
REVOLUTION AGAINST THE STATE: THE CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF MARX'S LATER WRITINGS

Author(s): Derek Sayer and Philip Corrigan

Source: *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1987), pp. 65-82

Published by: Springer

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29790218>

Accessed: 17-09-2016 05:09 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://about.jstor.org/terms>



Springer is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Dialectical Anthropology*

REVOLUTION AGAINST THE STATE: THE CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF MARX'S LATER WRITINGS

Derek Sayer
Philip Corrigan

In this centennial decade of Marx's death socialists will be concerned to re-evaluate his political legacy and its relevance to our own times and struggles. This paper aims to contribute to that discussion. Its immediate stimulus was two seminal papers published several years ago in the pages of *History Workshop* by Haruki Wada and Teodor Shanin [1], on the significance of the researches and writings of Marx's last decade, particularly those on Russia. Wada and Shanin argue that there are important shifts in "late Marx". Subsequent Marxism has for the most part either ignored or suppressed these, yet they are highly germane to socialist struggles in the 20th century. Our paper extends the general line of argument in both pieces. We show that the shifts Wada and Shanin identify in Marx with respect to Russia have no less important counterparts in other texts of the 1870s and 1880s, notably the drafts and texts of *The Civil War in France*. In short, there indeed is something distinctive, novel and important about "late Marx", which should cause us to rethink his political legacy as a whole. But first, it is necessary to qualify some aspects of the Wada/Shanin argument.

Derek Sayer is Professor and Chair of Sociology, University of Alberta

Philip Corrigan is Professor of Sociology, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto

Dialectical Anthropology 12: 65-82 (1987)

© Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht

1. Marx and Capitalist Development

Shanin maintains that there "remains" an essential kernel of evolutionism in *Capital*, and that Marx's final break with this "arch-model of the time" only began to take shape with the turn of the 1870s. By evolutionism Shanin understands "the assumption of an intrinsically necessary development through pre-ordained stages." Built into such evolutionism is "a highly optimistic teleology." Shanin allows that there were elements of multilinearism in Marx's view of history prior to the 1870s, citing his use of the concept of the Asiatic mode of production in 1853, and the *Grundrisse*'s acceptance of a plurality of possible routes out of primitive communism. But these remained refinements of a basically evolutionist scheme. With the appearance of capitalism as a "global unifier", for the Marx of 1867, "the iron laws of evolution finally assume their global and universal place". Thenceforth "the country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future". At the end of the day capitalism is necessary, inevitable, and progressive. The political corollary is that such pre-capitalist social forces as seek to obstruct its forward march are objectively reactionary, however much they might engage our intuitive sympathies. Hence Marx's rather embarrassing views on colonialism and peasants, respectively expressed in, for

instance, his 1853 articles on India and *The Eighteenth Brumaire* [2].

Shanin detects a twofold departure from this position by Marx in the 1870s and 1880s, which is most in evidence in his writings on Russia. First, Marx moves beyond a picture of capitalism as straightforwardly progressive towards a more realistic grasp of the complexities and contradictions of what we would nowadays call dependent development. Second, he extends multilinearism to the future. By the late 1870s Marx was envisaging “a multiplicity of roads of social transformation, within a global framework of mutual and differential impact”. Evolutionism was dead. This revolution in Marx’s macro-historical picture entailed a corresponding re-evaluation of social struggles in peripheral formations. Marx shifted his position on peasants, the *obshchina*, and the character of ruling classes and State forms on capitalism’s periphery. In sharp contrast to the next three generations of Marxists, Marx himself was “beginning to recognise for what they really are the nature, problems and debate concerning ‘developing’ and post-revolutionary societies of the twentieth century.”

Wada’s story of the fate of the drafts of Marx’s letter to Zasulich is a reminder that the struggle for the soul of Karl Marx has never been a merely academic exercise. Shanin’s intervention is a timely one, for a new Marxist fundamentalism is resurgent [3]. Our major complaint against Shanin is that he concedes too much to the traditionalists. In brief, Marx was never so consistent an evolutionist as Shanin implies. And his intimations as to the specific structures of peripheral capitalism long pre-date the 1870s. These are not scholastic points, for they affect our interpretation and our political evaluation of Marx’s legacy *as a whole*.

It is not entirely irrelevant to begin by questioning the characterization of evolutionism which Shanin offers, at least as regards its Darwinian variant (which was the

only form known to have impressed Marx) [4]. Darwin certainly did *not* believe in “necessary development through pre-ordained stages.” The essence of his theory is random mutation. Species survive because, for whatever accidental reasons, they have developed characteristics which adapt them to their environment – they do not acquire those characteristics in order so to adapt. The latter is the Lamarckian view, not the Darwinian. Darwin’s theory was specifically *anti*-teleological (this was part of why it so upset the clerics). This matters for two reasons. First, because what Marx himself welcomed in Darwin’s *Origin of Species* was precisely that, in his own words, “it deals the death-blow to teleology in the natural sciences [5].” And second, because in representing Darwin in this way Shanin reveals – not for the only time in his paper – the extent to which he continues, unquestioningly, to read the Marx of *Capital* and before through the lens of a century of orthodoxy. The hoary parallel between a Hegelianized Marx and a Lamarckianized Darwin originated with Engels and the Second International and remains a staple of Soviet Marxology to this day. In this connection it is worth drawing attention to Margaret Fay’s excellent demolition of the well-worn myth that Marx sought to dedicate Volume II of *Capital* to the great biologists [6].

In fact, *pace* Shanin, Marx’s hostility to teleology in all its forms was overt and of long standing. Such hostility is a recurrent motif of *The German Ideology*, a work Shanin seems to regard as a paradigm of crude evolutionism. There Marx was quite clear that any notion that “later history is ... the goal of earlier history” is “a speculative distortion”; “what is designated by the words ‘destiny’, ‘goal’, ‘germ’ or ‘idea’ of earlier history is nothing more than an abstraction from later history [7].” The teleology of Proudhon’s “providential history” was to be mercilessly lambasted the following year [8]. Indeed what is most striking in *The German Ideology* and other works of this period is Marx’s refusal, in

terms quite as adamant as those of his famous 1877 letter to *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, of any overarching “historico-philosophical theory.” What is rather offered is a program for investigating “real, profane history” of an avowedly – some would say embarrassingly [9] – empiricist kind. It is in this spirit that Marx and Engels warn their readers that the sketch of historical development in *The German Ideology* which Shanin cites is no more than “some ... abstractions”, illustrated “by historical examples”, which “by no means afford a recipe of schema, as does philosophy, for neatly trimming the epochs of history [10].”

One can certainly find passages in Marx’s work which speak of the achievements of capitalism as a presupposition for socialism. But one equally finds such sentiments in the late Marx. His 1874 notes on Bakunin’s *Statism and Anarchy* – a text unaccountably neglected by Wada and Shanin [11] – insists, a propos Russia, that “a radical social revolution ... is only possible where with capitalist development the industrial proletariat occupies at least an important position among the mass of the people”, and derides Bakunin for wanting “the European social revolution, premised on the basis of capitalist production, to take place at the level of the Russian or Slavic agricultural and pastoral peoples.” Marx penned this *after* the supposed sea-change in his views Wada claims was brought about by reading Chernyshevsky. Relatedly, Wada never satisfactorily establishes his major contention that by 1881 Marx had abandoned his former opinion that an *obshchina*-based socialism in Russia required a successful proletarian revolution in the West. Wada presents no evidence for this other than Marx’s failure to reiterate this requirement in the drafts of his letter to Zasulich, and has to dismiss Marx’s explicit endorsement of his former position, in the joint 1881 Preface to the Russian edition of the *Manifesto*, by the flimsy and speculative argument that Marx was too devastated by his

wife’s death to know or care what he was doing. The reservations about this Preface in Marx’s covering letter to Lavrov, cited by Wada, cannot seriously be read as relating to anything other than style. What we know of Marx’s study and correspondence in December 1880 and January 1881, moreover, suggest Wada is simply wrong in the consequences of Jenny Marx’s death – if anything, Marx took refuge from his grief in work, compiling at this time his massive chronology of world history, while letters to Engels and others indicate a continuing interest in matters intellectual and political [12]. Here, Wada comes uncomfortably close to the mode or argument whose nadir is Riazanov’s suggestion that the Zasulich drafts indicate the late Marx’s encroaching senility.

There can be little doubt that Marx believed that socialism required at least the levels of social production only capitalism had (so far) historically proved capable of delivering, and continued to believe this to the end of his life. But this does not in itself add up to the kind of tight arch-model of evolutionism attributed to Marx by Shanin. Marx certainly at times employed an evolutionist idiom in presenting his conclusions, as in the 1859 Preface. But we would suggest that the major reason for seeing Marx at any point as an evolutionist in Shanin’s full-blown sense lies less in anything Marx himself wrote than in the incredibly powerful legacy of received interpretations from the late Engels onwards. Why, for example, do we persist in regarding Marx’s abundant departures from a supposed unilinear evolutionism prior to 1870 as *anomalies*? There are other “departures” in addition to those conceded by Shanin, like Marx’s untroubled acceptance in his 1857 General Introduction of the *sui generis* character of a society like pre-Columbian Peru, in which the highest forms of economy, e.g. co-operation, a developed division of labour, etc., are found, even though there is no kind of money [13].”

We want finally to question Shanin’s

interpretation of the famous passage from Marx's Preface to the 1867 edition of *Capital* I, which Shanin treats as incontrovertible evidence of Marx's evolutionism. Let us quote what Marx actually says in full:

In this work I have to examine the capitalist mode of production, and the conditions of production and exchange corresponding to that mode. Up to the present time, their classic ground is England. That is the reason why England is used as the chief illustration in the development of my theoretical ideas. If, however, the German reader shrugs his shoulders at the condition of the English industrial and agricultural labourers, or in optimistic fashion comforts himself with the thought that in Germany things are not nearly so bad; I must plainly tell him, "De te fabula narratur!" Intrinsically, it is not a question of the higher or lower degree of development of the social antagonisms that result from the natural laws of capitalist production. It is a question of these laws themselves, of these tendencies working with iron necessity towards inevitable results. The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future.

Later Marx adds, in similar vein

And even when a society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement – and it is the ultimate aim of this work, to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society – it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactment, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development [14].

To those convinced of it already, undeniable confirmation of *Capital's* evolutionism. But is it?

Recall, first, the context. Marx is publishing, in Germany, a book whose empirical material is mostly drawn from England. He is understandably concerned to assert its relevance to German conditions. Since Germany is a society in which capitalism has already taken hold, its "normal development" might reasonably be expected to follow a broadly "English" path. But this in no way implies any necessity for societies in which capitalism is *not* already established to do the same. Internal evidence from the same text, *Capital* I, suggests it highly unlikely that Marx in 1867 would have expected, say, India or Ireland simply to mirror the English pattern. We will

return to this below. Look, moreover, at what Marx actually writes. The only iron necessity he speaks of concerns the working out of the consequences of the "natural laws of capitalist production", and the only phases of development to which he refers are those of "modern society", i.e., capitalism. Nothing he says in any way bears on the *separate* issue of whether capitalism as such is a necessary phase in a law-governed process of general historical development. And this is, of course, exactly what Marx was himself to make plain in his clarification (which is what it was, not a recantation) against Mikhailovsky:

Now what application to Russia could my critic make of this historical sketch? Simply this: *If* Russia wants to become a capitalist nation after the example of the West-European countries ... *then, once drawn into* the whirlpool of the capitalist economy, she will have to endure its inexorable laws like other profane nations [15].

It was the fact that Germany was already in the "whirlpool" in 1867, not some general evolutionist "arch-model", that licensed Marx's "De te fabula narratur!" Wada is probably right, however, that Marx thought Russia analogous to Germany in 1867 and later changed his mind on this *specific* point.

To turn now to the question of Marx's apprehensions as to the structures of dependent development. We do not for a moment deny the great advances in his late texts. But to suggest Marx's picture of capitalist development was until the 1870s one of straightforward progressiveness travesties the facts. We are not just referring to his denunciations of the incidental brutalities of capitalist expansion here, but to his evaluation of its historical consequences. Marx knew that capitalist development could well sustain, strengthen or even create forms of "backwardness" on its periphery, long before his studies of Russia. Some examples. *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847) asserted an intimate relation between Lancastrian "modernity" and barbarism: "Direct slavery is just as much the pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery, credits, etc. Without

slavery you have no cotton; without cotton you have no modern industry ... Slavery is an economic category of the greatest importance [16]." The point is extended in Marx's writings on the American civil war: the slave states "grew and developed simultaneously with the monopoly of the English cotton industry on the world market [17]." The same articles severely qualify the progressivist conclusions, referred to by Shanin, of Marx's 1853 articles in India:

England pays now, in fact, the penalty for her protracted misrule of that vast Indian empire. The two main obstacles she has now to grapple with in her attempts at supplanting American cotton by Indian cotton are the want of means of communication and transport throughout India, and the miserable state of the Indian peasant, disabling him from improving favourable circumstances. Both these difficulties the English have themselves to thank for [18].

Shanin himself mentions Marx on Ireland. By 1867 Marx was quite clear that it was England that "struck down the manufactures of Ireland, depopulated her cities, and threw her people back upon the land". "Every time Ireland was about to develop industrially, she was crushed and reconverted into a purely agricultural land", one "forced to contribute cheap labour and cheap capital to building up 'the great works of Britain' [19]." The same MS documents the underdevelopment of Irish agriculture itself by a predatory absentee landlordism, whose importance to the *English* ruling class Marx underlines in many contemporary letters and speeches [20].

We do not wish to claim that Marx had anything like a worked out theory of dependent development by 1867 (nor yet by 1883). *Capital* does however venture some pertinent generalizations:

[a]s soon as people, whose production still moves within the lower forms of slave-labour, corvee-labour, etc., are drawn into the whirlpool of an international market dominated by the capitalist mode of production, the sale of their products for export becoming their principal interest, the civilised horrors of overwork are grafted on to the barbaric horrors of slavery, serfdom, etc. [21].

Russian revolutionaries might have drawn some lessons here, as Marx goes on to illustrate his point with the experience of the Danubian Principalities of the Tsarist Empire. Later on in *Capital* he suggests a systematic unevenness in capitalist development:

A new and international division of labour, a division suited to the requirements of the chief centers of modern industry springs up, and converts one part of the globe into a chiefly agricultural field of production, for supplying the other part which remains a chiefly industrial field [22].

This concludes a discussion of the forcible destruction of indigenous manufactures in India, Java, etc., with capitalist penetration, and the conversion of these countries into raw material suppliers for metropolitan industries. Far from Marx's Russian studies of the 1870s coming from out of the blue to torpedo a secure evolutionism, they fitted into – whilst, certainly, deepening – a set of apprehensions as to "the specific structures of backward capitalism" which were already very well established in his work.

2. Capitalist Development and State Formation

Shanin's version of Marx pre-1870 may be something of a simplification. But this does not make the developments he and Wada draw our attention to in Marx's late writings on Russia any the less genuine or important. Marx did take up radically new positions in these texts, for the most part in directions on which mainstream Marxism (Second International and Bolshevik) was silent after his death [23]. What we want now to show is that such shifts were by no means confined to his Russian writings, but exist equally in other "late" texts. There is a wider rethink in late Marx (of which later Marxism has generally been no more aware), whose true dimensions are obscured by Wada's exclusive focus on Russia and Shanin's obsession with evolutionism.

A preliminary aside regarding periodizati-

on. There is real novelty in the late Marx. But not the least interesting feature of Marx's late texts is their *restatement*, albeit in very much more concrete terms, of themes that were central to his thought as far back as the early and mid-1840s. E.P. Thompson's suggestion that Marx's mature writings are hopelessly trapped within the conceptual net of the Political Economy they are fighting [24] is exaggerated, but the argument contains a kernel of truth as regards Marx's more overt preoccupations. It is surely no accident that the concerns we will be discussing here should have been most to the fore during the two periods when Marx was most actively engaged in politics, namely the 1840s and from 1864 onwards. There is a continuity of concern between the "early" and the "late" Marx, in areas with too exclusive a focus on the "mature" Marx of *Grundrisse* and *Capital* has often obscured. We would hope that one result of "discovering" late Marx might therefore be to make us take more seriously his insights into the anatomy of bourgeois civilization in texts like *The German Ideology*, "On the Jewish Question" and the Paris Manuscripts. This is particularly important given the present popularity of an unrepentantly economicistic interpretation of Marx as Gerry Cohen's book [25]. More widely, it draws attention to the dangers involved in any simple and unilinear periodization of Marx's work.

We will concentrate here on some other key neglected texts of Marx's late years, the two drafts and final text of *The Civil War in France*. Marx saw far more than the heroism of a lost cause in the Paris Commune. It was "the greatest revolution of this century" (*Writings on the Paris Commune*, p.147) [26]. The Commune was, moreover, a social *discovery* of the profoundest significance, "the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labour."

What so excited Marx in the Commune was not its policies as such (which he saw as having "nothing socialist in them" and acting mainly "for the salvation of the middle class" –

pp.162, 159), but its potentialities *as a political form*. "Whatever the merits of the single measures of the Commune, its greatest measure was its own organisation" (p. 153). For Marx, of course, "political forms ... originate in the material conditions of life [27]." He did not therefore laud the Communal Constitution in the abstract, but only insofar as it was a means towards the emancipation of labor: "Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion" (p.76). We will return to this below. But what is more novel, and certainly far less often remarked, in these texts, is the stress Marx lays on the *contrary* dependence:

The working class know that they have to pass through different phases of class struggle. They know that the superseding of the economical conditions of the slavery of labour by the conditions of free and associated labour can only be the progressive work of time ... But they know at the same time that great strides may be made at once through the Communal form of political organisations (pp.154-5).

The Commune "affords the rational medium through which the class struggle can run through its various phases in the most rational and humane way" (p.154).

The obverse of this is a warning socialists have honored more in the breach than in the observance:

the working class cannot simply lay hold on the ready-made state-machinery and wield it for their own purpose. The political instrument of their enslavement cannot serve as the political instrument of their emancipation (p. 196). The first condition for the hold[ing] of political power is to transform working machinery and destroy it – an instrument of class rule (p. 196).

Economic and social emancipation of labor requires political forms which are *themselves* emancipatory. A century's experience since Marx's death during which socialism has repeatedly been deformed by statism (whether in Bolshevik or Social Democratic forms) underscores his point. That Marx himself thought this conclusion both extremely important *and* a definite advance in terms of his own ideas is indicated not only by its

frequent reiteration in the second draft and final text of *The Civil War*, but above all by the fact that Marx and Engels again cite it, as *self-criticism*, in their Preface to the 1872 reissue of the Communist Manifesto [28]. This Preface endorses the “general principles” of the Manifesto, with the proviso that their application will always depend upon historical conditions. There then follows a specific correction. “No special stress”, Marx and Engels say, should be placed on the “revolutionary measures” proposed in the original text. For

in view of the practical experience gained, first in the February Revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole months, this programme has in some details become antiquated. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.”

Readers are then referred to *The Civil War*, “where this point is further developed.” The dominant motif of the “revolutionary measures” in the Manifesto to which this passage relates is precisely “centralisation ... in the hands of the State [29].” Engels later qualified another text contemporary with the Manifesto along similar lines. His and Marx’s call in 1850 for “the really revolutionary party [in Germany] to carry through the strictest centralisation” is now (1885) seen as “based on a misunderstanding” of French history. They had at one time thought the French centralized administrative machine “progressive. But now Engels argues that it was rather “provincial and local self-government” which was “the most powerful lever of the revolution”, whilst Napoleon’s centralization was “a pure instrument of reaction from the beginning [30].”

This brings us to the heart of Marx’s argument. Quite simply, the Commune was a rational form for the emancipation of labor precisely to the extent that it was *not* a State but specifically set out to smash it. He makes their opposition unmistakeably clear:

The true antithesis to the *Empire itself* – that is to the state power, the centralised executive, of which the Second Empire was only the exhausting formula – was *the Commune* ... This was, therefore, a Revolution not against this or that, legitimate, constitutional, republican or Imperialist form of State Power. It was a Revolution against the State itself, of this supernaturalist abortion of society, a resumption by the people for the people of its own social life. It was not a revolution to transfer it from one faction of the ruling classes to another, but a Revolution to break down this horrid machinery of classdomination itself ... The Second Empire was the final form of this State usurpation. The Commune was its definite negation, and, therefore, the initiation of the social Revolution of the 19th century (pp. 150-51).

To understand the full significance of this (which we would argue Marxism in general has not) [31] we need to look in detail at what the drafts and text of *The Civil War* have to say both about the State and about its antithesis the Commune. To do so is to highlight one of the oddest of gaps in Marx commentary. For these texts contain Marx’s fullest discussion of the State since the mid-1840s. And this just happens to be the one area where Marx indicated he thought *Capital* most in need of his personal supplementation [32].

The Civil War offers both a historical sketch of the evolution of the French State and an implicit theory of the modern State as a political form. The roots of France’s “centralised statemachinery which, with its ubiquitous and complicated military, bureaucratic, clerical and judiciary organs, entoils (inmeshes) the living civil society like a boaconstrictor” lie in the period of Absolutism. It was first forged as “a weapon of nascent modern society in its struggle of emancipation from feudalism”: seigneurial privileges were “transformed into the attributes of a unitary state power”, feudal retinues replaced by a standing army, feudal dignitaries supplanted by salaried state functionaries, and “the chequered (partycoloured) anarchy of medieval powers“ superseded by “the regulated plan of a statepower, with a systematic and hierarchic division of labour” (p. 148).

The 1789 revolution took “centralisation and organisation of state power” further. “With its task to found national unity (to create a nation)” it “had to break down all local, territorial, townish and provincial independence.” In expanding the “circumference and attributes” of the State, the revolution also increased its “independence, and its supernaturalist sway of real society” (p. 148). The ensuing national unity, Marx observes, “if originally brought about by political force” become “a powerful coefficient of social production” (p. 75). The Napoleonic Empire perfected this “parasitical [excrescence upon] civil society” (p. 148). At home it “served ... to subjugate the Revolution and annihilate all popular liberties”, abroad it was “an instrument of the French Revolution ... to create for France on the Continent instead of feudal monarchies more or less states after the image of France” (p. 149).

So “this state power forms in fact the creation of the middle class, first a means to break down feudalism, then a means to crush the emancipatory aspirations of the producers, the working class” (p. 150). This second aspect now comes to the fore in Marx’s account. As

the modern struggle of classes, the struggle between labour and capital, assumed shape and form, the physiognomy of the state power underwent a striking change ... With the entrance of society itself into a new phase, the phase of class struggle, the character of its organized public force, the state-power, could not but change also ... and more and more develop its character as the instrument of class despotism, and political engine forcibly perpetuating the social enslavement of the producers of wealth by its appropriators, of the economic rule of capital over labour (p. 197).

Successive popular revolutions (1830, 1848) served only to transfer state power from one fraction of the ruling classes to another, while with every revolution “the repressive character of the state power was more fully developed and more mercilessly used” (p. 197). So too was the financial burden of the state on the people, amounting to “a second exploitation” (p. 149). In sum, “all revolutions thus

only perfected the state machinery instead of throwing off this deadening incubus” (p. 149).

The Second Empire of Napoleon III was the “last triumph of a *State* separate of and independent from society” (p. 151). “At first view, apparently [elsewhere Marx writes: ‘to the eye of the uninitiated ...’ - p. 150] the usurpatory dictatorship of the governmental body over society itself, rising alike above and humbling all classes, it has in fact, on the European Continent at least, become the only possible state form in which the appropriating class can continue to sway it over the producing class” (p. 196). Professing to rest on the producing mass of the nation, the peasantry, and claiming to be above the labor/capital conflict, the Empire “divest[ed] the state power from its direct form of class despotism” (p. 198). We come now to a delicate but critical distinction in Marx’s analysis. On the one hand the State really “had grown so independent of society itself that a grotesquely mediocre adventurer with a hungry band of desperadoes behind him sufficed to wield it” (p. 149). But on the other hand it was not less a *bourgeois* State for that. “Apparently the final victory of the governmental power over society ... in fact it was only the last degraded and the only possible form of that class ruling” (p. 150). This amounts to an implicit and important criticism of the model of “Bonapartism” which Marxists have habitually drawn from *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, of a genuinely independent state resting on a stalemate of class forces. In the past such a model has been used to “explain” both Hitler and Stalin!

Marx is writing here of France, and does not see French State forms as universals of capitalism. He notes that “peculiar historical circumstances” allowed England “to complete the great central State organs by corrupt vestries, jobbing councillors, and ferocious poor-law guardians in the towns, and virtually hereditary magistrates in the counties” (p. 75). Nonetheless Marx does see

France as representing “the classical development of the bourgeois form of government” (p. 75). Mechanical applications of this notion have sometimes had a baneful influence in English Marxist historiography, and we ought to remember that all histories are “peculiar” rather than understand by peculiarities deviations from an otherwise “normal” model [33]. But such qualifications should not blind us to the fruitful elements of a general theory of the bourgeois state to be found in these analyses.

That the State is an instrument – or much better, *a form of organization* – of class power is a commonplace of Marxist theory. But other themes in Marx’s analysis here usually receive much less prominence in commentary, especially where they touch on the issues of the roots of the modern State form as such. The Marxist mainstream, taking its departure in Engels’ *Anti-Duhring*, identifies the State with government of people (as distinct from administration of things) in general and sees it as coterminous with class society [34]. Marx’s usage here (though not everywhere in his writings) is notably more historically precise. States in the sense Marx uses the term here are modern inventions. The modern State as such is specifically a form of organization of the class power of the *bourgeoisie*, a form forged in struggles first against feudalism and then against the working class. This is not to say that there was no coercive governance before the bourgeoisie, merely that this did not take the specific form of a State in Marx’s present sense.

The converse of this is equally important. Everything Marx says in *The Civil War* makes it evident that for him State formation was inseparable from, and indispensable to, the making of the capitalist mode of production. The State is an essential relation [35] of bourgeois society, not a “superstructure” in any normal sense of that unfortunate term. The State is not the political icing on the economic cake but one of its most important ingredients. This recuperates a major theme of

Marx’s writings of the 1840s: that “civil society” – here meaning bourgeois society [*burgerliche Gesellschaft*] – “must assert itself in its external relations as nationality and internally must organise itself as State [36].” In France this occurred through the development of a quasi-independent central State bureaucracy, in England through the gradual transformation, over a much longer period, of existing forms and resources, giving more apparent continuity (and leaving Marxist historians with the pseudo-problem of finding an English “equivalent” for 1789). But in both cases national state organization of those Max Weber called the *national citizen class* [37] was essential to the formation of modern capitalism.

What gives the State this historical specificity, indeed constitutes it as a State, is its very *separation* from “civil society”. The novelty of the bourgeois organization of its collective class power lies in the exercise of this power through a distinct policy or arena of general interests, whose counterpart is a depoliticized civil society, the realm of the individual, particular and private. Marx drew attention to this as early as 1843:

The *establishment of the political state* and the dissolution of civil society into *individuals* – whose relations with one another depend on *law*, just as the relations of men in the system of estates and guilds depended on privilege ... is accomplished by *one and the same act* [38].

This separation of the State from civil society – and it is instructive that Marx continues to employ the latter term in his late writings – is central to both the analysis of the State in *The Civil War* and Marx’s insistence on the need for socialism to smash it. The growing separation of the State, up to a point where it becomes “elaborated into seeming independence from society” (p. 151), is a major theme of the historical sketch summarized above. Marx repeatedly links this separation to the wider social divisions of labor characteristic of bourgeois society. It is “the state insofar as it forms through the

division of labor a special organism separate from society" (to quote another "late" text) [39] that forms the specific target of his critique. What is new in the writings of the 1870s as against the 1840s is the greater materialism of Marx's grasp of this division of labor.

As is clear from Marx's analysis of the Second Empire, this independence of the State is in one very material sense real. The specialization of the machinery of State *did* allow its capture by an "adventurer". More generally this specialization provides the key to the disjunction Marx recognizes between the general character of the State as a bourgeois organization, and the particulars of who commands its apparatuses at any given point in time. The institutional independence of the State allows the possibility of its control, at different times, by competing fractions of the bourgeoisie or even by non-bourgeois forces (as in Marx's – dubious – analysis of the British Constitution in which the "aristocracy" wield State power) [40]. This recognition is fundamental to the empirical richness of Marx's political sociology, in which the State is clearly not just a pliant bourgeois tool. It also allows due room for the specific interests of State servants. But this should not be confused with independence of the State from bourgeois relations in any wider sense. Marx is equally adamant that no matter who momentarily controls it, the modern State *as such* remains bourgeois. It remains bourgeois by virtue precisely of its form, that is, by virtue of its relationship to civil society.

The modern State form as such is intrinsically bourgeois because the boundaries of political and private, general and personal, collective and individual which it presupposes and articulates are those corresponding to the conditions of commodity production. Most decisions regarding the allocation of resources, for instance, are outside the political sphere (at best the State "intervenes" in "The Economy"). These boundaries

circumscribe what counts and can be practiced as politics, not just conceptually but *materially* through the means of action they make available or deny. The divisions of labor through which the State is constructed constitute and limit both the permitted sphere of political debate and action and the modes of political participation available to differentially located groups and individuals. We are of course talking about the attempted rather than the achieved: this social geography is a landscape of struggle. But the point we want to emphasize here is that in this wider context any "independence" of the State is purely illusory. Far from being independent of society, the State is an essential form of organization of *burgerliche Gesellschaft* itself. That is why it cannot be used by labor for its own emancipation.

3. Socialist Construction as Revolution Against the State

Which brings us to the Commune, for Marx precisely "the *political form of the social emancipation*, of the liberation of labor" (p. 154). What then is this sphynx so tantalizing to the bourgeois mind?

One way of reading *The Civil War* is simply as a manifesto of extreme political democracy. This would focus on Marx's enthusiasm for the Commune's achievement of real representation "Never were elections more sifted, never delegates fuller representing the masses from which they had sprung" – p. 147) and genuine public accountability, ensured by openness of sittings, publication of proceedings and revocability of delegates. Some might perhaps pause to note that administrative and judicial personnel were also to be elective and revocable (pp. 140, 153, 200). And those with a materialist bent might remind us that this democratization of the polity was to be protected by disbanding the army, arming the people, and paying Communal functionaries workmen's wages. If we add the caveat

that everything is contingent upon “expropriating the expropriators” we will have reached the point Lenin does in his commentary on the text in *The State and Revolution* – a reading we cannot ignore because of its authority [41]. This is, we should be clear, to go a long way. Lenin’s commentary highlights the silences and distortions of the Second International Marxists, reminds us of Marx’s correction of the Communist Manifesto, and above all insists that for Marx the State was something to be *smashed*. Nonetheless for Lenin (who did not, incidentally, know the drafts) *The Civil War* remained about “the reorganization of the state, the purely political reorganization of society [42].” The language is revealing.

For Lenin – writing, we might note, in autocratic, Tsarist Russia – the State was simply “bodies of armed men, prisons, etc.”, “a special force for the suppression of a particular class” incarnated in “the bureaucratic-military machine [43].” Hence, “democracy introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable [44]” is tantamount to smashing the State, inasmuch as it does away with such a special force. Lenin is explicit:

The Commune ... appears to have replaced the smashed state machine “only” by fuller democracy ... But ... this “only” signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different type. This is exactly a case of “quantity being transformed into quality” ... [45]

It is, Lenin continues, “in this sense” that “the state *begins to wither away*” [46]. Marx did not use the dangerously bland “withering away” formulation (it comes from Saint-Simon via *Anti-Dühring*) [47], he spoke of the need actively to smash. And he had in mind far more than Lenin realizes.

Marx had contrasted what he called *political* and *human emancipation* in his essay of 1843 on the Jewish question, a text Lenin ignores in *The State and Revolution* (if indeed he knew of its contents). The argument is taken further in *The German Ideology*, only

published after Lenin’s death. A knowledge of these materials and the drafts of *The Civil War* might perhaps have led Lenin to reason differently. Historical experience since 1917 should certainly lead us to reason differently. The gist of Marx’s argument is that since the existence of a separate political sphere is itself testimony to the alienation of human social powers, any merely political emancipation remains partial (albeit still desirable):

Only when man has recognised and organised his “*forces propres*” as *social* forces, and consequently no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of *political* power, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished [48].

For Marx what is needed is not so much political emancipation, as emancipation from politics, understood as the specialization of general social concerns into a particularized set of activities, occasions, and institutions – no matter how democratic. States presuppose and regulate relations within which individuals *cannot* collectively control the conditions of their real lives in “civil society”. The State is an “illusory community” which exists where real community does not [49]. So to smash it entails more than breaking the obvious apparatuses of class rule. The issue is not just the class content of State power but the alienation inherent in the State form as such.

This leads Marx to a different set of emphases from Lenin’s. The Commune’s primary significance lies in its being a social form through which this alienation can be challenged. It is, in a telling contrast, “a Revolution against the *State* itself ... a resumption by the people for the people of its own social life” (p. 150). At slightly more length, it was

the reabsorption of the State power by society as its own living forces instead of as forces controlling and subduing it, by the popular masses themselves, forming their own force instead of the organised force of their suppression – the political form of their social emancipation, instead of the artificial force (appropriated by their oppressors) (their own

force opposed to and organised against them) of society wielded for their oppression by their enemies (p. 152).

This is perhaps rather abstract, but it is important to grasp the *overall* thrust of Marx's analysis (and note its continuities with 1843). The way he develops his argument, however, is highly materialist.

Against the Anarchist absurdity that the State can be decreed away, Marx argued the necessity of transforming those material conditions of civil society which sustain it. The Commune "had no ready-made Utopias to introduce *par décret du peuple*" (p. 77). Time, and long class struggles, would be needed for labor to free itself from the muck of ages [50]. The Commune was no more than a "rational medium" for those struggles:

As the State machinery and parliamentarism are not the real life of the ruling classes, but only the organised general organs of their dominion, the political guarantees and forms and expressions of the old order of things, so the Commune is not the social movement of the working class and of a general regeneration of mankind, but the organised means of action. The Commune does not do away with the class struggles, through which the working class strives to the abolition of all classes ... (p. 154).

Marx goes on to draw an explicit parallel (which the late Mao Tsetung would have appreciated [51]) between the class struggles of socialist construction and the *centuries*-long struggles through which slavery was transformed into feudalism and feudalism into capitalism (pp. 154-55). This emphasis on the complexity and protractedness of class struggle *after* anything that might be called "the" socialist revolution is a general feature of Marx's late writings [52].

But this does *not* legitimate what we might call the Bolshevik absurdity that a "proletarian State" can be used and will then either "wither away" or be "thrown away" [53]. Sixty years after the October revolution, is it not time socialists abandoned this amiable but murderous fantasy? There is not a whiff of it in *The Civil War in France*. The Commune can be an appropriate form for labor's self-

emancipation because, and to the extent that, it is a *material* and *present* challenge to those relations which perpetuate labor's subordination. Central to the latter is the separation between a specialized State and a civil society without social control. Breaking down this separation is therefore not for Marx one of communism's remote objectives, but an indispensable part of any conceivable *means* for its attainment. What needs to be understood is that Marx is being every bit as materialist here as in his critique of the Anarchists. If the objective is labor's self-emancipation the means *have* to be "prefigurative", because they are the only ones which will work.

Extending the principles of election and revocability to administrative and juridical functionaries, for instance, is significant in this context as an extension of the *sphere* of social control beyond the realm of the polity as traditionally understood. So too are the Commune's infractions upon the erstwhile "private jurisdiction" of employers in "their" factories and mills, one of the very few measures Marx hails as being for the working class (p. 138). The Critique of the Gotha Programme extends this awareness of the needs for certain despotic inroads upon bourgeois right [54]. More generally, Marx celebrated the fact that "the initiative in all matters of social life [was] to be reserved to the Commune" (p. 200). What saves this from being a blueprint for totalitarian aggrandizement of a strengthened central State is that the forms through which this "social control" was exercised were not in the least statelike, but part of a wider revolution within civil society against any such alienation of social powers. This concept of "social control" is a key one in Marx [55]. His meaning is exactly the opposite of that sense it has since acquired in orthodox and radical sociologies alike. Marx is not referring to the attempted control of society by the State, but to conscious, collective and egalitarian control of society by its members - a situation which in his view would render States both impossible

and unnecessary.

The measures on which Lenin focuses, for full political democracy, are of course an important part of this, but not in and of themselves (nor yet, we might add, when merely supplemented by expropriation of capitalists if the program for socialist construction then pursued makes use of Statist forms of economic and other regulation, as in the Bolshevik case [56]). What Lenin neglects, and Marx attends to in detail – above all in the drafts – is the wider context of revolutionizing circumstances and selves which alone makes such measures meaningful elements of *socialist* transformation. Marx is clear that the Commune stood for a once and for all reduction in the scale, power and cost of *any* central societal authority. Abolition of the standing army has a multiple significance here. Yet, it does disarm the counter-revolution. But equally important to Marx, it was “the first economical *conditio sine qua* for all social improvements, discarding at once this source of taxes and state debts” (p. 152). Marx saw the Commune as arguing “all France organised into self-working and self-governing communes … with the army of stateparasites removed … [and] the state-functions reduced to a few functions for general national purposes (p. 154). What was sought was “the political unity of French society itself through the Communal organisation” instead of “that centralisation which has done its service against feudalism, but has become the mere unity of an artificial body, resting on gendarmes, red and black armies, repressing the life of real society” (pp. 167-68). This is a far cry from the model of “democratic centralism” Lenin somewhat casuistically extracts from the final text of *The Civil War* [57]. It is abundantly clear from the drafts that Marx’s approval was for a highly *decentralized* form of society, with local Communes being *sovereign* in all except the very few functions genuinely “necessitated by the general and common wants of the country” (p. 100).

We have left the more important feature of Marx’s account until the end. The *means* for all this was a sustained attack on the *divisions of labor* that constitute administration and government as “mysteries, transcendent functions only to be trusted to the hands of a trained caste” (p. 153). It is of the utmost importance, first, that Marx brands this, unequivocally, as “a delusion” (p. 153), and second, that it is a delusion he insists both can and must be *materially* challenged *now*, not in the communist hereafter. Breaking down this central and constitutive facet of capitalism’s wider division of labor was not something to await development of “the productive forces” and requisite levels of popular education on the one hand and the technical sophistication of the machinery of central government on the other, as *The State and Revolution* more than hints [58]. The Commune *was* such a challenge, and that was why Marx hailed it as a social discovery of monumental significance for the emancipation of labor. He is clear:

The delusion as if administration and political governing were mysteries, transcendent functions only to be trusted to the hands of a trained caste – stateparasites, richly paid sycophants and sinecurists, in the higher posts, absorbing the intelligence of the masses and turning them against themselves in the lower places in the hierarchy. Doing away with the state hierarchy altogether and replacing the haughty masters of the people into always removable servants, a mock responsibility by a real responsibility, as they act continuously under public supervision. Paid like skilled workmen … The whole sham of state-mysteries and state-pretensions was done away [with] by a Commune, mostly consisting of simple working men … doing their work publicly, simply, under the most difficult and complicated circumstances, and doing it … for a few pounds, acting in broad daylight with no pretensions to infallibility, not hiding itself behind circumlocution offices, not ashamed to confess blunders by correcting them. Making in one order the public functions – military, administrative, political – *real workmen’s functions*, instead of the hidden attributes of a trained caste … Whatever the merits of the single measures of the Commune, its greatest measure was its own organisation … proving its life by its vitality, confirming its thesis by its action … giving body to the aspirations of the working class of all countries (p. 153).

4. Marx's Materialism – Continuities and Contradictions

The full significance of Marx's later writings on Russia only emerges when they are seen in context – the immediate context of Marx's other writings of the 1870s and 1880s (and the political experience which gave rise to them), and the broader context of the development of his thought as a whole. Wada effectively ignores the first, while Shanin in our view at least greatly oversimplifies the second. Wada's and Shanin's articles are in many ways path-breaking. They document real and important developments in Marx's thinking on peasants, the *obshchina*, and peripheral capitalism, and draw out relevant and timely implications for traditional evolutionist, progressivist readings of Marx. But their neglect or simplifications of context also means, paradoxically, that in other respects Wada and Shanin undervalue the importance of "late Marx".

When read against the background of Marx's writings on the Paris Commune, for instance, what is most striking in the drafts of the letter to Vera Zasulich (and virtually ignored by both Wada and Shanin) is an *exactly* parallel concern with the centrality of the State to capitalist development on the one hand, and the appropriateness of the *obshchina* as a form through which labor can emancipate itself on the other. Marx's scenario is once again a communal revolution against the State. Marx detects a "deep-seated dualism" [59] within the Russian village community, of private and collective tendencies. This permits "an alternative development" [60] towards the disintegration of the community or towards socialism, depending entirely on the historical environment. One alternative is hopeful:

The communal ownership of the soil offers it [the village community] a natural basis for collective appropriation, and its historical environment, the contemporaneous existence of capitalist production, lends it all the material conditions of co-operative labour, organised on a vast scale. The

community can thus adopt the positive achievements elaborated by the capitalist system without having to undergo its hardships ... it can become the *direct point of origin* of the economic system towards which modern society develops and it can cast off its old skin without first committing suicide [61].

"It would, of course, be only a gradual change, which would begin by establishing the normal state of the community in its *present* form [62]." There exists already a basis for socialist transformation in "the collective mode of production" in jointly-owned meadowlands, whilst the peasants' familiarity with the *artel* would "greatly facilitate the transition from agriculture by individual plot to collective agriculture [63]."

But this possibility, indeed the *obshchina*'s very existence, is threatened by a conspiracy of powerful interests:

What menaces the life of the Russian community is neither historical necessity, nor a social theory: it is the oppression by the State and the exploitation by capitalist intruders who have been made powerful at the expense and cost of the peasants by the very same State [64].

The State has acted as a "hothouse" [65] for capitalist development. Since the 1861 Emancipation "the Russian community was put by the State into an abnormal economic situation", and this "oppression from the outside" unleashed conflicts within the community itself [66]. This is not "historic necessity", it is class struggle. Marx similarly holds "governmental fetters" rather than any inherent primitivism responsible for perpetuating the isolation of communities [67]. What is therefore needed is first and foremost a revolution against "this coincidence of destructive influences":

If such a revolution takes place in time, if it concentrates all its forces to assure the free development of the rural community, this later will soon become the regenerating element of Russian society, and the factor giving it superiority over the countries enslaved by the capitalist system [68].

Marx's later writings as a whole can

fruitfully be seen as a sustained reflection – or better, a highly focussed and productive moment in a lifetime's reflection, informed by Marx's deep involvement in the political struggles of the time – on *appropriate forms for socialist transformation*. A search, on the one hand, for social forms within *present* modes of life and struggle which are *capable* of advancing the emancipation of labor, a search for what we nowadays call prefigurative forms, not in any Utopian sense but as material and effective means for furthering socialist transformation. And a sober identification, on the other hand, of the myriad social forms and relations – going well beyond manifest property relations [69]: State, division of labor, forms of social classification and identity “encouraged” by complex modes of moral and legal regulation – which block that emancipation and fetter that transformation.

This concern is not of course a feature of Marx's post-*Capital* writings only, though it is most developed there. His praise for the emancipatory potential of the Paris Commune (despite what he considered its many errors [70]) or the *obshchina* (notwithstanding its “private side”) has antecedents in his eulogies to the success of the Ten Hours Bill and to the co-operative movement in his 1864 Inaugural Address to the First International [71] – though he well knew the extreme limitations of co-operatives in a capitalist world, and was no lover of the law. Going further back we find this salient comment on trade union activities:

In order to rightly appreciate the value of strikes and combinations, we must not allow ourselves to be blinded by the apparent insignificance of their economical results, but hold above all things in view their moral and political consequences [72].

These are all what Marx calls “*great facts*” for socialism, prefigurative victories – however contradictory or compromised – for the political economy of labor (“social production controlled by social foresight”)

over the political economy of capital [73]. Such egalitarian and collective forms of social life, forms which permit its conscious and democratic control by all in the interests of all, are socialism's starting-point in the here and now.

The other, equally important side of this is Marx's critique in his later texts of forms of bourgeois civilization which will not further the self-emancipation of labor, and therefore cannot be treated instrumentally. Pre-eminent amongst these is the State, and the wider divisions of labor in bourgeois society of which its separability is one expression. But the point applies more generally. Raymond Williams has put it well:

There is the one level at which we can say that a specific form was historically productive and therefore historically valuable – in that sense it was a major contribution to human culture. But we must also be able to say, in a distinct but connected way, that it was a disastrously powerful contribution. In the same way one can acknowledge the productive capacity of bourgeois society, or its political institutions, and yet distance oneself from them as creations which not only later become, but in the very mode of their constitution always were, blocks on human freedom or even human progress. If you cannot make the first judgement, then all history becomes a current morality, and there ceases to be any history. If you cannot make the second, I do not know what an affiliation to the working class would be for me [74].

Wada's and Shanin's demonstration of Marx's growing (though as we have shown, not unheralded) reservations in his late texts about the actual forms which capitalist development takes is germane here. It ought to make us re-think our too linear, too progressivist, too economicistic reading of *Capital* itself, just as Marx's treatment of the State and the division of labor in his late texts should lead us to read anew his still marginalized writings of the 1840s.

It would be a pity if Shanin's claims for “late Marx” (coupled perhaps with Thompson's labelling *Grundrisse* and *Capital* an “anti-Political Economy”) had the same sort of effect on perceptions of *Capital* as Althusser's periodization of Marx had for a

time on evaluations of the “early writings”. We do not argue a continuity in Marx’s work in the sense of denying genuine discovery in the writings of the 1870s and 1880s. There was novelty aplenty, leading at times as we have shown to explicit or implicit self-criticism. But there is a continuity of concern and the real importance of Marx’s late writings for his overall legacy lies in helping us see where this lies. For us the late writings put beyond any doubt the centrality of what are too readily dismissed as Utopian elements within Marx’s thought, to the end of his days. Marx was never a Utopian socialist, still less was he an Anarchist. He fought bitter struggles with the Anarchists in the 1870s, in the course of which he denounced “political indifferentism” with Swiftian irony [75]. But nor was he an instrumentalist, a despised “*Realpolitiker*” [76]. He was as passionate a critic of Lassalle’s “state socialism” as he was of Bakunin or Proudhon. Political indifferentism does not engage with the facts of bourgeois power. But Realpolitik only appears to do so, because the means it employs are themselves forms of bourgeois domination. In our times, the latter seems the more pertinent lesson. We can learn a lot from Marx’s close attention to *forms*.

NOTES

1. T. Shanin, “Marx and the Peasant Commune”, and H. Wada “Marx and Revolutionary Russia”, *History Workshop* (12) 1981. Reprinted in T. Shanin (ed.), *Late Marx and the Russian Road* (London: Routledge, 1983). A much reduced version of the present paper is also available in the latter source, together with a biographical note on “late Marx” by Derek Sayer.
2. K. Marx, “The British Rule in India” and “Future Results of the British Rule in India”, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works* (hereafter cited as *MECW*) vol. 12; *MECW* 11, pp. 187-8.
3. Represented in different areas by e.g. G. Cohen, *Marx’s Theory of History: a Defense* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); B. Warren, *Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism* (London: Macmillan, 1980).
4. On Engels and Darwinism, see Benton, “Natural Science and Cultural Struggle”, J. Mepham and D. Ruben (eds), *Issues in Marxist Philosophy* (Brighton 1979) vol. 2.
5. Marx to Engels, January 16, 1861. In Marx/Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow, 1975; hereafter cited as *SC*). Edward Thompson makes the same point in his *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (London: Merlin, 1978) pp. 255-6.
6. Margaret Fay, “Did Marx Offer to Dedicate *Capital* to Darwin? A Reassessment of the Evidence”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. XXXIX, no. 1 (1978).
7. *The German Ideology*, *MECW* 5, p. 50. Compare *Grundrisse* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973) p. 106.
8. *The Poverty of Philosophy*, *MECW* 6, pp. 173-4.
9. For typically “empiricist” injunctions in Marx see, *Inter Alia*, *MECW* 5, pp. 31, 35, 43; *MECW* 6, p. 170; *Capital*, vol. 3 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981) pp. 927-8; Afterword to *Capital*, vol. 1 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970), p. 19; Marginal notes on A. Wagner’s *Textbook* ..., in *Value: Studies by Marx* (London: New Park, 1976) p. 214 and *passim*. Althusser was amongst those who found such “empiricism” disturbing; see his remarks on Marx’s “Works of the Break”, in *For Marx* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969) pp. 31-8.
10. *MECW* 5, p. 37.
11. In *The First International and After* (ed. D. Fernbach, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974; hereafter cited as *FI*); first English publication in *Cahiers de l’ISEA*, 91 serie S, no. 2, Paris (1959).
12. See D. Sayer. “Karl Marx 1867-1883: A Biographical Note”. In T. Shanin (ed), *Late Marx, op. cit*
13. *Grundrisse*, p. 102.
14. *Capital* I, pp. 8, 10.
15. Letter to *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, (?) November 1877 (see Wada). *SC*, pp. 291-4.
16. *MECW*, 6, p. 167.
17. K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Civil War in the United States* (New York: International Publishers, 1974) p. 84.
18. Ibid. p. 19. The text goes on to repeat *The Poverty of Philosophy*’s analysis of the indispensability of black slavery to the English cotton industry.
19. “Outline of a Report on the Irish Question”, in K. Marx and F. Engels *Ireland and the Irish Question* (Moscow, 1978) pp. 139, 142, 143.
20. See for example “Notes for An Undelivered Speech on Ireland” (*Ireland and the Irish Question* pp. 130-5) and the letters on Ireland collected in *FI*, pp. 158-171.
21. *Capital* I, p. 236.
22. Ibid., p. 451. See further, K. Mohri, “Marx and Underdevelopment”, *Monthly Review*, vol. 31, no. 11, 1979. We might recall here Marx’s formulation of what he (untypically) referred to as “The absolute general law of capitalist accumulation”, *Capital* I, pp. 643-4.
23. On the 2nd International see Lucio Colletti’s brilliant essay “Bernstein and the Marxism of the 2nd International” in his *From Rousseau to Lenin* (London: New Left Books, 1972); on Bolshevism, Phillip Corrigan, Harvie Ramsay, Derek Sayer, *Socialist Construction and Marxist Theory* (London: Macmillan, and New York, Monthly Review

Press, 1978) and "Bolshevism and the USSR", *New Left Review* No. 125, (1981).

24. Thompson suggests this in *Poverty of Theory*, pp. 247f. Even in *Grundrisse* there are extensive passages on for instance law, individuality, subjectivity in bourgeois civilization going well beyond an "anti-Political Economy", notwithstanding the Hegelian *form* of the work. But there were important shifts between *Grundrisse* and *Capital*, on which we have commented elsewhere. See Derek Sayer, *Marx's Method* (Harvester, 2nd ed., 1983) ch. 4.

25. *Op. cit.*, note 3 above.

26. H. Draper (ed), *Writings on the Paris Commune* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971). All subsequent in-text page references to this source.

27. 1859 Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971) p. 20.

28. *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Moscow, 1973) pp. 7-9.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-5.

30. *MECW* 10, pp. 285-6n.

31. See note 23 above. A towering exception is Mao Tsetung. See Philip Corrigan, Harvie Ramsay, Derek Sayer, *For Mao* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

32. Writing of his plans for *Capital* to Kugelmann on December 28, 1862, Marx said that the volume on "capital in general" was "the quintessence", and "the development of the rest (with the exception perhaps of the relations of different state forms to different economic structures of society) could be easily accomplished by others on the basis thus provided" (*Letters to Dr. Kugelmann*, London: Martin Lawrence, n.d.). Marx had always intended his opus to discuss the State: the drafts of *The Civil War* are the nearest, after 1867, he came to it, and provide the means for evaluating the continuity or otherwise in his thought of the major themes of the analysis of the State he had developed in the 1840s.

33. See E. P. Thompson's brilliant "Peculiarities of the English", reprinted in *The Poverty of Theory*.

34. F. Engels, *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (Anti-Dühring)* (New York: International Publishers, 1972) pp. 306-8.

35. See further *MECW* 5, p. 52; Corrigan, Ramsay, Sayer, "The State as a Relation of Production", in Philip Corrigan (ed), *Capitalism, State Formation and Marxist Theory* (London: Quartet, 1980).

36. *MECW* 5, p. 89.

37. See his *General Economic History* (New York: Collier, 1966) p. 249 and Part 4 *passim*.

38. On the Jewish question, *MECW* 3, p. 167. Cf. pp. 32, 197-9. We have discussed Marx's work on law - a closely related topic - in detail in Corrigan and Sayer, "How the Law Rules" in B. Fryer, *et al* (eds), *Law, State and Society* (London: Croom Helm, 1981).

39. *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, in *FI*, p. 356.

40. "The British Constitution", *MECW* 14, pp. 53-6.

41. In his *Selected Works in 3 volumes* (Moscow, 1970) vol. 2, pp. 312-327.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 318.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 292, 317, 313.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 317.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 316-7.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 317.

47. *Anti-Dühring*, p. 307. The government of persons/administration of things antithesis is from Saint-Simon. The danger with it is when persons become administered like things in the name of States withering away.

48. *MECW* 3, p. 168.

49. *MECW* 5, p. 83.

50. The image is from *The German Ideology: MECW 5*, p. 53.

51. See above all his "15 Theses", in *On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism ...* (Peking: FLP, 1964).

52. Compare e.g. *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, *FI*, pp. 346-7, and *passim*.

53. See for instance Lenin's 1919 Lecture on the State, in his *Collected Works* vol. 19, p. 488.

54. *FI*, pp. 346-7. See Corrigan and Sayer, "How the Law Rules", *op. cit.*

55. See for instance its use in *Capital* I (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976 translated) p. 412. The Moore and Aveling edition otherwise used in this paper is "Control on the Part of Society" (p. 298).

56. See Corrigan *et al*, *Socialist Construction and Marxist Theory*, chs. 2, 3, and *passim*, and the remarkable collection *Lenin on the Soviet Apparatus* (Moscow, 1969).

57. *The State and Revolution*, pp. 323-5.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 322-3. This should be read with the passage from the lecture on the State cited in note 53 above.

59. Letter to Zasulich, 2nd draft, in P. Blackstock and B. Hoselitz (eds), *The Russian Menace to Europe* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1953) p. 223. Cf. 3rd draft pp. 220, 221. Translations from this source amended throughout.

60. *Ibid.*, 3rd draft, p. 221.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 221-2.

62. *Ibid.*, 2nd draft, p. 224.

63. *Ibid.*

64. *Ibid.*

65. *Ibid.*, 1st draft, p. 225. Marx also used the hothouse image in a famous passage in *Capital* I (Moore and Aveling translation) p. 751, which concludes that (State) force "is itself an economic power".

66. Letter to Zasulich, 1st draft, p. 225.

67. *Ibid.*, 2nd draft, p. 225.

68. *Ibid.*, 1st draft, p. 226. It is perhaps apposite to point out that peasants in the USSR were eventually collectivized forcibly, from above, with predictably disastrous political and productive consequences.

Collectivization has only ever been at all successful when it proceeds from an assessment of existing co-operative elements in the peasant community, as Marx suggests here, and as was the case in China. See Jack Gray, "The Two

Roads”, in S. R. Schram (ed), *Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China* (Cambridge, 1973) or *For Mao*, Part 2, Essay 2.

69. On property relations as understood by Marx see *Poverty of Philosophy*, *MECW* 6, p. 197; “Moralising Criticism”, *Ibid.*, p. 336; *German Ideology*, *MECW* 5, p. 46, which sees property as “the power of disposing of the labour-power of others” and asserts that “division of labour and private property are, after all, identical expressions.”

70. See Marx’s letters to Liebknecht of April 6, 1871, to Kugelmann of April 12, 1871, to Frankel and Varlin of May 13, 1871, to Beesly of June 12, 1871, and to Domela-Nieuwenhuis of February 22, 1881, all in Draper (ed), *Writings On the Paris Commune*.

71. In *FI*, pp. 73-81.

72. “Russian policy against Turkey - Chartism”. *MECW* 12, p. 169.

73. Inaugural Address to first International, *FI*, pp. 78-9. Marx twice uses these same formulations in the drafts of *The Civil War. Writings on the Paris Commune*, pp. 138, 155.

74. Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters* (London: New Left Books, 1979) p. 307.

75. The relevant article is in *FI*, pp. 327-332.

76. See Marx(s letter to Kugelmann of February 23, 1865 (in *FI*, pp. 148-153) “Lassalle only imitated the gentleman of the National Association. But while they invoked Prussian ‘reaction’ in the interests of the middle class, he shook hands with Bismarck in the interests of the proletariat. Those gentlemen were more justified than Lassalle, in so far as the bourgeois is accustomed to regard the interests lying immediately before his nose as ‘reality’ ... while the working class, in the very nature of things, must be honestly ‘revolutionary’ (p. 150).