. The term “overcoming” corresponds to a process of the transformation of society, the rhythms and duration of which depend on the people, which allows a questioning and even suppression of exploitation, alienation, domination, not by making the present society a blank slate but by relying in this struggle on the development of the experiences, needs, and potentials of this society. No one can claim to define in advance the political structures and ruptures by which this socialist transformation will be effected, in accordance with the rhythm of the struggles and votes of the people. (41)

Consider the assertion that “no one can claim to define in advance the political structures and ruptures by which this socialist transformation will be effected, in accordance with the rhythm of the struggles and votes of the people.” It shifts the focus from what is fundamental to any social transformation, the nature of the change in the property relations, about which nothing is said, to political structures. The political structures formed in revolutionary transformations will depend on the alliances that have been formed in the process, as well as on the resistance of the displaced classes to their loss of power. The French CP document uses this statement to avoid confronting all that has distinguished revolutionary Marxism from reformism. We are referring here not to the right-wing reformism that openly places itself in the service of class collaboration and support for imperialism abroad and monopoly capitalism at home, but also to a reformism that reduces a socialist orientation to a broad-left progressivism. Such progressivism is quite capable of engaging in militant struggles on individual issues—defying legally sanctified denials of democratic rights, court injunctions and executive decrees enforced by the police and National Guard, with beatings, killings, and individual and mass arrests. Examples of this in U.S. history are the industrial-union organizing drives of the 30s, the civil rights struggles of the 50s and 60s, and the mass movement against the U.S war in Vietnam in the 60s and 70s.

The victories in each of these struggles required flexible combinations of legal and extralegal tactics because the class in power had no illusions about the neutrality of the state and used the repressive state apparatus freely to defend their class interests. Unless already equipped with a Marxist understanding of the class basis of the state, those engaged in such struggles will see the flexibility of tactics only in relation to the single issues with which they are involved. A theoretically grounded Marxist party is necessary to generalize this understanding for the wide range of people's struggles and to prepare the working class for the fierce resistance that capital will surely mount when it sees its economic dominance threatened. This Marxist understanding ran so deep in the French Communist tradition that even today the French CP expression for rank-and-file Communists is *les militants*.

The French CP document issues the call for "overcoming capitalism" with the objective of "passing to another organization of society." It calls for "a questioning and even suppression of exploitation, alienation, domination," but carefully avoids any mention of changing the property relations that are the source of this exploitation, alienation, and domination. Where the electoral path is open, revolutionary Marxists have no hesitation in using it to express the people's will for fundamental social change. But history has taught revolutionary Marxists to have no illusions that capitalism will accept any democratic expression of the people's will if that will curtails in any significant way the property relations on which the power of capital to exploit, alienate, and dominate is based. The revolutionary character of a Communist party expresses itself not only in not having such illusions, but also in leading or participating in people's struggles in such a way as not to generate or strengthen such illusions. Without mentioning the class content of the socioeconomic changes needed to "overcome" capitalism, without a Marxist analysis of the nature of the class struggle entailed in any effort to curtail the power of the monopolies, the French CP deprives its working-class cadres of the ideological armor they need to lead the struggles to realize the sweeping reforms the document proposes in the section entitled "The Communist Party Project."

The Communist Party Project is divided into five principal areas.

1. Change the orientation of investments from investment for profit to investments for employment and other needs. Affirm the right of the people to participate in the administration of enterprises and demand local control of businesses and financial institutions.

2. Increase wages and pensions. Expand the public services and public works with the public sector serving as motor of a democratized and decentralized mixed economy. The public and private sectors should cooperate, with criteria of social effectiveness dominating over criteria of financial profitability. The document calls for an end to privatizations of the public sectors. This section of the project also calls for universal access to education, culture, and healthcare (with nationalization of pharmaceutical firms), adequate housing, lowering of the retirement age to 60 (55 for women and for those employed in hard labor), and support for family farms with price supports and agrarian reforms.

3. Full employment, job training, and job security. Free employees from the law of the market by ending layoffs, plant closings, and plant relocations. Reduce the workweek now to thirty-five hours and subsequently to thirty.

4. A France active for a different European construction, for a world of peace, cooperation, and development. The document opposes the Maastricht Treaty, especially the provisions for a single currency, austerity programs, and abandonment of national sovereignty. It calls for the dissolution of NATO and the protection of the rights of immigrants throughout Europe, with all immigrants having the right to vote in local, national, and European elections.

5. Democratization of representative government, proportional representation, an end to the presidential system, parity for women in all elected bodies. The document calls for a resolute struggle against racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia, as well as a rejection of fundamentalisms. The struggle against crime must include a struggle against social insecurity.

The principal ideological content of the French CP document reappears in item 2 of the Project in a subsection subtitled "The

Public Sector as the Motive Force." The first paragraphs of the subsection read:

To be free from domination of finance capital implies that the public sector and the national enterprises will be the motive force and thereby acquire an entirely different importance in a profoundly new and democratized conception. This requires for the entire economic field of enterprises—in which the forms of property should be diversified in a framework consisting of a new mixture dominated by social and public factors—new powers for the wage earners, the population, consumers, and national and local collectives, and therefore, new democratic institutions in the enterprises and the country. Cooperation will be made possible between the public and private sectors to develop skilled labor, resist the conceptions of economic warfare that sterilize the abilities of people, know-how, and capital. Based on the new struggles, such cooperation would favor this new mixture in which criteria of social effectiveness would prevail over those of financial profitability. This mixture cannot mean the introduction or reinforcement of private capital in the existing public sector, the property of which should remain public.

This conception of democratization and decentralization, of new criteria of management, and of rights of initiative and control by the wage earners and the public collectives permits a new approach to the social appropriation of the means of production and exchange which is disengaged from statism and collectivism. Moreover, the existence of a large public service is a factor structuring a balanced territorial development.

Regaining a great national industrial ambition makes it indispensable to halt the privatizations, to preserve the existing public monopolies, to envisage renationalizations and extensions of the public sector: in this way, the creation of a true public sector in credit that is implied by the renationalization of banking and insurance; nationalizations necessary for the development of genuinely

diversified and decentralized public services for water, sanitation, collection and treatment of waste, establishment around France-Télécom—which should remain a public enterprise—of a public axis for industry and the audio-visual communication services, the creation of a public axis for air and space transport and the aeronautical industry. In order to ensure its security, guarantee its independence and liberty, our country should have a national defense strictly intended for its protection. Arms and equipment necessary for our army should be produced by state-owned industries. (51–3)

Implementation of what is proposed here, that is, investments to be made on the basis of need rather than profit, would truly be the start of a social revolution. But there are two domains of activity in this proposal, the private sector and the public sector. The proposals to stop the privatizations and to renationalize what was denationalized, if implemented, would certainly be a positive development, but would not eliminate the dominance of finance capital. Finance capital, after all, dominated French society before the denationalization process began. How then, does one avoid “statism,” that is state intervention in property relations, and place the boards of directors of the big monopolies under social control so that the corporations place public need above corporate profit? How does one democratize the boardroom without shifting control over private property to the people? The German Social Democratic Party and the trade unions under its influence have long put forward the slogan of codetermination, which at most consists of token consultation with the trade unions without any weakening of the domination of the German monopolies over public and private life.

Many of the concrete proposals in this item of the Project—an end to privatizations, renationalization, full employment, reduction of the workweek, livable wages, ending the cuts in social welfare, etc.—are similar to the demands being made by the Communist and non-Communist Left in every industrialized country. Victory in these struggles would, of course, cut deeply into capitalist profits and would put the working class in such a

position of strength that a move to the socialist restructuring of society could be on the immediate agenda. These demands are indeed so far-reaching that there is little possibility of winning them without the understanding of the material and ideological dynamics of historical processes that the participation of Marxist-Leninists will bring to these struggles.

In a section entitled "The French Communist Party," the document states:

In its action, the Communist Party is nourished by what the thought and action of humanity have produced that is progressive and by the revolutionary traditions of the French people. The Party is open without preconditions to all women and men who wish to act for social relations worthy of human beings. Being a member does not imply any renunciation of one's philosophical or religious convictions. (87)

No Marxist party that has any claim to being or becoming a mass party today will require that its members renounce their previous philosophical or religious convictions. But every Marxist party strives to link the education of its members in Marxist theory with day-to-day political activities. In the entire French CP document, however, not a single reference appears to Marxism, Marx, or to the Marxist origins of the Party. The critique of the principle of democratic centralism in this section of the document is based on the identification of the principle with deformations of it in its application within the French CP itself. Unity of action, which follows from proper application of democratic centralism, has been a distinctive source of the historic strength of the Communist movement. As the Party transforms itself into a non-Marxist pluralist organization it will be increasingly difficult to maintain the level of unity and militancy that will be needed to stop the continuing erosion of the gains won by the French working class in earlier years.

The international consequences of the French CP mutation are already visible within the European Union as it and a few parties allied with it (like the PDS of Germany) attempt to court closer relations with the established social democratic parties. The French CP, with these allies, is at the same time trying to

isolate Marxist-Leninist parties such as the British, German, Greek, Irish, Portuguese, and Swedish CPs. It has recently convened international gatherings of European Union parties of the Left excluding many Marxist-Leninist parties.

What is likely to be the largest international commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto* will take place in May 1998 in Paris. Leading personalities associated with the French CP are in effect assuming the role of chief bearers of the *Manifesto*'s heritage. The attempt to construct a *communism* without Marx and Engels is clearly evident in the first abstracts of papers distributed in advance of the commemoration. Marxist-Leninists should participate to keep alive and move forward the revolutionary spirit of the *Manifesto*.

In spite of these criticisms, no assessment can ignore the fact that the French CP remains the largest and strongest political force opposing the Maastricht Treaty and fighting efforts of European Union governments to balance national budgets and enhance corporate profits by destroying the historic gains won by the working class over decades of struggle.

(AAK) Department of French and Italian
(EM) School of Physics and Astronomy
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

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Communists Seek Unity at Moscow Meetings: Progress and Problems

Jim Sacouman

The class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class continues to develop. This is true both within capitalism as a whole and also within the Communist parties of the world. For Marxist-Leninists and others committed to a world freed from exploitation and oppression, therefore, the ideological and theoretical issues raised at both the international conference and the congress in Moscow in April 1997 deserve serious consideration.

The international conference

An international meeting of Communist parties was held in Moscow, 15–16 April 1997, to discuss recent events and the conditions prevailing in the current world. Organized by the Union of Communist Parties-CPSU, the conference was attended by almost all of the CPs from the former Soviet Union and by fourteen CPs from outside of that region. The CPUSA was unable to attend; its delegate was not allowed entry into Russia because his visa was dated incorrectly. Each participating party provided a brief overview of conditions and prospects in the world of the late 1990s.

The conference provided ample proof of the ongoing creativity of Marxism-Leninism in theory and practice. It was generally agreed that the meeting may become seen as an early step in the reconstitution of a second wave of socialism based upon Marxism-Leninism, both in what was the Soviet Union and in world communism.

The UCP-CPSU was founded in 1993 to restore and strengthen the republican CPs within the former USSR, to

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restore the USSR under one Communist Party, and to strengthen the international Communist movement. By July 1994 it was composed of twenty-five member parties and now has more than thirty parties from virtually all of the former USSR, representing about 1,300,000 Communists.

In his introduction to the meeting, Oleg Shenin, Chairperson of the UCP-CPSU, ably spelled out the "main line" at the meeting: 1) a commitment to the revolutionary transformation of capitalism through the creative use of Marxism-Leninism; 2) the rooting of both theory and practice in the working class; 3) a twin focus against opportunism and bureaucratism in both the CP and society; 4) the central role of the CP in ensuring the increasingly democratic control of society through the dictatorship of the proletariat and anti-imperialist struggle; and 5) a concerted commitment to uniting efforts among CPs and allied parties in a step-by-step fashion, beginning with the sharing of information.

In his brief review of both the external and internal reasons for the rapid demise of socialism in the USSR, Shenin emphasized internal reasons. In particular, he quoted Lenin to the effect that socialism in the Soviet Union was indestructible unless it were betrayed by the revolutionaries themselves.

For Shenin, as for most of the participants, opportunism and bureaucratism by leading so-called Marxist-Leninists were and still are the principal methods of internal betrayal. Shenin argued that although it will no doubt continue to be instructive to debate, it was not crucial to agree on the exact dates that the betrayal began. What is crucial is the commitment never to repeat that betrayal of the working class and its self-emancipation again.

In the view of the large majority of the CPs of the former Soviet Union, the worsening life-conditions brought on by the onslaught of capitalism (and the associated break-up of the Soviet Union) are becoming increasingly intolerable to the working class and its allies. The immiseration of the working class has been dramatic, to say the least. For instance, the average monthly wage of a worker in Moscow, if it is paid, is the equivalent of twenty subway fares. On top of that, rents in Moscow for apartments are expected to double or triple over the

next year in order to bring them in line with what is said to be market value. Living conditions in formerly well-off republics such as Latvia have plummeted to levels of the 1930s. Organized crime, prostitution, begging, and degradation are present everywhere. In Russia, four to seven percent of the population have bettered their living conditions in the 1990s; a similar percentage remain about the same as in the 1980s; all the rest have faced declining circumstances and in many cases absolute immiseration.

In these intolerable conditions, the renewal of Soviet power through revolutionary transformation is not impossible. If/when Yeltsin's heart finally gives up or forces him to step down, and/or the announced rent increases take place, and/or . . . it is generally expected that Russia will certainly become ungovernable. This situation of ungovernability may well occur within a year.

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) missed the first day of the international meeting because of "transportation" difficulties. When Alexander Shabanov spoke on behalf of the CPRF, he argued that there were no principled ideological differences among the CPs in Russia and the rest of the former Soviet Union. He then proceeded to disprove himself by, for instance, talking about the interesting theoretical "advances" being made by leading ideologues in the CPRF around such concepts as "ultra imperialism" and "the evolutionary development of socialism in Russia."

Virtually all heads around the table shook in dismay at this blatant revival of the economism of Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky, theorists that Lenin and Luxemburg had so clearly discredited so long ago. This "right line" was shared, to a degree, by only a very few in attendance. Most of the CPs from within and from outside the former Soviet Union shared the "main line."

A "left line" was also presented by some delegates at the conference, led by Victor Tioulkin of the Communist Workers Party of Russia (CWPR). He described this line as one of uncompromising revolution now based on the theory and practice of the Great October Revolution and rooted in strong links with the

working class (whose strikes in the last year have increased at least sixfold). This position also contains some ultranationalist components, shared, oddly enough, with the “right line” of many in the CPRF, such as a focus on the Zionist conspiracy in Russia.

Most of the “main line” parties within the UCP-CPSU are working with this “left line” to ensure the maximum success of the November 1997 events in Leningrad (St. Petersburg) being organized in celebration of the eightieth anniversary of the October Revolution. These events will likely include major actions on the streets. Shenin and other leading members of the UCP-CPSU are very clear that they can, do, and will work with the CWPR as a member party. Like the CWPR, they are highly critical of the “right line”

At the meeting, full verbal support was given to the offer of the CP of Greece to undertake to provide an “information clearing house” for all CPs in the world, as perhaps a first step to rebuilding Communist internationalism. The UCP-CPSU and CP of India will work closely with the Greek Party.

The Fourth Congress of the CPRF

With invited observers from eighty-two countries in attendance, the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, 18–19 April 1997, was an object lesson in class struggle within Russia and within the CPRF. CPRF leader Gennady Zuganov reviewed the absolutely disastrous impact of capitalism on economic, social, and political life in Russia and the prospects for even worse. This situation, he asserted, called for increased patriotism of all true Russians in defense of Mother Russia and in defense of the Duma (Russia’s legislature). Class analysis in order to advance the existing class struggle was particularly absent in his and in most of the central leadership’s remarks.

Having admitted that the leadership of the CPRF was under sizable pressure from its own grassroots to “act dramatically,” Zuganov announced: 1) that there would no longer be any attempt to form a coalition government with the Yeltsinites; and 2) that nonconfidence in Yeltsin should be voted by the Duma.

To these two ends, mass demonstrations were to be organized under the slogans “Patriotism and Protection of Our National Interest!” and “Yeltsin Resign/No Confidence!”

The CPRF has about the same membership as it had at its last Congress (540,000). During the discussions, there was a good deal of severe criticism of the Central Committee and of Zuganov directly for failing to act decisively. In particular, the Central Committee was charged by a sizable minority of grassroots speakers during discussion periods with ignoring the working class and its conditions and interests.

Despite this criticism, there were very few changes made to the program and to the party rules. Also, apparently, while there were quite a few changes of individuals on the Central Committee, there was not much real change in ideological composition. The “right line” continues to dominate the Central Committee of the CPRF. About the only substantive change is that the CPRF is now committed to organizing a general political strike at some appropriate time.

The CPRF leadership’s perception of the main organizational problem continues to be to attract to the Party more and more highly educated lawyers and others who could master the intricacies of the legislature and legislation. Presumably, this is also the central concern of the right-wing of social democratic parties around the world. It is a concern that consciously subordinates the centrality of the working class in the Party.

A special post-Congress meeting with international observers was held on 21 April in order to discuss concerns expressed by some of the Communist parties from around the world. Having been announced as a mutual discussion, it actually was a series of lectures by the CPRF leadership, including Zuganov, on their views of the situation in Russia and the problems faced by the leadership of the CPRF.

Two rather telling quotes from Zuganov exemplify the developing antiworker line of the leadership of the CPRF. The first is: “Theoretically it is impossible to explain how the working class has moved from socialism to capitalism.” In fact, the core of the explanation for why the working class had run to capitalism had been provided by Shenin at the preceding conference on the day

that the CPRF missed: the betrayal of revolutionary principles in favor of bureaucratism and opportunism.

The second quote is even more telling: “We had pampered the working class in the former period.” “We,” the privileged suits, had pampered them, the working class. So much for the Party as the living vanguard of the most advanced workers in the interests of all of the working class and its allies.

To a number of foreign observers, myself included, it seems fairly clear that ideological debate within the CPRF over the leadership’s continuing right-wing social democratic line and practice will not go away. If this line and practice continue, a large majority of grassroots members may become attracted to a Communist party in Russia that would be more closely associated with the “main line” of the UCP-CPSU.

In sum

There is a clear class struggle going on within and between the Communist parties of the former Soviet Union. It is not an overstatement to suggest that the results of this struggle are of crucial importance to the prospects for socialism.

On the one hand, the unifying and organizing work of the UCP-CPSU proceeds. Both within Russia and in the other republics of the former Soviet Union there are very real preparations being made to make the eightieth anniversary of the October Revolution a year that will shake the world again. If/when Yeltsin dies or if/when the rent increases take effect, Russia is expected to become ungovernable. As a poet-military officer from Tajikistan said: “The snow may yet again fall down from the mountains on Moscow and the storm may yet again roll in from the coast.”

On the other hand, the CPRF is becoming more and more a debating forum for the elite in Russian society—a party machine of the thoroughly bourgeois variety. As one young working-class couple who were formerly active in the CPRF explained to me in their apartment over supper, the CPRF seems to care only for itself and not at all for the workers.

Those with a historical sense of the Russian Revolution will see a number of similarities between now and then. They will also see enough differences to suggest that the tragic mistakes of the past need not be repeated if and only if the “main line” succeeds over the “right line.”

It is therefore possible that the second wave of socialism may be inaugurated, like the first wave, in Russia. If this were to occur there is plenty of reasons to expect that the second wave will not only be torrential but also will be systematically antiopportunist, antibureaucratic, and pro-Soviet as the specific form of the Paris Commune. And if that is the case, then the whole world may well shake for much longer than ten days with the real advancement toward what both Marx and Lenin defined as the social revolution, the self-emancipation of the working class.

The author attended the two gatherings discussed here as a representative of the Communist Party of Canada.

*Department of Sociology
Acadia University, Nova Scotia*

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BOOKS AND IDEAS

by Herbert Aptheker

With this issue of NST we begin a new section of commentaries by Herbert Aptheker called "Book and Ideas." Except for special issues, we plan to include this feature in all future issues of NST.

Washington's foreign policy

Deception and violence have been basic to the implementation of Washington's foreign policy since the death of F.D.R. and the coming to power of Truman. Significant exposures of this reality have been the main content of two recent books. One is by Frank Kofsky, a professor at California State University in Sacramento: *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948: A Successful Campaign to Deceive the Nation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993; paper \$16.95). The other is Paul Brodeur's *Secrets: A Writer in the Cold War* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1997; cloth \$24.95).

Kofsky's volume consists of 268 pages of text and 150 pages of appendices and reference notes. It is clearly and persuasively written. It demonstrates that Truman and his underlings, Byrnes, Marshall, and Forrestal, systematically deceived Congress and lied to the people of the United States. The deception affirmed that the USSR, as soon as World War II ended, planned general war upon the West. Although the Soviet Union had sustained over twenty million killed, twice that seriously wounded, and the European third of its territory nearly demolished, this lie was systematically peddled with the full cooperation of dominant means of communication and education.

To resist this, to document its deceptive character and its awful motive, was to risk denunciation, loss of employment, unlimited slander, physical assault, and often imprisonment. This

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resistance is not in Kofsky's book, but the book does show persuasively the nature, purposes, and implementation of this criminal intention by the dominant forces in the country. Kofsky concludes:

The simple truth is that for over forty years the nation has been burdened with policies inaugurated by Truman and his chief advisers, the primary consequence of which has been to mire the United States inextricably in a perpetual arms race and a permanent war economy.

The text fully confirms this awful condemnation. It was not the author's duty to suggest the need to reverse this policy. But exposing it renders invaluable aid to the necessary process of undoing it. That is the vital need of present generations of people in the United States.

Of equal consequence to the Kofsky volume is Paul Brodeur's book. For nearly forty years he was a staff writer for the *New Yorker* when it was a periodical worth reading. Earlier he had worked for the U.S. Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC), where he witnessed Washington's collaboration with former Nazis. As a journalist he exposed the corruption of components of big business—especially firms connected with asbestos and electrical power. Above all, he witnessed firsthand the murderous character of the FBI and the CIA, and the inspiration thereof by presidents of the United States.

Brodeur observes the CIA operations in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and elsewhere and notes the apologetics for such atrocities by journalists like William Safire, paid well by the *New York Times*.

His own experiences permit him to write of the CIC agents who knew what the Nazi mass murderer Klaus Barbie had done but helped him get away. He writes of the

German scientists who stood by while slave laborers died of cold and starvation in the V-2 factories, but got to live in luxury when they worked for NASA's Space Flight Center; the American scientists who irradiated thousands of unsuspecting people for secret atomic research; the State

Department physicians who lied to women they tested for genetic damage.

Brodeur has had the strength and courage to expose the nation's rulers "in the Cold War." The class that created and nurtured such rulers remains entrenched. Hence not only have the crimes he chronicles gone unpunished, but the class responsible for them remains in power. Brodeur has retired now, but the unfolding of history endures. His book should help generations who are far from the age of retirement to create a history cleansed of such "secrets."

A personal note: one of Brodeur's heroes is Irving Selikoff, the physician who bravely and decisively exposed the criminal machinations of the Johns-Manville Corporation in trying to hide the killing nature of the asbestos it was selling. Irving and I were college friends in the thirties and leaders in the student efforts opposing Franco in Spain and Mussolini in Ethiopia. In those days, since Selikoff was Jewish, he could not gain admittance to a medical school in this country. A school in Scotland had the honor of making a physician of him. As such Selikoff—alas, he is gone now—retained his social conscience, as Brodeur's book demonstrates.

The CIA exposed—again

This past spring something of a sensation was caused by the "revelation" of the criminal and murderous activity of the Central Intelligence Agency. Some of that activity had been made public, while it was occurring, by George Seldes, I. F. Stone, Hyman Lumer, and the present writer. More recently such exposures, based on material unavailable some forty years ago, have proliferated. An example is the work of Michael Parenti.

Early in 1997, Kermit Hall, an Ohio legislator, was appointed to the Assassinations Record Review Board, which had been created in response to published evidence—mostly in journals of the Left—of criminal activity by the CIA. Hall, in accepting his appointment, remarked that perhaps his main qualification was his "ignorance."

In the February 1997 issue of the *Newsletter* of the Organization of American Historians, Hall confirmed his ignorance by asserting that it was now established as fact that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin of President Kennedy. In the May issue, a devastating critique of Hall appears proving the contrary. In an unprecedented act, the *Newsletter* published a 2,500-word refutation of Hall by David R. Wrone, a Wisconsin historian. Hall had ridiculed the persistence of the belief that Oswald could not have been the lone murderer of Kennedy. Wrone writes:

It is the absence of any credible fact linking Oswald to the crime and the federal denial of the fact of a conspiracy in the face of an overwhelming amount of evidence that sustains the interest and not bogus information that rouses the public.

Wrone then summarizes the evidence and demolishes Hall's "fact."

The same issue of the *Newsletter* contains a communication from Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. objecting to Hall's assertion that the so-called Operation Mongoose was "a covert scheme concocted by J.F.K., his brother Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and the CIA to assassinate Fidel Castro with the help of organized crime." Schlesinger's point amounts to this: the original Operation Mongoose was concocted by the CIA under Eisenhower, not Kennedy. Washington did meet with gangsters, but the operation did not involve murder, Schlesinger affirms, but "only" disruption.

"Assassination plots," Schlesinger continues, were conceived by the CIA, but these were separate from Mongoose. Schlesinger doubts that Kennedy personally would have approved the murder efforts. He points out that late in 1963 Kennedy was "looking toward the normalization of relations with Cuba." That is Schlesinger's rebuttal. The statement by Schlesinger, a member of the Kennedy administration, that Kennedy was moving toward normalizing relations with Cuba is important. Schlesinger does not write this, but I can: it was, I believe, because Kennedy was moving toward normalizing relations with Cuba that he was murdered—and not by the pitiful fall guy named Oswald.

Also last spring, yet again more disclosures appeared of criminal activity by the CIA. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* reported late in April the release of some fourteen hundred pages of hitherto classified documents. These, we are told, are highly partial revelations of the dastardly activity by the government agency. We learn that in March 1954 the CIA established criteria for the killing of high officials in governments considered hostile to Washington. In its own language, now revealed, the CIA drew up lists of foreign government officials scheduled for murder. According to its own language, targets were leaders “irrevocably implicated in communist doctrine and policy.” If this language was not broad enough, targets were to include people in key governmental or military positions “whose removal for psychological, organizational or other reasons is mandatory for the success of military action.”

CIA-approved people were placed in power after popularly elected individuals were forced into exile or killed. The victims included leaders in Central and South America, Africa, and Asia. The numbers murdered came to hundreds of thousands—not counting the slaughter maintained *after* Washington-created monsters (like Pinochet and Mobutu) came into power. And this excludes the slaughter of millions, especially in Asia, during “normal” wars conducted by U.S. leaders, as in Vietnam.

Reflecting the horror evoked by the officially released documents, the *New York Times* editorialized (30 May 1997) that some official body “ought to control the declassification of CIA materials.” Further, said the *Times*, the destruction of CIA documents—which has been widely practiced—“bespeaks a contempt for the principles of democracy.”

While the atrocities were being committed, no source played a more influential role than the *Times* in hiding reality and apologizing for what could not be hidden. Now, after all the admissions and disclosures, the recommendation of the *Times* amounts to this: “the CIA must comply with laws requiring that its documents be turned over periodically to the National Archives.” How drastic! Yes, let the records of the murdering CIA “be turned over periodically to the National Archives”!

Anthony Lewis, in his usual incisive column commenting on the latest revelations (25 May 1997), quoted a White House spokesman as expressing satisfaction that “Mobutuism is about to become a creature of history.” Lewis added that he would like to be around “when a Presidential spokesman says, ‘CIA corruption of other countries’ politics is a creature of history.’” That would require a basic change in those who control the CIA and *that* must be the order of business if real change is to come in Washington. I hope Anthony Lewis is around to write about that.

On “colored peoples” and the police

The *New York Times* published on 28 April 1997 an article quite unusual in light of that paper’s devotion to the status quo. I am referring to Bob Herbert’s “A Brutal Epidemic,” a brief presentation of the reality of the police practice of killing African American, Latino, and Asian people.

The article was inspired by a three-day conference held earlier that month at Hunter College in New York City aimed at calling attention to the “epidemic of police violence.” The conference was sponsored by the Center for Constitutional Rights—a conference and center not favored with notice in the *Times* and other respectable newspapers. Herbert reported that the conference demanded action to stop “the unconscionable toll of lives and suffering that is being taken by the cops, who, for whatever reasons, are failing to control their most brutal impulses.” The conference noted that the police involved “get away with it” and that public officials do not pursue the matter. On the contrary, Herbert observed, the brutalizing police “are given a very green light to act on their inclinations.”

But there is no mystery, no “for whatever reasons” about police brutality toward colored peoples. And it is not strange that governmental authorities and the courts do not interfere with—let alone punish—the sadists involved. A main *purpose* of the police, from the days of slavery to the present days of racism and impoverishment, is to restrain the victims. That is why, as Herbert writes, “police departments are not interested in policing their own,” and “prosecutors go to extremes to avoid bringing charges

against the cops,” and “politicians . . . tend to make excuses for the police or avoid the matter altogether.”

The U.S. system has, in the past and in the present, been oppressive of colored peoples, especially African Americans. That has been and is the source of police brutality and of the refusal of public authorities to stop it. Eliminating police brutality against colored peoples in the United States requires a significant change in the nature of its social order. There is a good, if brief, probing of police violence by Carl Dix in the *Black Scholar*, vol. 27, no. 1 (spring 1997). Note also the article “When Justice Kills” by Bruce Shapiro in the *Nation*, 9 June 1997, 21–23.

Eric Hobsbawm’s history of the world, 1914–1991

The most eminent living historian of the English-speaking world is, I think, Eric Hobsbawm. He has now concluded an important study, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994. 630 pages, cloth \$30; Vintage Books, 1996, paper \$16.) Earlier, among his several books, were *The Age of Revolution*, *The Age of Capital*, and *The Age of Empire*; these prepared one for this study of the twentieth century. All are vital; the final work is a masterful and courageous effort to make sense of the tumultuous century now reaching a conclusion. That the Marxian outlook is most persuasive for Hobsbawm enhances the book’s convincing nature.

The volume has three sections: The Age of Catastrophe (from the First World War to the conclusion of the Second); The Golden Age (from the start of the Cold War to the 1950s); The Landslide (from “the crisis decades” to the century’s end). Not least among the attractions of the book are its almost seventy illustrations, carefully chosen and truly illuminating the past hundred years.

In a modest preface, Hobsbawm writes that he believes his own comprehension of the vast subject whose description he attempts may be “casual and patchy.” Indeed, he thinks he “cannot have succeeded.” If one expects fully adequate description and analysis of the globe’s history in the current century in one volume (even a stout one), the expectation is at fault. But this reviewer thinks there is no other single book that offers an

attentive reader such a guide to significant developments that have characterized the twentieth century.

Some material in the book was new to this reviewer. The subsidizing of reaction by Washington is, of course, fairly well known, but Hobsbawm writes of the “secret anti-communist armed force” set up “in various European countries” in 1949 that, by the 1970s, when fear of the Red Army had diminished, “found a new field of activity as Right-wing terrorists, sometimes masquerading as Left-wing terrorists” (165).

More clearly exposed here than elsewhere is the venality of Yitzhak Shamir—later a prime minister of Israel—who, as a leader of an extremist Jewish group, actually negotiated with Hitler’s Germany for help in tearing Palestine from the British, which was “a top priority for Zionism” (172).

Of course, in so vast an effort, some opinions appear to this reviewer quite questionable. Washington’s view of the Cold War in terms of U.S. public opinion is accepted uncritically by Hobsbawm. Further, his view that the “irrational frenzy of the anti-Red witch-hunt” was simply the work of “otherwise insignificant demagogues” like Senator Joseph McCarthy (234–5) is quite wrong. Truman and Forrestal were conscious initiators of anti-Communist hysteria; McCarthy (and Nixon) joined in and took over.

The chapters on Latin America, the USSR, and especially China are very well done. The same cannot be said for his treatment of the United States, particularly in the near absence of serious consideration of the African American population. In that connection, the absence of even the name of W. E. B. Du Bois is indicative. While many aspects and personalities connected with the arts and sciences do find some treatment—often quite perceptive—the total lack of any notice of anthropology weakens the book. Here Hobsbawm’s failure even to mention Franz Boas is almost as serious as his omission of Du Bois.

The writing is brisk and thought provoking. Illustrative are these two sentences:

Human beings are not efficiently designed for a capitalist system of production. The higher the technology, the more

expensive the human component of production compared to the mechanical. (414)

Hobsbawm also writes: “The failure of Soviet socialism does not reflect on the possibility of other kinds of socialism”—a perceptive and consequential observation (498).

As he closes his great effort, Hobsbawm suggests that “it is no help to prophesy,” but his final words are prophecy enough—and a valid one, I think:

If humanity is to have a recognizable future, it cannot be by prolonging the past or the present. If we try to build the third millennium on that basis, we shall fail. And the price of failure, that is to say, the alternative to a changed society, is darkness. (585)

Hobsbawm’s book is an important contribution towards preventing that failure.

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Book Reviews

Eight Tragedies of Shakespeare: A Marxist Study. By Victor Kiernan. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996. 296 pages, cloth \$60.00; paper \$20.00.

In an era when the study of Shakespeare's work often seems subsumed in a morass of poststructuralist criticisms of one sort or another, reading the eloquent analyses of Victor Kiernan offers the hope that all is not yet lost. Kiernan's new book provides a thoughtful and provocative look at the political and social issues of the early seventeenth century through the lens of eight of Shakespeare's tragedies, from *Julius Caesar* to *Coriolanus*.

He begins his study with a historical overview of the condition of England and the development of the theater, providing essential insights into the ways in which the tragedies of Shakespeare and his contemporaries offer a particularly vivid reflection of a world on the cusp of dramatic changes that promised both good and ill to the citizenry at large. Building on the classic criticism of Marxists such as Raymond Williams, Kiernan carefully delineates the ways in which both art and life in the reigns of Elizabeth and James sought what was beneficial in tradition while hurtling toward a future filled for many with both fear and promise.

But while Kiernan begins with a broad perspective that will inform all that follows, the greatest portion of the book is dedicated to careful readings of each of the eight texts in question, followed by a section in which he brings together several of the thematic threads he has found most intriguing in his readings, including heroes, villains, and revengers; war and politics; women and men; and religion and philosophy. His ability to synthesize a variety of critical perspectives, both his own and others, offers readers an opportunity to reexamine these much-discussed

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plays with the welcome guidance of a careful reader whose political analysis informs but never overwhelms his arguments.

Kiernan treats the plays in their traditional chronological order: *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Timon of Athens*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*. While the title characters in each drama are in the center of things, as is to be expected, Kiernan nonetheless offers us an opportunity to see these characters anew as he traces Shakespeare's dramatic, political, and philosophical development through the decade in which the plays were written. He sees a movement from the essentially heroic figures of Brutus and Hamlet, to the more troubling and ambiguous characters of Othello and Lear and the antiheroism of Macbeth, to the idiosyncratic central figures of the final three tragedies. His reading of *Lear* offers an especially powerful argument about the needs of those in power to recognize the impact of their position on those whose lives are traditionally invisible, those who live beyond the castle walls and with whom Lear, if only briefly, must take shelter. Lear's journey—from king to beggar—marks a movement toward full humanity that the play ultimately leaves in the hands of its survivors, who may or may not accept the burden they inherit.

As he traces the ways in which wealth, political power, and issues of class—as well as sexual entanglements (or their absence) and familial loyalties—affect the lives and actions of the tragic protagonists and the other characters, we as readers are drawn into the dilemmas of the plays themselves, the age of which they are representative, and the process of history as it has interpreted these works from their era to our own. Kiernan's skill as a critic demands that we look closely not only at the plays and the characters who inhabit them, but that we see as well the man and the culture from which they sprang. Given this breadth of perspective, we can then move forward toward a more informed view of contemporary issues and dilemmas.

Shakespeare's own political and social vision remains elusive, yet one of Kiernan's gifts is his ability to tease out a number of possibilities that challenge readers and viewers of the plays to consider again how very rich they are. While I occasionally found myself disagreeing with particular arguments, my response was to look at my own perspective more carefully and to construct

appropriate counterarguments to his. This, surely, is the sign of the very best of criticism: to engage and challenge its readers, so that they, too, will look more closely at the text and articulate more clearly their own analysis. Kiernan's work offers a plethora of ideas to engage literary scholars, theater practitioners, and anyone else with an interest in Shakespeare's place in our history and culture. Students of literature and theater, both undergraduate and graduate, should also look to this work as a splendid model of both intelligent and articulate criticism.

Christine Mack Gordon
Department of English
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Marxist Literary Theory: A Reader. Edited by Terry Eagleton and Drew Milne. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996. 446 pages, cloth \$62.95; paper \$23.95.

In producing the anthology *Marxist Literary Theory*, Terry Eagleton and Drew Milne have satisfied a need for a single-volume text upon which a college course in Marxist literary theory can be based. The selections have been made from an expert knowledge of what each theorist selected for inclusion contributes to the development of Marxist literary criticism. As Drew Milne notes in one of the volume's two introductory essays, "Preference is given to theories which develop specifically Marxist conceptions, such as the determining status of the forces and relations of production and the historical centrality of class struggle" (18).

Initial selections from work by Marx, Engels, and Lenin provide the necessary foundation for Marxist criticism: the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*; paragraphs from *The German Ideology*, *Grundrisse*, and *The Eighteenth Brumaire*; the letters that Engels wrote to Joseph Bloch on economic determinism and to Margaret Harkness on realism; Lenin on Tolstoy. It is regrettable that Eagleton and Milne did not include passages on alienation from the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, on the rise of the bourgeoisie and on

base and superstructure from *The Communist Manifesto* and from Engels's introductions to its various editions, and on the fetishism of the commodity from *Capital*—but these omissions are understandable with so much to squeeze into one volume. The foundation texts are followed by Trotsky's best piece of literary theory—his chapter on formalism from *Literature and Revolution* (1923)—and by some of Volosinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929); both excerpts are refutations-in-advance of the underpinnings of subsequent bourgeois literary theory as it would develop in the universities.

The editors restore Christopher Caudwell to a place too long denied him, in the company of his contemporaries Benjamin and Brecht. Lukács, who was undervalued for a time in the age of Althusser, is permitted to deliver his devastating critique of modernism in his "Ideology of Modernism." Althusser, once considered Eagleton's mentor but subsequently subjected by him to the thorough reevaluation announced in his *Against the Grain* (1986), is reduced to a snippet of five pages in order to make room for his coworkers in the French Communist Party, Etienne Balibar and Pierre Macherey.

There is an interesting selection of work by Raymond Williams, whom Eagleton criticized in *Criticism and Ideology* (1976) but to whom, in an act unheard of among academics, he publicly apologized in the memorial volume *Raymond Williams* (1989): Eagleton and Milne acknowledge the stature of Williams's *Marxism and Literature* by printing a chapter of it, but they also include the powerful and deeply felt chapter "Tragedy and Revolution" from *Modern Tragedy*. Adorno, Goldmann, Sartre, Jameson, and others less well known are represented, and Eagleton surprisingly accepts the no-longer-accurate assignment of himself to the Althusserian camp by printing the widely read "Towards a Science of the Text" from *Criticism and Ideology*. The book ends with Alex Callinicos's convincing "The Jargon of Postmodernity," which rejects—as did Raymond Williams in *The Politics of Modernism*—the splitting of twentieth-century culture into two phases, the second critical of the first, called modernism and postmodernism (a division meaningful to the U.S. Marxist Frederic Jameson and to some other Marxists).

It is ironic that Callinicos should be given the final word, and that Lukács should have been given full scope to voice his Marxist critique of modernism, because definitions of modernism and postmodernism lead Eagleton into some uncharacteristic confusions at the conclusion of his own introductory section. The word “modernity” should, in a Marxist context, most appropriately describe the means of production and distribution in middle or late capitalism, but Eagleton conflates the term with the superstructural alienation and confusion that has been produced in this period—a complex ideology that we usually call modernism. Thus Eagleton writes, “If postmodernism is right—if modernity is effectively over—then Marxism is most certainly superannuated along with it” (14). A common end for modernism and Marxism is presented as the logical outcome of the fact that “Marxism is as inseparable from modern civilization as Darwinism or Freudianism” (14).

The point obscured in this subsuming of Marxism into modernism is precisely that, while modernism has its roots in such phenomena as urbanization and the division of labor and the resulting alienation, Marxism explains the process by which such factors determine consciousness. Bourgeois philosophy reached a self-confessed impasse in Kant, for whom subject and object remain divided and the “thing-in-itself” remains unknowable. Such skepticism of course finds “modern life” incomprehensible and shapes modernism and its philosophic/aesthetic formulations from Matthew Arnold and Walter Pater through Samuel Beckett and beyond. Modernism has drawn fresh support from a linguistics that ignores the extent to which language is a social and material practice. Marx, however, broke through the subject/object dichotomy by recognizing that subject and object in fact engage in actual living in the world, in praxis, in the carrying out of the defining human act of changing the world. Marx saw that language was “practical consciousness”—was indeed both material and social, a point that Volosinov usefully reaffirmed.

Modernism and Marxism are, then, opposing outlooks as they emerge in the nineteenth century and contend with one another in the twentieth century. As Georg Lukács argues in his chapter reprinted by Eagleton and Milne, the “solitariness” announced by modernist writers is “a specific social fate, not a *universal*

condition humaine" (144). The modernist "assumption" is "that the objective world is inherently inexplicable" so that "the disintegration of personality is matched by the disintegration of the outer world" (145). Finally, "as the ideology of most modernist writers asserts the unalterability of outward reality (even if this is reduced to a mere state of consciousness) human activity is, a priori, rendered impotent and robbed of meaning" (155). As Callinicos shows, the fundamental modernist skepticism has undergone little development in reemerging as postmodernism; it may, however, have become even more self-critical, almost in fact to the point of recognizing that the conclusions of the modernist thinker arose from social determinants and philosophical predispositions.

The Marxist, on the other hand, confronts modernity with the awareness that the force behind it, capitalism, creates its own gravedigger as it advances, and the isolated and alienated individuals that it creates can at the same time be brought into solidarity. The economic and ideological changes that this process of transformation brings about can be seen in a Marxist reading of literature. As Drew Milne usefully explains, literature "can be seen as a human resource which speaks of resistances to the alienation and reification of human labour. Or it can be figured as the ideological legitimization of such alienation and reification" (23). Literature can depict both the modernist failure to interpret the world and the Marxist commitment to change it.

The squabbles between postmodernists and modernists are squabbles within the bourgeois camp. Neither these disputes nor the collapse of the Soviet Union deterred the working-class men and women who recently filled the streets of Paris and Bonn to protest a decaying quality of life, or those who gathered in Cleveland to establish a class-conscious Labor Party in the United States. As Eagleton puts it, recovering from his moment of doubt and speaking with characteristic force, "it is clear that capitalism is incapable of solving the human suffering it causes, and that its early emancipatory promise has long been exhausted. As more and more pre- or noncapitalist societies are drawn inexorably into its wake, the social devastation which ensues will make socialism a more urgent and relevant proposal than ever" (15). This

excellent anthology provides texts that will assist teachers and students in finding the meaning and direction of the modernity within which modernist and Marxist writers have worked. In that sense, Eagleton and Milne make their own contribution to the fundamental human enterprise that progresses even as modernism despairs—the liberation of humanity and the building of socialism.

More Marxist literary theory, of course, remains to be written. Even though the selections made by Eagleton and Milne accurately represent what has been done so far, unexplored resources for future work abound in the writings of Marx and Engels. Marx still astonishes readers by explaining the motives of human labor as he does in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*:

An animal forms objects only in accordance with the standard and the need of the species to which it belongs, whilst man knows how to produce in accordance with the standards of every species, and knows how to apply everywhere the inherent standard to the object. Man therefore also forms objects in accordance with the laws of beauty. (Marx 1975, 277)

In a passage even more familiar to Marxists than the one quoted above, Marx in *Capital* similarly contrasts human and animal endeavor by emphasizing the role of the human imagination:

A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realises a purpose of his own. (1996, 188)

Marx in these related statements rescues a standard for aesthetic discrimination from the shaky status that it would have as a class-determined criterion of “taste” and instead grounds it in the labor process itself. Humans change the world, but they do so by their conscious activity, and they know whether or not they

satisfy their expectations: humanity can, therefore, legitimately speak of “beauty.”

Yet, because material and social production is an effort to restore to full functioning an alienated species being, humans may point as well to the failings of literary artifacts produced by the incomplete people who live under capitalism. Ideology—and here the definition of ideology as “false consciousness” serves perfectly well—is the product of the division of labor. Marxist literary theory may properly devote itself to analysis of both form and content, recognizing that the goal of literary production—and of labor—is the resolution of the inadequacies of each in the other. “Beauty” is the need of the species for which humans strive but whose full realization must always be postponed—until the destruction of capitalism ends exploitation and alienation. Marxist literary criticism examines and explicates the material and social production called literature and acknowledges the ideological, economic, and political barriers that authors have faced in their own times in their “confronting,” as Raymond Williams puts it, this “hegemony in the fibres of the self” (Williams 1977, 212). To these distorted and incomplete visions that would nonetheless present themselves as not merely the cultural expression of a class but of all humanity, the Marxist critic applies a standard drawn from the human future, measuring the distance yet to be traversed in the achievement of “beauty” and pointing to the difficult path that will produce that longed-for outcome.

Victor N. Paananen
Department of English
Michigan State University

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ABSTRACTS

Pradip Baksi, “Karl Marx’s Study of Science and Technology,”—Although Marx’s investigations of science and technology were primarily related to his work on unraveling the mysteries of the political economy of capitalism, his interests in science and technology went beyond political economy, extending to their entire interface with philosophy and society. About 22,500 pages of his manuscripts remain unpublished. The author traces the chronological development of Marx’s interest in science and technology, detailing a number of Marx’s important observations in this area and appeals to all those concerned that no stone be left unturned in the publication of the manuscripts of Marx and his friends.

José Barata-Moura, “History of Philosophy, Philosophy of History, and Ontology in Hegel’s Thought”—It is shown how, in Hegel’s term, the history of philosophy returns to a philosophy of history as the thought of what arrives and perfects itself in the trials of time. An ontology is therefore opened in which that which is, that which is in process, is the mind, is reason. Despite all the idealism of Hegel, his philosophy, reworked, becomes, perhaps, capable of inspiring new itineraries upon which to embark in our historical horizon. Contemporary materialism cannot do without dialectics,

Grover C. Furr, “Corporate Ideology and Literary Criticism: How the New Right Pushes the Ideology of Exploitation in the Field of Literary Studies and What to Do about It”—The author demonstrates how under the guise of academic scholarship, the New Right, financed by corporate interests, propagates the corporate ideology in the field of literary studies. He argues against becoming embroiled in academic debates with the pseudoarguments of the New Right, and favors putting forward class analyses in the classroom, exposing the relationship

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between the cultural agenda of the Right and the exploitation of the working class, and pointing out to students and colleagues the socialist alternative to the inhumane capitalism.

April Ane Knutson and Erwin Marquit, “The ‘Mutation’ of the French Communist Party”—Analysis of the main document adopted at the Twenty-Ninth Congress of the French Communist Party in December 1996 leads to the conclusion that the ideological position reflected in the document represents abandonment of the principal traditions of revolutionary Marxism that distinguished it historically from social democratic revisionism.

Jim Sacouman, “Communists Seek Unity at Moscow Meetings: Progress and Problems”—The author describes the different ideological positions reflected at an international meeting of Communist parties in Moscow in April 1997, especially those within the host organization, the Union of Communist Parties—CPSU. The author also reports on the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, which took place a few days earlier.

ABREGES

Pradip Baksi, «L’étude de la science et de la technologie par Karl Marx»—Bien que les enquêtes menées par Marx sur la science et la technologie soient en relation étroite avec son travail d’investigation sur les mystères de l’économie politique du capitalisme, ses intérêts pour la science et la technologie dépassèrent l’économie politique, s’étendant jusqu’à leur interface entière avec la philosophie et la société. Environ 22.500 pages de ses manuscrits restent inédits. L’auteur trace le développement chronologique de l’intérêt de Marx pour la science et la technologie, exposant en détail un nombre de réflexions importantes de Marx à ces propos, et en appelle à tous ceux concernés afin qu’aucun détail ne soit oublié dans la publication des manuscrits de Marx et de ses amis.

José Barata-Moura, «L’histoire de la philosophie, la philosophie de l’histoire, et l’ontologie dans la pensée d’Hégel»—On démontre comment, selon l’expression d’Hégel, l’histoire de la philosophie retourne à une philosophie de

l'histoire comme la pensée de ce qui arrive et se perfectionne pendant les épreuves du temps. Une ontologie donc s'ouvre donc dans laquelle ce qui est, ce qui est en cours, c'est l'esprit, c'est la raison. En dépit de tout l'idéalisme d'Hégel, sa philosophie, remaniée, devient, peut-être, capable d'inspirer de nouveaux itinéraires sur lesquels on peut embarquer vers notre horizon historique. Le matérialisme contemporain ne peut pas se passer de la dialectique.

Grover C. Furr, «L'idéologie des corporations et la critique littéraire: comment la nouvelle droite impose l'idéologie de l'exploitation au domaine d'études littéraires et ce qu'il faut en faire»—L'auteur démontre comment, sous l'apparence de l'érudition académique, la nouvelle droite, financée par les corporations, propage l'idéologie des corporations au domaine d'études littéraires. Il argumente pour ne pas se laisser embrouiller dans des débats académiques avec des pseudoarguments de la nouvelle droite, mais d'avancer des analyses de classe dans la salle de classe, tout en exposant les rapports entre le programme culturel de la droite et l'exploitation de la classe ouvrière et en attirant l'attention des étudiants et collègues sur l'alternative socialiste au capitalisme inhumain.

April Ane Knutson et Erwin Marquit, «La «Mutation» du Parti communiste français»—Cette analyse du document principal adopté au 29e Congrès du PCF en décembre 1996 amène à la conclusion que le document reflète une position idéologique qui abandonne les traditions principales du marxisme révolutionnaire ce qui le distinguait historiquement du révisionnisme social-démocrate.

Jim Sacouman, «En quête de l'unité communiste aux réunions en Moscou: progrès et problèmes»—L'auteur décrit les différentes positions idéologiques différentes reflétées à l'occasion d'une réunion internationale des partis communistes à Moscou en avril 1997, surtout celles à l'intérieur de l'organisation qui recevait, l'Union des Partis communistes-PCUS. L'auteur rend compte aussi du 4e Congrès du Parti communiste de la Fédération russe qui eut lieu quelques jours avant.

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