

# Fundamental Problems of Marxism

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by **GEORGE V. PLEKHANOV**  
with an appendix of his two essays:  
**THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY**  
**THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN HISTORY**

FUNDAMENTAL  
PROBLEMS OF  
MARXISM

by GEORGE V. PLEKHANOV

WITH AN APPENDIX OF HIS ESSAYS:

*The Materialist Conception of History*

*The Role of the Individual in History*



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

The present text of *Fundamental Problems of Marxism* has been translated by Julius Katzer from the Russian edition prepared by the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and edited by V.A. Fomina of that Institute. Titles for the various sections have been supplied by the editor of the present edition. He has drawn upon the notes to the Russian edition in preparing his own, which are indicated by superior numbers in the text and are to be found in the back of the book. Plekhanov's own notes are given as footnotes on the page, and incorporate the extensive notes he added to the German edition of 1910. Bibliographical data supplied by the editor in the text and in Plekhanov's footnotes are enclosed within square brackets. Plekhanov's references and quotations have been checked with the original or with currently available English translations.

The two essays by Plekhanov in the present volume are based on the text as previously issued by International Publishers: *The Materialist Conception of History*, 1940; and *The Role of the Individual in History*, 1940. The editor has found it necessary to make some revision in the translation, and has also added a few explanatory notes. In these latter essays, which were published under tsarist censorship, Plekhanov used a general term, such as "modern materialism," to avoid direct reference to Marxism. Occasionally the editor has supplied the identification within square brackets in the text, but in most cases the reader has been left to supply his own from the context.

## EDITOR'S PREFACE

In his last major work, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism* (1908), which is published here in new translation, Plekhanov's purpose was to elaborate historical materialism in the context of the general philosophical outlook of Marxism. Added as appendices to the present volume are two smaller but no less valuable essays, written earlier: "The Materialist Conception of History" (1897) and "The Role of the Individual in History" (1898).

The lasting value of these works arises from Plekhanov's well reasoned and erudite elucidation of the materialist conception of history, as against other interpretations which give it a one-sided, economic-determinist meaning. Indeed, he is impatient with any tendency that seeks to establish a direct, causal line between the realm of ideas and the economic base, which he considers a complete misrepresentation of Marxism.

Marx stated the general principle in his famous Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*. In essence, he said, any given social formation—such as feudalism, capitalism or socialism—and the "superstructure" of institutions and ideas associated with it rests upon a distinctive economic development which arises from the level of productive forces and the mode of production. The latter determines the relations of production, the specific class formation. It is not this or that economic "factor" but the entire complexity of economic relations and development which is meant. Furthermore, as Engels, followed by Plekhanov, emphasized, it is "in the final analysis," in the long run, that the underlying economic development can provide an explanation of the even more complex social and cultural phenomena.

Intrinsic to the general principle, is Marx's emphasis upon the *process* of history. The motive force, so to speak, of progress lies in the unity and conflict between the productive forces and the relations of production. When these are in conformity, although even roughly so, the social order will have general stability and continue to grow. But when the former outgrow the latter, when

the existing social order restricts the growth of the productive forces, the historic or objective necessity for revolution arises. However, such social transformations do not take place of themselves. Man must become cognizant of the need—for only man, acting in the real world, within the context of class and circumstances, can carry through revolutions. Historical materialism is thus not only a methodology for the study of history but even more is it an approach to the making of history. It is sociology in the sense of a science of society and it is politics in the sense of a theory of social change and revolution.

By emphasizing that these principles operate “in the final analysis,” Engels and Plekhanov meant to call attention to the mediating forces between the economic base and the superstructure. There is a wide intermediate field of complex interactions between the economic base, the social structure and ideology, as well as within each of these spheres. In any concrete situation and at any given time, the actual course of history is deeply affected by the superstructural factors which may also react back upon the base and which, in a revolutionary situation, may change the base, as in the transition from capitalism to socialism. Engels made this point neatly when he said, “What would be the use of fighting for the political dictatorship of the working class if political power were powerless in the economic sphere? Force (i.e., the power of the state) is also an economic factor.”

Neither Marx nor Engels claimed that any theory of history, including their own, would ever provide a key to the understanding of a particular phase of history unless it were applied in special research in each case. One need only read the historical classics of Marx and Engels to see how they pursued the study of each historic situation to reveal the class dynamics underlying all the contradictions, variations, peculiarities and “accidents” which actually occurred. What the Marxist view of history does maintain is that what is possible at any particular place and time is “historically given” in the level of productive forces, the prevailing mode of production, and the corresponding property and social relations.

In this light, the reader will find especially illuminating Plekhanov's discussion of “necessity” and the role of people in his-

tory, including the place of “chance” or “accident.” He lays to rest a common objection to Marxism, still heard today, i.e., that it poses an insoluble contradiction between necessity and human endeavor (why strive for an objective that is guaranteed by the laws of social development?). He shows that this is a false contradiction, since history is made by men in recognition of and in response to necessity, to historically given situations. The same “necessity” that has created the situation gives rise to the class which will change it; but it will not change of itself, since only the active intervention of man, knowing what needs to be done and what is possible, can bring about the required change.

Indeed, the active, creative role of man in history is the central emphasis of Marx's theory. In his famous Third Thesis on Feuerbach, referring to the limitations of preceding materialism, Marx says, “The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing . . . forgets that circumstances are changed precisely by men and that the educator must himself be educated.” It is the task of historical materialism to explain how men can change circumstances, according to a science of society and history. As Marx said, “Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.”\* In any specific situation, both the historically given potentials and the historically given limitations, and the interaction between them, must be understood. Thus can man make history.

In his incisive treatment of the role of accident in history, Plekhanov shows that it is relative, in two respects. First, what may appear as accident to one class or nation may be seen as necessity by another class or nation. Thus a capitalist may view a socialist revolution as a catastrophe or an unfortunate accident, while a worker would see it as a necessity of his freedom; the Indians of Mexico saw the arrival of the *conquistadores* as a bolt from the blue, totally unconnected with their own history, while the Spaniards saw their conquest as a necessity of commercial expansion. Secondly, even “accident” is subject to necessity in

\*K. Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Chapter 1.

the sense that it can play a role in history only at junctures which are created by given developments. True, Plekhanov says, "only at the point of intersection of *inevitable* processes," which contains a rigidity not present in Marx. Nevertheless, he does make the major point against opponents who hold Marxism is hopelessly entangled in "opposites" such as necessity *vs* freedom or determinism *vs* chance, for he shows the dialectical interrelationship between them.

In his "Materialist Conception of History," Plekhanov takes the publication in France of a book by the early Italian Marxist, Antonio Labriola, as the occasion to strike at certain misconceptions of Marxism. Among other things, he joins with Labriola in discrediting the "theory of factors"—an eclectic approach common today under different guises—which separates the activity of social man into various categories (economics, law, morality, etc.) each of which has an independent impact on historical development. But his main concern here, as elsewhere, is with the economic determinists who mechanically attempt to explain the entire historical process in its manifold variety directly by the economic factor, acting on its own, independent of man. It is much easier to refute this caricature of Marxism than it is to refute dialectical materialism, he points out, and that is why the opponents of Marxism try to make it appear that economic determinism is synonymous with Marxism. Turning the argument the other way, and citing appropriate examples (including Edwin Seligman's *The Economic Interpretation of History*), Plekhanov suggests that if historians were to accept historical materialism they would save themselves from falling into schematism.

It is indeed surprising how the economic-determinist distortion has persisted to the present day, not only among bourgeois historians who have admitted the economic factor into their analysis but also as an influence in Marxist or Left-wing movements. In the latter case, it does great harm, for such a simplified and mechanistic reading of history, past and present, encourages fatalistic and subjective approaches. On the one hand, it leads to the falling off of conscious revolutionary activity ("inexorable economic law is on our side, in any case"). Labriola, who was particularly strong on this point, had this to

say about those socialists who believe socialism "will come because it should": "Blessed are those who measure the future of history and the right to progress with the yardstick of a life insurance policy!"\* On the other hand, such mechanistic distortions may encourage reliance upon human nature to see us through (since "humanism" must be counted on to soften the harsh, unrelenting grind of that same inexorable law).

While Plekhanov has a high estimate of Labriola's book on historical materialism, he is critical of certain "distortions on the idealist side," as in his treatment of the state, the role of ignorance and error in history, of symbolism in the history of ideologies, of tradition. Perhaps it would be of interest here to single out his criticism of Labriola's view that racial factors complicate historical development. Plekhanov holds this theory is wrong even with regard to prehistoric peoples, and as regards historic peoples he declares that "in relation to them the word 'race' cannot and should not be used at all. We do not know of any historical nation that can be regarded as racially pure." In Plekhanov's view, it is absurd to refer to racial characteristics as a factor in history because it terminates the investigation just at the point where it should begin. Plekhanov is certainly right in hitting sharply at any racist theory of history, whether it seeks to establishing the inherent "racial" superiority of one people over another, or to explain this or that aspect of social progress by race. Yet, it cannot be ignored that in a subjective or ideological sense the racial factor does play a role, as in the United States, for example, where the racists use the factor of color to segregate and oppress Afro-Americans, while the latter in the process of their struggle for liberation find positive identity in being black. It may be argued that this is essentially a subjective reaction to a racist ideology which plays a particularly pernicious role in the United States because it sustains a system of super-exploitation. Nevertheless, regardless of the source, the sense of racial identity among Afro-Americans, which may be considered analogous to a sense of nationality, is a factor that can be ignored only to the detriment of a progressive solution.

\**Socialism and Philosophy*, Chicago, 1906, p. 159.

The essay on "The Role of the Individual in History" is directed against those opponents who claim that Marxism repudiates the human factor in social development, thus converting history into a fatalistic and impersonal process. Among the best expositions of the Marxist view on this theme, the essay is a devastating reply to the contention that social progress is the work of "heroes," as opposed to the "mob," which is an inert mass, incapable of creative action. The "mob" attains significance only when the "hero," the "critically thinking individual" (a favorite term of the Narodniks) places himself at its head. Plekhanov directed his sharpest barbs against the Narodniks and the political conclusions they (and then the Socialist-Revolutionaries) drew from this "theory"—that a mass working class revolutionary party was unnecessary since tyranny was to be overthrown by the "hero" with acts of individual terrorism. The contemporary reader can draw certain parallels regarding similar current theories and moods, including the intellectual elitism intrinsic to them.

In destroying the "hero-mob" theory, Plekhanov emphasizes his favorite theme on the role of man in history, both in general and in the individual sense. While history as a process is governed by necessity, he says, it does not proceed independent of man, but is made by men who recognize the requirements of progress and solve them in accordance with the historical conditions of the epoch. A man is great because "he possesses qualities which make him most capable of solving the great social needs of his time, needs which arise as a result of general and particular causes." However, intent as he is upon destroying the "hero" theory, he seems to underestimate the influence that personality may have on history ("cult of the personality," for example).

In his discussion of historical materialism, Plekhanov presents a dialectical view. He destroys effectively the supposed contradiction between freedom and necessity for he sees their dialectical unity. Other difficulties with Plekhanov appear when he seeks philosophical "justification" for the theory of historical materialism. As concerns his principal objective in *Fundamental Problems*—to show that a single world outlook permeates all aspects of Marxism—there can be little argument. But certain

questions do arise with respect to his treatment of Marx in relation to Feuerbach. It would appear that Plekhanov was so intent upon establishing Marxism as a philosophy—as against those who saw it only as history, economics and politics—that he emphasized the continuity of materialist thought without a full critical evaluation of materialism before Marx.

It should be kept in mind, of course, that he did not have available to him certain works by Marx and Engels which throw new light on the genesis of their thinking, such as *The German Ideology*, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, and the *Grundrisse*.<sup>\*</sup> If he had known these works, perhaps he would not have made the error of referring to the materialism of Marx and Engels as a kind of modernized Spinozism. While this may be passed over as a figure of speech, more serious is the rather thin line of demarcation he draws between Marx and Feuerbach. To be sure, Plekhanov notes Marx's critique of Feuerbach with respect to his idealism in history and his lack of dialectical method. However, he makes it appear that Marx took over Feuerbach's materialism and merely made a "masterly correction" by combining it with the dialectical method of Hegel, and applying the materialist theory more consistently to reality.

This oversimplified presentation of the genesis of Marxist thought can lead to a sort of crude materialism, although it should be noted that Plekhanov polemicized very effectively against economic determinism. Actually, Marx did not take over Feuerbach. As Engels said in his essay on the philosopher, "Feuerbach . . . in many respects forms an intermediate link between Hegelian philosophy and our conceptions."<sup>†</sup> The transitory aspect consists in Feuerbach's reversal of Hegel's idealist system (being determines consciousness, and not, as with Hegel, the absolute idea determines being). But a mere reversal of the Hegelian system, without changing its nature, would merely replace the dogmatic idealism of Hegel by dogmatic materialism.

<sup>\*</sup>The manuscripts of these works were discovered only later. English translations of the first two have been published in New York and London, and a part of *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* has also been published in English in both cities under the title, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*.

<sup>†</sup>Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Forward.

Thus, Feuerbach substituted for Hegel's "man is an alienation from God," his formula, "God is an alienation from man." In seeking to liberate man from religion, Feuerbach sought the unity of man with man, the realization of "universal love." But for Feuerbach, man is abstracted from history and society. Politics and the science of society are foreign to him. The old religion is replaced with a new religion of humanism which is divorced from the real world. His "philosophical communism" is identified neither with the struggle of the proletariat nor with the transformation of bourgeois society.\*

Marx transcended Hegelianism by rejecting the *system* entirely, while "putting on its feet" the dialectical *method* of Hegel. Feuerbach, as Engels said, had "stopped halfway; the lower half of him was materialist, the upper half idealist." Marx effected a complete transformation, by departing entirely from Feuerbach's abstract man and entering the real world of men, in history, at work and in action. While Feuerbach saw the overcoming of religious alienation by universal love, Marx said that alienation can be overcome only by the active intervention of man in his environment. By reversing the dialectical method of Hegel, he also transformed it into materialist dialectics, as the distinctive feature of the Marxist theory of cognition—the process of knowing, in relation to practice, to the concrete activities of man in specific social and historical circumstances.† Thus dialectics, as Lenin pointed out, imparted to the Marxist theory of knowledge its distinctive quality—the analysis of concrete condition, in interaction and contradiction, in motion. This is the vital point missed by Plekhanov in his presentation of the relation between Feuerbach and Marx, and is one of the roots of the dogmatic thread in his thinking. Despite his high regard for Plekhanov's philosophical contributions, Lenin pointed to the source of this dogmatic strain when he remarked in his notes "On the Question of Dialectics"‡ that Plekhanov gave inade-

\*See Roger Garaudy, *Karl Marx: Evolution of His Thought*, New York and London, 1967, Chapter 1.

†See Maurice Cornforth, *The Open Philosophy and the Open Society*, New York and London, 1968, Chapter 3.

‡*Philosophical Notebooks, Selected Works*, Vol. 38, Moscow, 1961, p. 359.

quate attention to the central aspect of dialectics, the unity of opposites, which he tended to see as a "sum-total of examples."

A similar difficulty can also be seen in the five-point outline which Plekhanov presents (*Fundamental Problems*, Chapter XIII) to show the relation of superstructural elements to the forces of production. Here he is arguing against the economic determinists and is attempting to show that "spiritual factors" also react upon the economic base. While there can be no quarrel with the main thrust of his argument, the schematic exposition does not allow for the complex interactions among the superstructural elements themselves, and the multiple way in which the interaction with the economic base may take place. It tends to be a "sum-total of examples" rather than a dialectical relationship—again proving that a schematic presentation, even for the purposes of popularization, should not be attempted to explain the dialectical process, which by its very nature defies simple classification.

Finally, attention should be called to the exaggerated role which Plekhanov assigns to geography in determining the evolution of the productive forces (Chapters VI and VII). He seems to be overly influenced by Hegel and especially by Feuerbach, who saw man's relation directly to nature without the mediation of society. He may also have been rather uncritical of that school of Russian historians who attributed prime importance to the struggle against the vast steppes in explaining the specific characteristics of Russian feudalism and absolutism. In any case, the importance he attaches to geographic factors may indeed be true for primitive and other pre-capitalist societies, and it is from these that he draws his examples. Certainly, the geographical environment played a vital role historically; but it also seems certain that its importance tends to decrease with the development of the productive forces. Plekhanov recognizes this when he indicates that as the level of productive forces rises they tend to free men from direct dependence on nature. Obviously, in highly developed industrial societies the geographical factors can be said to play only a very minor role in determining the further development of technology. Moreover,



Plekhanov seemed to place little importance upon the inner source of development of technology—by its own laws, so to speak—which today plays an increasingly important role.

In a certain sense, it may be argued, dogmatic and schematic strains can hardly be avoided in the relatively early application of theory to practice, when popularization is especially important. The principal opponents of Marxism within the Russian revolutionary movement were the Narodnik theorists, the “subjectivists,” who denied the existence of objective truth and asserted that all that satisfies our demand for knowledge is true. Plekhanov leaned somewhat too much the other way in answering them, as well as the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who took over the Narodnik theories in the 1890s. Nevertheless, he was the first to challenge their doctrine that capitalism would not drive roots in Russian soil and that socialism would arise from the village commune. He also rejected the terrorist doctrine, and early saw the need for a working class party.

It might well be that the dogmatic strain in his thinking, which perhaps arises primarily from his difficulty with dialectics, accounts to a large measure for the inconsistency in his life and work. After the schism in Russian Social-Democracy in 1903, he became a Menshevik and remained one until the end of his life in 1918. He failed to grasp, as Lenin did, the specific conditions at the dawn of the 20th century that would affect the character of the revolution in Russia. Thus he objected to the independent thrust of the working class in the Revolution of 1905, for he thought that backward Russia lacked the technical and cultural level required for socialism and that the peasantry would not play a revolutionary role alongside the proletariat. For essentially the same reasons he rejected the Socialist Revolution of 1917, believing that a bourgeois republic was needed to prepare the conditions for socialism. Yet, throughout his life he was a staunch advocate of Marxism. He made major contributions to a Marxist aesthetics, and his elaboration of historical materialism is lucid and scholarly, second perhaps only to Engels.

Many of the opponents he deals with in this book are little known today, but his basic themes are still the most discussed in relation to Marxist philosophy. New theories in opposition to

Marxism and new controversies around the basic premises have arisen, as well as new questions not dealt with before. We have learned that problems as vital as those discussed in this book are never settled with finality and must always be taken up afresh. But from each controversy and each polemic there should be a cumulative gain, enabling us to contend better with the new problems of Marxism. Although fighting in another context, Plekhanov's arguments against idealist conceptions of history and economic determinism have considerable meaning for today.

*January 1969*

JAMES S. ALLEN

**FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS  
OF MARXISM**

## INTRODUCTION

Marxism is an integral world outlook. Expressed in a nutshell, it is contemporary materialism, at present the highest stage in the development of that view of the world whose foundations were laid down in ancient Greece by Democritus, and in part by Ionian thinkers<sup>1</sup> who preceded that philosopher. What was known as hylozoism<sup>2</sup> was nothing but a naive materialism. The main credit for the development of present-day materialism must no doubt go to Karl Marx and his friend, Frederick Engels. The historical and economic aspects of this world outlook, known as *historical materialism*, and the closely related body of views on the tasks, method, and categories of political economy, as well as on the economic development of society, especially capitalist society, are in their fundamentals almost entirely the work of Marx and Engels. That which was introduced into these fields by their precursors should be regarded merely as the preparatory work of amassing material, often copious and valuable, but not as yet systematized or illuminated by a single fundamental idea, and therefore not appraised or utilized in its real significance.

What the followers of Marx and Engels in Europe and America have done in these fields is merely a more or less successful elaboration of specific problems, sometimes, it is true, of the utmost importance. That is why the term "Marxism" is often used to signify only these two aspects of the present-day materialist world outlook not only among the "general public," which has not yet achieved a deep understanding of philosophical theories, but even among people, both in Russia and in the entire civilized world, who consider themselves faithful followers of Marx and Engels. In such cases these two aspects are looked upon as something independent of "philosophical materialism," and at times as something almost opposed to it.\* And since

\*My friend Victor Adler was perfectly right when, in an article he published on the day of Engels' funeral, he observed that socialism, as understood by Marx and Engels, is not only an economic doctrine but a world outlook (I am quoting

these two aspects cannot but hang in mid air when arbitrarily they are torn out of the general context of cognate views constituting their theoretical foundation, those who perform that tearing-out operation naturally feel an urge to "substantiate Marxism" anew by joining it—again quite arbitrarily and most frequently under the influence of philosophical moods prevalent at the time among ideologists of the bourgeoisie—with some philosopher or another: with Kant, Mach, Avenarius or Ostwald, and of late with Joseph Dietzgen. True, the philosophical views of Dietzgen have arisen quite independently of bourgeois influences and are in considerable measure related to the philosophical views of Marx and Engels. The latter views, however, possess an incomparably more consistent and richer content, and for that reason alone cannot be supplemented by Dietzgen's teachings but only popularized by them. No attempts have yet been made to "supplement Marx" with Thomas Aquinas. It is however quite feasible that, despite the Pope's recent encyclical against the Modernists, the Catholic world will at some time produce from its midst a thinker capable of performing this feat in the sphere of theory.<sup>4</sup>

from the Italian edition: Frederico Engels, *L'Economia politica. Primi lineamenti di una critica dell'economia politica. Con introduzione e notizia bio-bibliografiche di Filippo Turati, Vittorio Adler e Carlo Kautsky e con appendice. Prima edizione italiana, pubblicata in occasione della morte dell'autore (5 agosto 1895), 12-17, Milano, 1895.*<sup>3</sup> However, the truer this appraisal of socialism "as understood by Marx and Engels," the stranger the impression produced when Adler conceives it possible to replace the *materialist* foundation of this "universal doctrine" by a *Kantian* foundation. What is one to think of a universal doctrine whose philosophical foundation is in no way connected with its entire structure? Engels wrote: "Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics from German idealist philosophy and apply it in the materialist conception of nature and history." [Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, New York, 1939, 15.] Thus, despite the assertions of certain of their present-day followers, the founders of scientific socialism were *conscious materialists*, not only in the field of history, but in natural science as well.

## I. PHILOSOPHICAL WRITINGS OF MARX AND ENGELS

Attempts to show that Marxism must be "supplemented" by one philosopher or another are usually supported with the contention that Marx and Engels nowhere set forth their philosophical views. This reasoning is unconvincing, however—apart from the consideration that even if these views indeed were not set forth anywhere that in itself provides no logical reason to replace them by the views of any random thinker who in the main holds an entirely different point of view. Moreover, it should be remembered that we have sufficient literary material at our disposal to form a correct idea of the philosophical views of Marx and Engels.\*

In their *final* shape these views were quite fully set forth, although in a polemical form, in the first part of Engels' book, *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science* (of which there are several Russian translations). Then there is a splendid booklet by the same author, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy* (which I have translated into Russian and supplied with a preface and explanatory notes), in which the views constituting the philosophical foundation of Marxism are expounded in positive form. A brief but vivid account of the same views, related to agnosticism, was given by Engels in his preface to the English translation of the pamphlet *The Development of Scientific Socialism*. As for Marx, I will mention as important for an understanding of the philosophical aspect of his teachings, in the first place, the characterization of the materialist dialectic—as distinct from Hegel's idealist dialectic—given in\* the preface to Volume I of *Capital*, and, secondly, the many remarks made *en passant* in the same volume. Also significant in certain respects are some of the pages in *The Poverty of Philosophy* (which has been translated into Russian).<sup>5</sup> Finally, the process of the development of Marx's and Engels' phil-

\*The philosophy of Marx and Engels is the subject of W. Weryho's book *Marx als Philosoph*, Bern und Leipzig, 1894. It would, however, be difficult to imagine a less satisfactory work.

osophical views is revealed with sufficient clarity in their early writings, republished by Franz Mehring under the title of *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx*,<sup>6</sup> Stuttgart, 1902.

In his doctoral dissertation "The Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature,"<sup>7</sup> as well as in several articles republished by Mehring in Volume I of the publication just mentioned, the young Marx appears before us as an idealist *pur sang* [of pure blood] of the Hegelian school. However, in the articles which have been included in the same volume, and which first appeared in the *Deutsch-Französischen Jahrbüchern* [Franco-German Annals],<sup>8</sup> Marx—like Engels, who also collaborated in the *Annals*—was a firm adherent of Feuerbachian "humanism."\* Moreover, the book, *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism*,<sup>10</sup> which appeared in 1845 and has been republished in Volume II of the Mehring publication, shows both its authors, Marx and Engels, as having made several important steps in the further development of Feuerbach's philosophy. The direction they gave to this elaboration can be

\*Of considerable importance for a characterization of the evolution of Marx's philosophical views is his letter of October 20, 1843, to Feuerbach. Inviting Feuerbach to come out against Schelling, Marx wrote the following: "You are the most suitable person for that, since you are the *direct opposite of Schelling. Schelling's youthful thought*—we must recognize everything that is good in our opponent—for the realization of which he had no abilities except imagination, no energy except vanity, no excitants except opium, and no organ except an easily aroused feminine receptivity—this sincere youthful thought of Schelling's, which remained a youthful and fantastic dream, has become for you the truth, reality, a serious and courageous cause. Schelling is therefore your *anticipated caricature*, and as soon as reality comes out against a caricature, the latter must vanish like a mist. That is why I consider you Schelling's necessary and natural opponent, called upon to be so by their majesties Nature and History. Your struggle against him is the struggle of philosophy itself against imaginary philosophy." (K. Grün, *Ludwig Feuerbach in seinem Briefwechsel und Nachlass*, I, 361. Leipzig und Heidelberg, 1874.) This seems to show that Marx understood "Schelling's youthful thought" in the meaning of a materialist monism. Feuerbach, however, did not share this opinion of Marx's, as will be seen from his reply to the latter. He considered that already in his first works Schelling "merely converts the idealism of *thought* into the idealism of the *imagination*, and attributes just as little reality to things as to the *Ich*, with the only difference that it had a different appearance, and that he replaced the definite '*Ich*' by the indefinite Absolute, and gave idealism a pantheistic<sup>9</sup> coloring" (*ibid.*, 402).

seen from the eleven "Theses on Feuerbach" written by Marx in the spring of 1845, and published by Engels as an appendix to the afore-mentioned booklet, *Ludwig Feuerbach*. In short, there is no lack of material here; the only thing needed is the ability to make use of it, i.e., the need to have the proper training for its understanding. Present-day readers, however, do not have the training required for that understanding, and consequently do not know how to make use of the available material.<sup>11</sup>

This is so for a variety of reasons. One of the principal reasons is that nowadays there is little knowledge, in the first place, of Hegelian philosophy, without which it is difficult to learn Marx's method, and, in the second place, of the history of materialism. Ignorance of the latter prevents present-day readers from forming a clear idea of the doctrine of Feuerbach, who was Marx's immediate precursor in the field of philosophy, and who in considerable measure worked out the philosophical foundation of what can be called the world outlook of Marx and Engels.

Nowadays Feuerbach's "humanism" is usually described in very vague and indefinite terms. F. A. Lange, who has done so much, both among the "general public" and in the learned world, to spread an absolutely false view of the essence of materialism and of its history, refused to recognize Feuerbach's "humanism" as a materialist teaching.<sup>12</sup> In this respect, Lange's example is being followed by almost all who have written on Feuerbach in Russia and other countries. P. A. Berlin, too, seems to have been affected by this influence, since he depicts Feuerbach's "humanism" as a kind of materialism that is not quite "pure."\* I must admit that I do not know for certain how this question is regarded by Franz Mehring, whose knowledge of philosophy is the best, and probably unique, among German Social-Democrats. But it is perfectly clear to me that it was the materialist that Marx and Engels saw in Feuerbach. True, Engels speaks of Feuerbach's inconsistency, but that does not in the least prevent him from recognizing the fundamental

\*See his interesting book, *Germany on the Eve of the Revolution of 1848*, St. Petersburg, 1906, 228-29.

propositions of his philosophy as purely materialist.\* But then these propositions cannot be viewed otherwise by anybody who has gone to the trouble of making a study of them.

## II. FEUERBACH AND MARX

I am well aware that in saying all this I risk surprising very many of my readers. I am not afraid to do so; the ancient thinker was right in saying that astonishment is the mother of philosophy. For the reader not to remain at the stage, so to say, of astonishment, I shall first of all suggest that he ask himself what Feuerbach meant when, in a terse but vivid outline of his philosophical *curriculum vitae*, he wrote, "God was my first thought, Reason the second, and Man the third and last thought." I contend that this question is conclusively answered in the following meaningful words of Feuerbach himself: "In the controversy between materialism and spiritualism. . .the human head is under discussion. . .once we have learnt what kind of matter the brain is made up of, we shall soon arrive at a clear view upon all other matter as well, matter in general." Elsewhere he says that his "anthropology," i.e., his "humanism," merely means that man takes for God that which is his own essence, his own spirit. He goes on to say that Descartes did not eschew this "anthropological" point of view.† How is all this to be understood? It means that Feuerbach made "Man" the point of departure of his philosophical reasoning only because it

\*Engels wrote: "The course of evolution of Feuerbach is that of a Hegelian—a never quite orthodox Hegelian, it is true—into a materialist; an evolution which at a definite stage necessitates a complete rupture with the idealist system of his predecessor. With irresistible force Feuerbach is finally driven to the realization that the Hegelian premundane existence of the 'Absolute Idea', the 'pre-existence of the logical categories' before the world existed, is nothing more than the fantastic survival of the belief in the existence of an extramundane creator; that the material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality; and that our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter. This is, of course, pure materialism." [*Ludwig Feuerbach*, 24-25.]

†"Über Spiritualismus und Materialismus," *Werke*, X, 129; IV, 249.<sup>15</sup>

was from that point of departure that he hoped to achieve his aim—to arrive at a correct view of matter in general and its relation to the "spirit." Consequently, what we have here is a methodological device, whose value was conditioned by circumstances of time and place, i.e., by the thinking habits of the learned, or simply educated, Germans of the time, and not by any peculiarity of world outlook.\*

The above quotation from Feuerbach regarding the "human head" shows that when he wrote these words the problem of "the kind of matter the brain is made up of" was solved by him in a "purely" materialistic sense. This solution was accepted by Marx and Engels. It provided the foundation of their own philosophy, as can be seen with the utmost clarity in Engels' works, so often quoted here—*Ludwig Feuerbach* and *Anti-Dühring*. That is why we must make a closer study of this solution; in doing so, we shall at the same time be studying the philosophical aspect of Marxism.

\*Feuerbach himself has very well said that the *beginnings* of any philosophy are determined by the prior state of philosophical thought (*Werke*, II, 193). F. Lange states: "A genuine materialist will always be prone to turn his glance to the totality of external Nature and consider Man merely as a wavelet in the ocean of the eternal movement of matter. To the materialist, Man's nature is merely a particular instance of general physiology, just as thinking is a special instance in the chain of physical process of life." (*Geschichte des Materialismus*, 2, 74, Leipzig, 1902.) But Théodore Dézamy, too, in his *Code de la Communauté* (Paris, 1843) proceeds from the nature of man (the human organism), yet no one will doubt that he shares the views of French 18th-century materialism. Incidentally, Lange makes no mention of Dézamy, whilst Marx counts him among the French Communists whose communism was more scientific than that of Cabet, for instance. "Like Owen, the more scientific French Communists, Dézamy, Gay and others, developed the teaching of materialism as the teaching of real humanism and the *logical* basis of communism." [*The Holy Family*, 177.] At the time Marx and Engels were writing the work just quoted, they as yet differed in their appraisal of Feuerbach's philosophy. Marx called it "materialism coinciding with humanism": "As Feuerbach represented materialism in the theoretical domain, French and English socialism and communism in the practical field represent materialism which now coincides with humanism." [*Ibid.*, 168-69.] In general Marx regarded materialism as the necessary theoretical foundation of communism and socialism. Engels, on the contrary, held the view that Feuerbach had once and for all put an end to the old contraposing of spiritualism<sup>14</sup> and materialism. [*Ibid.*, 168-69, 126.] As we have already seen, he, too, later took note of the evolution, in Feuerbach's development, from idealism to materialism.

In an article entitled "Provisional Theses for the Reform of Philosophy," which came out in 1842 and, judging by the facts, had a strong influence on Marx, Feuerbach said that "the real relation of thinking to being may be formulated as follows: being is the *subject*; thinking, the *predicate*. Thinking is conditioned by being, and not being by thinking. Being is conditioned by itself. . . has its foundation in itself."\*

This view on the relation of being to thinking, which Marx and Engels made the foundation of the materialist explanation of history, is a most important outcome of the criticism of Hegel's idealism already completed in its main features by Feuerbach, a criticism whose conclusions can be set forth in a few words.

Feuerbach considered that Hegel's philosophy had removed the contradiction between being and thinking, a contradiction that had expressed itself in striking relief in Kant. However, as Feuerbach thought, it removed that contradiction, while continuing to remain within the latter, i.e., within one of its elements, namely, thinking. With Hegel, *thinking is being*: "Thinking is the subject; being, the predicate."† It follows that Hegel, and idealism in general, eliminated the contradiction only by removing one of its component elements, i.e., being, matter, Nature. However, removing one of the component elements in a contradiction does not at all mean doing away with that contradiction. "Hegel's doctrine that reality is 'postulated' by the Idea is merely a translation into rationalistic terms of the theological doctrine that Nature was created by God—and reality, matter, by an abstract, non-material being."‡ This applies not only to Hegel's absolute idealism. Kant's transcendental idealism, according to which the surrounding world receives its laws from Reason instead of Reason receiving them from the surrounding world, is closely akin to the theological concept that the world's laws were dictated to it by the divine Reason.\*\* Idealism does not establish the unity of being and thinking nor can it do so; it tears that unity asunder.

\**Werke*, II, 263.

†*Ibid.*, 261.

‡*Ibid.*, 262.

\*\**Ibid.*, 295.

Idealistic philosophy's point of departure—the "I" as the fundamental philosophical principle—is totally erroneous. It is not the "I" that must be the starting point of genuine philosophy, but the "I" and the "you." It is such a point of departure that makes it possible to arrive at a proper understanding of the relation between thinking and being, between the subject and the object. I am "I" to myself, and at the same time I am "you" to others. The "I" is the *subject*, and at the same time the *object*. It must be noted at the same time that I am not the abstract being with which idealistic philosophy operates. I am an *actual* being; my *body* belongs to my *essence*; moreover, my body, as a whole, is my *I*, my genuine essence. It is not an abstract being that thinks, but this actual being, this body. Thus, contrary to what the idealists assert, an actual and material being proves to be the subject; and thinking, the predicate. Herein lies the only possible solution of the contradiction between being and thinking, a contradiction that idealism so vainly sought to resolve. None of the elements in the contradiction is removed; both are preserved, revealing their real unity. "That which to me, or subjectively, is a purely spiritual, non-material and non-sensuous act is in itself an objective, material and sensuous act."\*

Note that in saying this, Feuerbach stands close to Spinoza, whose philosophy he was already setting forth with great sympathy at the time his own breakaway from idealism was taking shape, i.e., when he was writing his history of modern philosophy.† In 1843 he made the subtle observation, in his *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, that pantheism is a theological materialism, a negation of theology but as yet from a theological standpoint. This confusion of materialism and theology constituted Spinoza's inconsistency, which, how-

\**Werke*, II, 350.

†By that time Feuerbach had already written the following noteworthy lines: "Despite all the oppositeness of practical realism in the so-called sensualism and materialism of the English and the French—a realism that denies any speculation—and the spirit of *all* of Spinoza, they nevertheless have their *ultimate* foundation in the viewpoint on *matter* expressed by Spinoza, as a metaphysician, in the celebrated proposition: 'Matter is a denial of God.'" (K. Grün, *L. Feuerbach*, I, 324-25.)

ever, did not prevent him from providing a "correct—at least for his time—philosophical expression for the materialist trend of modern times." That was why Feuerbach called Spinoza "the Moses of the modern free-thinkers and materialists."\* In 1847 Feuerbach asked: "What then, under careful examination, is that which Spinoza calls *Substance*,<sup>15</sup> in terms of logic or metaphysics, and *God* in terms of theology?" To this question he replied categorically, "Nothing else but Nature."<sup>16</sup> He saw the main shortcoming in Spinoza's philosophy in the fact that "in it the sensible, anti-theological essence of Nature assumes the aspect of an abstract, metaphysical being." Spinoza eliminated the dualism of God and Nature, since he declared that the acts of Nature were those of God. However, it was precisely because he regarded the acts of Nature as those of God, that the latter remained, with Spinoza, a being distinct from Nature but forming its foundation. He regarded God as the subject and Nature as the predicate. A philosophy that has completely liberated itself from theological traditions must remove this important shortcoming in Spinoza's philosophy, which in its essence is sound. "Away with this contradiction!" Feuerbach exclaimed. "Not *Deus sive Natura* [God or Nature] but *aut Deus aut Natura* [either God or Nature] is the watchword of Truth."†

Thus, Feuerbach's "humanism" proved to be nothing else but Spinozism disencumbered of its theological setting. And it was the viewpoint of this kind of Spinozism, which Feuerbach had freed of its theological setting, that Marx and Engels adopted when they broke with idealism.

However, disencumbering Spinozism of its theological setting meant revealing its real and *materialist* content. Consequently, the Spinozism of Marx and Engels was indeed materialism brought up-to-date.‡

Further: Thinking is not the *cause* of being, but its *effect*, or

\**Werke*, II, 291.

†*Werke*, IV, 392.

‡In *The Holy Family* Marx remarks: "Hegel's *History of Philosophy* represents French materialism as the *realization* of the substance of Spinoza." [177.]

rather its *property*. Feuerbach says: *Folge und Eigenschaft*, I feel and think, not as a subject contraposed to an object, but as a *subject-object*, as an actual and material being. "For us the object is not merely the thing sensed, but also the basis, the indispensable condition of my sensation." The objective world is not only without me, but also within me, inside my own skin.\* Man is only a part of Nature, a part of being; there is, therefore, no room for any contradiction between his thinking and his being. Space and time exist not only as forms of thinking. They are also forms of being, forms of my contemplation. They are such, solely because I myself am a creature that lives in time and space, and because I sense and feel as such a creature. In general, the laws of being are at the same time laws of thinking.

That is what Feuerbach said.† And the same thing, though in a different wording, was said by Engels in his polemic with Dühring.‡ This already shows what an important part of Feuerbach's philosophy became an integral part of the philosophy of Marx and Engels.

If Marx began to elaborate his materialist explanation of history by criticizing Hegel's philosophy of Right, he could do so only because Feuerbach had completed his criticism of Hegel's speculative philosophy.<sup>17</sup>

Even when criticizing Feuerbach in his Theses, Marx often develops and augments the former's ideas. Here is an instance

\*"How do we cognize the external world? How do we cognize the *inner* world? For ourselves we have no other means than we have for others! Do I know anything about myself without the medium of my senses? Do I exist if I do not exist outside myself, i.e., outside my *Vorstellung* [conception]? But how do I know that I exist? How do I know that I exist, not in my *Vorstellung*, but in my sensations, in actual fact, unless I perceive myself through my senses?" (Feuerbach's *Naschlässene Aphorismen* in Grün's book, II, 311.)

†*Werke*, II, 334 and X, 186-87.

‡I particularly recommend to the reader's attention the thought expressed by Engels in *Anti-Dühring*, that the laws of external Nature and the laws governing man's corporal and spiritual being are "two classes of laws which we can separate from each other at most only in thought but not in reality." [125.] This is the selfsame *doctrine of the unity of being and thinking, of object and subject*. Regarding space and time, see Chapter 5 of Part I of the work just mentioned. This chapter shows that to Engels, just as to Feuerbach, space and time are not only forms of contemplation, but also forms of being.



from the sphere of epistemology.<sup>18</sup> According to Feuerbach, before thinking of an object, man experiences its action on himself, contemplates and senses it.

It was these words that Marx had in mind when he wrote: "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism—that of Feuerbach included—is that the object (*Gegenstand*), reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object* (*Objekt*) or *contemplation* (*Anschauung*), but not as *human sensuous activity, practice*, not subjectively.<sup>19</sup> This shortcoming in materialism is to be explained, Marx goes on to say, by the circumstance that Feuerbach, in his *Essence of Christianity*, regards theoretical activity as the only genuine human activity. Expressed in other words, this means that, according to Feuerbach, our *I* cognizes the object by coming under its action.\* Marx, however, objects by saying: our *I* cognizes the object, *while at the same time acting upon that object*. Marx's thought is a perfectly correct one: as Faust already said, "*Am Anfang war die Tat.*" [At the beginning was the deed.]

It may of course be objected, in defense of Feuerbach, that in the process of our acting upon objects we cognize their properties only in the measure in which they, on their part, act upon us. In both cases *sensation* precedes *thinking*; in both cases we first *sense* their properties, and only then *think* of them. But that is something that Marx did not deny. For him the gist of the matter was not the indisputable fact that sensation precedes thinking, but the fact that man is induced to think chiefly by the sensations he experiences in the process of his acting upon the outer world. Since this action on the outer world is prescribed to man by the struggle for existence, the theory of knowledge is closely linked up by Marx with his materialist view of the history of human civilization. It was not for nothing that the thinker who directed against Feuerbach the thesis we are here discussing wrote in Volume I of *Capital*: "By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he [man] at the same time changes his own nature." This proposition fully reveals its pro-

\*"Thought," he said, "precedes being; before one thinks a quality, one feels it." (*Werke*, II, 253)<sup>20</sup>

found meaning only in the light of Marx's theory of knowledge. We shall see how well this theory is confirmed by the history of cultural development and, incidentally, even by the science of language. It must, however, be admitted that Marx's epistemology stems directly from that of Feuerbach, or, if you will, it is, properly speaking, the epistemology of Feuerbach, only rendered more profound by the masterly correction made by Marx.

I shall add, in passing, that this masterly correction was prompted by the "spirit of the times." The striving to examine the interaction between object and subject precisely from the point of view in which the subject appears in an *active* role, derived from the public mood of the period in which the world conception of Marx and Engels was taking shape.\* The revolution of 1848 was in the offing.

### III. THINKING AND BEING IN FEUERBACH

The doctrine of the unity of subject and object, thinking and being, which was shared in equal measure by Feuerbach and by Marx and Engels, was also held by the most outstanding materialists of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Elsewhere† I have shown that La Mettrie and Diderot—each after his own fashion—arrived at a world conception that was a "brand of Spinozism," i.e., a Spinozism without the theological setting that distorted its true content. Inasmuch as we are speaking of the unity of subject and object, it would also be easy to show that Hobbes too stood very close to Spinoza. That, however, would be taking us too far afield, and, besides, there is no immediate need for that. Probably of greater interest

\*Feuerbach said of his philosophy: "My philosophy cannot be dealt with exhaustively by the pen; it finds no room on paper." This statement, however, was only of theoretical significance to him. He went on to say: "Since for it (i.e., his philosophy) the truth is not that which has been thought, but that which has been not only thought, but seen, heard and felt." (*Nachgelassene Aphorismen* in Grün's book, II, 306).

†My article, "Bernstein and Materialism," in the symposium *Criticism of Our Critics*.

to the reader is the fact that today every naturalist who has delved even a little into the problem of the relation of thinking to being arrives at that doctrine of their unity which we have met in Feuerbach.

FUNCTIONALISM

When Huxley wrote the following words: "Surely no one who is cognizant of the facts of the case, nowadays, doubts that the roots of psychology lie in the physiology of the nervous system," and went on to say that the operations of the mind "are functions of the brain,"\* he was expressing just what Feuerbach had said—only with these words he connected concepts that were far less clear. It was precisely because the concepts connected with these words were far less clear than with Feuerbach that he attempted to link up the view just quoted with Hume's philosophical scepticism. †

In just the same way, Haeckel's "monism," which created such a stir, is nothing else but a purely materialist doctrine—in essence close to that of Feuerbach—of the unity of subject and object. Haeckel, however, is poorly versed in the history of materialism, which is why he considers it necessary to struggle against its "one-sidedness"; he should have gone to the trouble of making a study of its theory of knowledge in the form it took with Feuerbach and Marx, which would have preserved him from the many lapses and one-sided assumptions that have made it easier for his opponents to wage a struggle against him on philosophical grounds.

A very close approach to the most modern materialism—that of Feuerbach, Marx and Engels—has been made by August Forel in various of his writings, for instance in the paper, *Gehirn und Seele* [Brain and Soul], which he read to the 66th Congress of German Naturalists and Physicians held in Vienna (September 26, 1894). ‡ In places Forel not only expresses ideas resembling Feuerbach's but—and this is amazing—marshals his arguments just as Feuerbach did. According to Forel, each

\*Hume, *His Life and Philosophy*; 80.

†*Ibid.*, 82.

‡See also Chapter Three in his book, *L'âme et le système nerveux. Hygiène et pathologie*. Paris, 1906.

new day brings us convincing proof that the psychology and the physiology of the brain are merely two ways of looking at "one and the same thing." The reader will not have forgotten the identical view of Feuerbach, which I have quoted above and refers to the same question. This view can here be supplemented with the following statement: "I am the psychological object for myself," Feuerbach says, "but a physiological object for others."\* In the final analysis, Forel's main idea boils down to the proposition that consciousness is the "inner reflex of cerebral activity." † This view is already materialist.

Objecting to the materialists, idealists and Kantians of all kinds and varieties assert that what we apprehend is only the *mental* aspect of the phenomena that Forel and Feuerbach deal with. This objection was formulated excellently by Schelling, who said that "the Spirit will always be an island which one cannot reach from the sphere of matter, otherwise than by a leap." Forel is well aware of this, but he provides convincing proof that science would be an impossibility if we made up our minds in earnest not to leave the bounds of that island. "Every man," he says, "would have only the psychology of his own subjectivism (*hätte nur die Psychologie seines Subjectivismus*) . . . and would positively be obliged to doubt the existence of the external world and of other people." ‡ Such doubt is absurd, however.\*\* "Conclusions arrived at by analogy, natural-scientific induction, a comparison of the evidence provided by our five senses, prove to us the existence of the external world, of other people, and

\**Werke*, II, 348-49.

†*Die psychischen Fähigkeiten der Ameisen, etc.*, Munich, 1901, 7.

‡*Ibid.*, 7-8.

\*\*Moreover, on his return from exile, Chernyshevsky published an article "The Character of Human Knowledge"<sup>21</sup> in which he proves, very wittily, that a person who doubts the existence of the external world should also doubt the fact of his own existence. Chernyshevsky was always a faithful adherent of Feuerbach.<sup>22</sup> The fundamental idea of his article can be expressed in the following words of Feuerbach: "I am not different from things and creatures without me, because I distinguish myself from them; I distinguish myself because I am different from them physically, organically, and in fact. Consciousness presupposes being, is merely conscious being, that-which-is as realized and presented in the mind." (*Nachgelassene Aphorismen* in Grün's book, II, 306.)

the psychology of the latter. Likewise they prove to us the existence of comparative psychology, animal psychology. Finally, our own psychology would be incomprehensible and full of contradictions if we considered it apart from the activities of our brain; first and foremost, it would seem a contradiction of the law of the conservation of energy.”\*

Feuerbach not only reveals the contradictions that inevitably beset those who reject the materialist standpoint, but also shows how the idealists reach their “island.” “I am *I* for myself,” he says, “and *you* for another. But I am such an *I* only as a sensible (i.e., material—*G. P.*) being. The abstract intellect isolates this being for oneself as Substance, the atom, ego, God; that is why to it the connection between being-for-oneself and being-for-another, is arbitrary. That which I think of as extra-sensuous (*ohne Sinnlichkeit*), I think of as without and outside any connection”† This most significant consideration is accompanied by an analysis of that process of abstraction which led to the appearance of Hegelian logic as an *ontological* doctrine.‡

Had Feuerbach possessed the information provided us by contemporary ethnology, he would have been able to add that philosophical idealism descends, in the historical sense, from the animism<sup>23</sup> of primitive peoples. This was already pointed out by Edward B. Tylor,\*\* and certain historians of philosophy are in part, beginning to take it into consideration, though for the time being more as a curiosity than a fact from the history of culture, and of tremendous theoretical and cognitive significance.\*\*\*

\**Die psychischen Fähigkeiten*, same page.

†*Werke*, II, 322. I highly recommend these words of Feuerbach's to the attention of Mr. Bogdanov. See also p. 263.

‡“Hegel's absolute spirit is nothing but the so-called abstract spirit, separated from itself, as the infinite essence of theology is nothing but abstract finite essence.” *Werke*, II, 249.

\*\**La civilisation primitive*, Paris, 1876, II, 143 [*Primitive Culture*, 2 vols., London, 1871]. It should, however, be observed that Feuerbach made a truly masterly surmise in this matter. He said: “The concept of the object is originally nothing other than the concept of a *different I*—thus man in childhood conceives of all things as freely-acting, arbitrary essences, so that the concept of the object, mediated by the concept of the Thou, is the objective *I*.” (II, 321-22.)

\*\*\*See Theodore Gomperz, *Les penseurs de la Grèce*, trad. par Aug. Reymond, Lausanne, 1905, II, 414-15.<sup>24</sup>

These ideas and arguments of Feuerbach's were not only well known to Marx and Engels and given careful thought by them, but indubitably and in considerable measure helped in the evolution of their own world outlook. If Engels later had the greatest contempt for post-Feuerbachian German philosophy, it was because that philosophy, in his opinion, merely resuscitated the old philosophical errors already revealed by Feuerbach. That, indeed, was the case. Not one of the latest critics of materialism has brought forward a single argument that was not refuted either by Feuerbach himself or, before him, by the French materialists.\* But to the “critics of Marx”—to E. Bernstein, C. Schmidt, B. Croce and the like—“the pauper's broth of eclecticism”<sup>25</sup> of the most up-to-date, German, so-called philosophy seems a perfectly new dish; they have fed on it, and, seeing that Engels did not see fit to address himself to it, they imagined that he was “evading” any analysis of an argumentation he had long ago considered and found absolutely worthless. That is an old story but one that is always new. Rats will never stop thinking that the cat is far stronger than the lion.

In recognizing the striking similarity—and, in part, also the identity—in the views of Feuerbach and A. Forel, we must note, however, that if the latter is far better informed in natural science, Feuerbach had the advantage of a thorough knowledge of philosophy. That is why Forel makes mistakes we do not find in Feuerbach. Forel calls his theory the *psycho-physiological theory of identity*.† To this no objection of any significance can be raised, because all terminology is conventional. However, since the theory of identity once formed the foundation of an absolutely definite idealist philosophy,<sup>27</sup> Forel would have done well straightforwardly, boldly and simply to have declared his theory to be materialist. He seems to have preserved certain prejudices against materialism, and therefore chose another

\*Feuerbach called “cudchewers” (*Wiederkäuër*) those thinkers who tried to revive an obsolete philosophy. Unfortunately, such people are particularly numerous today, and have created an extensive literature in Germany, and partly in France. They are now beginning to multiply in Russia as well.

†See his article “*Die psychophysiologische Identitätstheorie als wissenschaftliches Postulat*,” in the symposium *Festschrift I, Rosenthal*, Leipzig, 1906, I, 119-32.<sup>26</sup>

name. That is why I think it necessary to note that identity in the Forelian sense has nothing in common with identity in the idealist sense.

"Critics of Marx" do not know even this. In his polemic with me, C. Schmidt ascribed to the materialists precisely the idealist doctrine of identity. In actual fact materialism recognizes the *unity* of subject and object, not their identity. This was well shown by Feuerbach himself.

According to Feuerbach, the unity of subject and object, of thinking and being, makes sense only when man is taken as the basis of that unity. This has a special kind of "humanist" sound to it, and most students of Feuerbach have not found it necessary to give thought to *how* man serves as the basis of the unity of the opposites just mentioned. In actual fact, this is how Feuerbach understood the matter: "It is only when thinking is not a *subject for itself*, but the predicate of a real (i.e., material—G. P.) being, that thought is not something separated from being."\* The question now is: Where, in which philosophical systems, is thinking a "subject for itself," that is to say, something independent of the bodily existence of a thinking individual? The answer is clear: in systems that are *idealist*. The idealists first convert thinking into a self-contained essence, independent of man ("the subject for itself"), and then assert that it is in that essence that the contradiction between being and thinking is resolved, for the very reason that separate and independent being is a property of that independent-of-matter essence.† Indeed, the contradiction is resolved in that essence. In that case, what is that essence? It is *thinking*, and this thinking exists—is—independently of anything else. Such a resolution of the contradiction is purely formal and, as we have already pointed out, is achieved only by eliminating one of its elements,

\**Werke*, II, 239.

†Ernst Mach and his followers act in exactly the same way. First they transform *sensation* into an independent essence, non-contingent upon the sensing *body*—an essence which they call an element. Then they declare that this essence contains the resolution of the contradiction between being and thinking, subject and object. This reveals the grossness of the error committed by those who assert that Mach is close to Marx.

namely, being, as something independent of thinking. Being proves to be a simple property of thinking, so that when we say that a given object exists, we mean that it exists only in our thinking. That is how the matter was understood by Schelling, for example. To him, thinking was the absolute principle from which the real world, i.e., Nature and the "finite" spirit, followed of necessity. But *how* did it follow? What was meant by the existence of the real world? Nothing but existence in thinking. To Schelling the Universe was merely the self-contemplation of the Absolute Spirit. We see the same thing in Hegel. Feuerbach, however, was not satisfied with such a purely formal resolution of the contradiction between thinking and being. He pointed out that there is no—there can be no—*thinking independent of man*, i.e., of an actual and material creature. Thinking is activity of the brain. To quote Feuerbach: "But the brain is the organ of thinking only as long as it is connected with the human head and body."\*

We now see in what sense Feuerbach considers man the basis of the unity of being and thinking. Man is that basis in the sense that he is nothing but a material being that possesses the ability to think. If he is such a being, then it is clear that none of the elements of the contradiction is eliminated—neither being nor thinking, "matter" or "spirit," subject or object. They are all combined in him as the subject-object. "I exist, and I think . . . only as a subject-object," Feuerbach says.

To be does not mean to exist in thought. In this respect Feuerbach's philosophy is far clearer than that of J. Dietzgen. As Feuerbach put it: "To prove that something exists means to prove that it is not something that exists only in thought."† This is perfectly true, but it means that the unity of thinking and being does not and cannot at all mean their identity.

This is one of the most important features distinguishing materialism from idealism.

\**Werke*, II, 362-63.

†*Werke*, II, 308.

#### IV. EMERGENCE OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

When people say that for a certain period Marx and Engels were followers of Feuerbach, it is often inferred that when that period ended, the world outlook of Marx and Engels changed considerably, and became quite different from Feuerbach's. That is how the matter is viewed by Karl Diehl, who finds that Feuerbach's influence on Marx usually is highly exaggerated.\* This is a tremendous mistake. When they ceased being followers of Feuerbach, Marx and Engels continued to share a very considerable part of his philosophical views. The best proof of this is the Theses which Marx wrote in criticism of Feuerbach. The Theses in no way eliminate the fundamental propositions in Feuerbach's philosophy, but only correct them, and—what is most important—call for a more consistent (than Feuerbach's) application in explaining the reality that surrounds man, and in particular his own activity. It is not thinking that determines being, but being that determines thinking. That is the fundamental thought in all of Feuerbach's philosophy. Marx and Engels made that thought the foundation of the materialist explanation of history. The materialism of Marx and Engels is a far more developed doctrine than Feuerbach's. The materialist views of Marx and Engels, however, developed in the direction indicated by the inner logic of Feuerbach's philosophy. That is why these views will not always fully be clear—especially in their philosophical aspect—to those who will not go to the trouble of finding out specifically which part of the Feuerbachian philosophy became incorporated in the world outlook of the founders of scientific socialism. And if the reader should encounter anyone deeply concerned with the problem of finding “philosophical substantiation” for historical materialism, he can be certain that this wise mortal is very deficient in the respect I have just mentioned.

But let us return to the subject. Already in his Third Thesis on Feuerbach, Marx tackled the most difficult of all the problems he was to resolve in the sphere of social man's historical “prac-

\**Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, V, 708.

tice,” with the aid of the correct concept of the unity of subject and object, which Feuerbach had developed. The Thesis reads: “The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing... forgets that circumstances are changed precisely by men and that the educator must himself be educated.”<sup>28</sup> Once this problem is solved, the “secret” of the materialist explanation of history has been uncovered. But Feuerbach was unable to solve it. In history—like the French 18th-century materialists with whom he had so much in common—he remained an *idealist*.\* Here Marx and Engels had to start from scratch, making use of the theoretical material that had been accumulated by social science, chiefly by the French historians of the Restoration period. But even here, Feuerbach's philosophy provided them with some valuable pointers. “Art, religion, philosophy and science,” Feuerbach says, “are the manifestation or revelation of genuine human essence.” Hence it follows that the “human essence” contains the explanation of all ideologies, i.e., that the development of the latter is conditioned by the development of the “human essence.” What is that essence? “Man's essence,” Feuerbach replies, “is only in community, in Man's unity with Man.”† This is very vague, and here we see a boundary that Feuerbach did not cross.‡ However, it is beyond this border line that the region of the materialist

\*This accounts for the reservations always made by Feuerbach when speaking of materialism. For instance, “When I go backward from this point, I am in complete agreement with the materialists; when I go forward, I differ from them” (*Nachgelassene Aphorismen* in K. Grün's book, II, 308). The meaning of this statement will be seen from the following words, “I too recognize the Idea, but only in the sphere of mankind, politics, morals and philosophy” (Grün, II, 307). But whence Idea in politics and morals? This question is not answered by our “recognizing” the Idea.

†*Werke*, II, 343, 344.

‡Incidentally, Feuerbach too thinks that the “human being” is created by history. Thus he says: “I think only as a subject educated by history, generalized, united with the whole, with the genus, with the spirit of world history. My thoughts do not have their beginning and basis directly in my particular subjectivity, but are the outcome; their beginning and their basis are those of world history itself” (K. Grün, II, 309). Thus we see in Feuerbach the embryo of a materialist understanding of history. In this respect, however, he does not go further than Hegel (see my article “For the Sixtieth Anniversary of Hegel's Death,” *Neue Zeit*, 1890 [Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, I, 455-83]), and even lags behind him. Together with Hegel, he stresses the significance

explanation of history begins, a region discovered by Marx and Engels; that explanation indicates the causes determining—in the course of history—the “community, Man’s unity with Man,” i.e., the mutual relations that men enter into. This border line not only *separates* Marx from Feuerbach, but testifies as well to his *closeness* to the latter.

The sixth Thesis on Feuerbach says that *the human essence is the ensemble of the social relations*. This is far more definite than what Feuerbach himself said, and the close genetic link between Marx’s world outlook and Feuerbach’s philosophy here revealed probably with greater clarity than anywhere else.

When Marx wrote this Thesis he already knew, not only the direction in which the solution of the problem should be sought, but the solution itself. In his *Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right* he showed that the mutual relations of people in society, “legal relations as well as forms of state are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from the so-called general development of the human mind, but rather have their roots in the material conditions of life, the sum-total of which Hegel, following the example of the Englishmen and Frenchmen of the 18th century, combines under the name of ‘civil society’ . . . however, the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy.”<sup>29</sup>

It now remained only to explain the origin and development of the economy to obtain a full solution of a problem that materialism had been unable to cope with for centuries on end. That explanation was provided by Marx and Engels.

of what the great German idealist called the geographic basis of world history. “The course of the history of mankind,” he says, “is of course prescribed to it, since man follows the course of Nature, the course taken by streams. Men go wherever they find room, and the kind of place that suits them best. Men settle in a particular locality, and are conditioned by the place they live in. The essence of India is the essence of the Hindu. What he is, what he has become, is merely the product of the East-Indian sun, the East-Indian air, the East-Indian water, the East-Indian animals and plants. How could man originally appear if not out of Nature? Men, who become acclimatized to any kind of nature, have sprung from Nature, which tolerates no extremes” (*Nachgelassene Aphorismen*, K. Grün, II, 330).

It stands to reason that when I speak of the full solution of that great problem, I am referring only to its general or algebraic solution, which materialism could not find in the course of centuries. It stands to reason that when I speak of a full solution, I am referring, not to the arithmetic of social development, but to its algebra; not to the causes of individual phenomena, but to how the discovery of those causes should be approached. And this means that the materialist explanation of history was primarily of *methodological significance*. Engels was fully aware of this when he wrote: “What we need is not so much crude results as studies (*das Studium*); results are meaningless if they are taken apart from the development that leads up to them.”\* This, however, is sometimes not understood either by “critics” of Marx—whom, as they say, may God forgive!—or by some of his “followers,” which is much worse. Michelangelo once said of himself, “My knowledge will engender a multitude of ignoramuses.” These words regrettably have proved prophetic. Today Marx’s knowledge is engendering ignoramuses. The fault lies, not with Marx, but with those who talk rubbish while invoking his name. To avoid such rubbish, an understanding of the methodological significance of historical materialism is necessary.

## V. THE MATERIALIST DIALECTIC AS METHOD

In general, one of the greatest services rendered to materialism by Marx and Engels lies in their elaboration of a *correct method*. Feuerbach, who concentrated his efforts on the struggle against the *speculative* element in Hegel’s philosophy, had little appreciation of its *dialectical* element, and made little use of it. “The true dialectic,” he said, “is no monologue by a solitary thinker with himself; it is a dialogue between the *ego* [*I*] and the *tu* [*thou*].”† In the first place, however, with Hegel dialectics did not signify a “monologue by a solitary thinker with himself”; and, secondly, Feuerbach’s remark gives a correct definition of

\**Nachlass*, I, 477.<sup>30</sup>

†*Werke*, II, 345.

the starting point of philosophy, but not of its method. This gap was filled by Marx and Engels, who understood that in waging a struggle against Hegel's speculative philosophy it would be mistaken to ignore his dialectic. Some critics have declared that during the years immediately following his break with idealism, Marx was highly indifferent to dialectics also. Though this opinion may seem to have some semblance of plausibility, it is controverted by the aforementioned fact that in the *Franco-German Annals*, Engels was already speaking of the method as the soul of the new system of views.

In any case, the second part of *The Poverty of Philosophy* leaves no room for doubt that at the time of his polemic with Proudhon Marx was very well aware of the significance of the dialectical method and knew how to make good use of it. Marx's victory in this controversy was that of a man able to think dialectically over one who had never been able to understand the nature of dialectics, but was trying to apply its method to an analysis of capitalist society. This same second part of *The Poverty of Philosophy* shows that dialectics, which with Hegel was of a purely idealist character and had remained so with Proudhon (so far as he had assimilated it), was placed on a *materialist foundation* by Marx.\*

"To Hegel," Marx wrote subsequently, describing his materialist dialectic, "the life process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea,' he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea'. With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the

\*See Part II of *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Notes 1 and 2. It should however be noted that Feuerbach, too, criticized Hegelian dialectic from the materialist viewpoint. "What kind of dialectic is it," he asked, "that contradicts natural origin and development? How do matters stand with its 'necessity'? Where is the 'objectivity' of a psychology, of a philosophy in general, which abstracts itself from the only categorical and imperative, fundamental and solid objectivity, that of physical Nature, a philosophy which considers that its ultimate aim, absolute truth and fulfilment of the spirit, lies in a full departure from that Nature, and in an absolute subjectiveness, unrestricted by any Fichteian non-ego, or Kantian thing-in-itself" (K. Grün, I, 399).

human mind, and translated into forms of thought."<sup>31</sup> This description implies full agreement with Feuerbach, first in the attitude toward Hegel's "Idea," and, second, in the relation of thinking to being. The Hegelian dialectic could be "turned right side up" only by one who was convinced of the soundness of the basic principle of Feuerbach's philosophy, viz., that it is not thinking that determines being, but being that determines thinking.

Many people confuse dialectics with the doctrine of development; dialectics is in fact such a doctrine. However, it differs substantially from the vulgar "theory of evolution," which is based completely on the principle that neither Nature nor history proceeds in leaps and that all changes in the world take place by degrees. Hegel had already shown that, understood in such a way, the doctrine of development was unsound and ridiculous.

"When people want to understand the rise or disappearance of anything," he says in Volume I of his *Science of Logic*, "they usually imagine that they achieve comprehension through the medium of a conception of the *gradual character* of that rise or disappearance. However, changes in being take place, not only by a transition of one quantity into another, but also by a transition of qualitative differences into quantitative, and, on the contrary, by a transition that *interrupts gradualness* and substitutes one phenomenon for another."<sup>\*</sup> And every time gradualness is interrupted, a *leap* takes place. Hegel goes on to show by a number of examples how often leaps take place both in Nature and in history, and he exposes the ridiculous logical error underlying the vulgar "theory of evolution." "Underlying the doctrine of gradualness," he remarks, "is the conception that that which is arising already exists in reality, and remains unobserved only because of its small dimensions. In like manner, when they speak of gradual destruction, people imagine that the non-existence of the phenomenon in question, or the phenomenon that is to take its place, is an accomplished fact, although it is as yet im-

\**Wissenschaft der Logik*, erster Band, Nürnberg, 1812, 313-14.

perceptible. . . . But this can only suppress any notion of arising and destruction. . . . To explain appearance or destruction by the gradualness of the change means reducing the whole matter to absurd tautology and to imagining in an already complete state (i.e., as already arisen or already destroyed.—G. P.) that which is in the course of appearing or being destroyed.”\*

This dialectical view of Hegel's on the inevitability of leaps in the process of development was adopted in full by Marx and Engels. It was developed in detailed fashion by Engels in his polemic with Dühring, and here he “turned it right side up,” that is to say, he put it on a *materialist foundation*.

Thus he indicated that the transition from one form of energy to another cannot take place otherwise than by means of a *leap*.† Thus he sought in modern chemistry a confirmation of the dialectical theorem of the transformation of quantity into quality. Generally speaking, he found that the laws of dialectical thinking are confirmed by the dialectical properties of being. Here, too, being conditions thinking.

Without undertaking a more detailed characterization of materialist dialectics (its relation to what, by a parallel with elementary mathematics, may be called elementary logic—see my preface to my translation of *Ludwig Feuerbach*) I shall remind the reader that during the last two decades the theory which sees only gradual changes in the process of development has begun to lose ground even in biology, where it used to be recognized almost universally. In this respect, the work of Armand Gautier and that of Hugo de Vries seem to show promise of epoch-

\*Regarding the matter of “leaps” see my pamphlet *Mr. Tikhomirov's Grief*, St. Petersburg [Section 2 of the article “A New Champion of Autocracy,” in Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, I, 413-21.]

†“In spite of all intermediate steps, the transition from one form of motion to another always remains a leap, a decisive change. This is true of the transition from the mechanics of celestial bodies to that of smaller masses on a particular celestial body; it is equally true of the transition from the mechanics of masses to the mechanics of molecules—including the forms of motion investigated in physics proper,” etc. [*Anti-Dühring*, New York, 1939, 75.]

making importance. Suffice it to say that de Vries' theory of mutations is a doctrine that the development of species takes places in leaps.\*

In the opinion of this outstanding naturalist, the weak point in Darwin's theory of the origin of species is that this origin is to be explained by gradual changes. Also of interest and most apt, is de Vries' remark that the dominance of the theory of gradual changes in the doctrine of the origin of species has had an unfavorable influence on the experimental study of relevant problems.

I may add that in present-day natural science, and especially among the neo-Lamarckians, there has been a fairly rapid spread of the theory of the so-called animism of matter, i.e., that matter in general, and especially any organized matter, possesses a certain degree of sensibility. This theory, which many regard as being diametrically opposed to materialism† is in fact, when properly understood, only a translation into the language of present-day natural science of Feuerbach's materialist doctrine of the unity of being and thinking, of object and subject.‡ It may be confidently stated that had they known of this theory, Marx and Engels would have been keenly interested in this trend in natural science, although it was far too little elaborated as yet.

Herzen was right in saying that Hegel's philosophy, which many considered conservative in the main, was a genuine algebra of revolution.\*\*<sup>32</sup> With Hegel, however, this algebra remained wholly unapplied to the burning problems of practical life. Of necessity, the speculative element brought a spirit

\*See his two-volume *Die Mutations-theorie*, Leipzig, 1901-03, his paper *Die Mutationen und die Mutations-Perioden bei Entstehung der Arten*, Leipzig, 1901, and the lectures he delivered at the University of California, which appeared in the German translation under the title of *Arten und Varietäten und ihre Entstehung durch die Mutation*, Berlin, 1906.

†See, for instance, *Der heutige Stand der Darwinschen Fragen*, by R. H. France, Leipzig, 1907.

‡To say nothing of Spinoza, it should not be forgotten that many French 18th-century materialists were favorably inclined toward the theory of the “animism of matter.”

\*\*See Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach* [9-12].



of conservatism into the philosophy of this great absolute idealist. It is quite different with Marx's materialist philosophy, in which revolutionary "algebra" manifests itself with all the irresistible force of its dialectical method. "In its mystified form," Marx says, "dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."<sup>33</sup>

If we regard the materialist dialectic from the viewpoint of Russian literature, we may say that this dialectic was the first to supply a method both necessary and competent to solve the problem of the rational causes of all that exists, a problem that so greatly troubled our brilliant thinker Belinsky. It was only Marx's dialectical method, as applied to the study of Russian life, that has shown us how much *reality* and how much *semblance* of reality there was in it.

## VI. PRODUCTIVE FORCES AND GEOGRAPHY

When we set out to explain history from the materialist standpoint, our first difficulty, as we have seen, is the question of the actual causes of the development of social relations. We already know that the "anatomy of civil society" is determined by its economic structure. But what is the latter itself determined by?

Marx's answer is as follows: "In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production, which correspond to a definite stage of the development of their material

productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which rises a legal and political superstructure. . . ."<sup>\*</sup>

Marx's reply thus reduces the whole question of the development of the economy to that of the causes determining the development of the productive forces at the disposal of society. In this, its final form, it is solved first and foremost by the reference to the nature of the geographic environment.

In his *Philosophy of History*, Hegel already speaks of the important role of "the geographical foundation of world history." But since, in his view, the Idea is the ultimate cause of all development, and since it was only *en passant* and in instances of secondary importance, against his will as it were, that he had recourse to a materialist explanation of phenomena, the thoroughly sound view he expressed regarding the historic significance of geographical environment could not lead him to all the fruitful conclusions that follow therefrom. It was only by the materialist Marx that these conclusions were drawn in their fulness. †

The properties of the geographic environment determine the character both of the natural products that serve to satisfy man's wants, and of those objects *he himself produces* with the same purpose. Where there were no metals, aboriginal tribes could not, unaided, get beyond the limits of what we call the Stone Age. In exactly the same way, for primitive fishermen and hunters to go over to cattle-breeding and agriculture, the appropriate conditions of geographic environment were needed, i.e., in this instance, suitable fauna and flora. Lewis Henry Morgan has shown that the absence in the New World of animals capable of being domesticated, and the specific differences between the flora of the two hemispheres brought about the considerable difference in the course of their inhabitants' social development. ‡ Of the Indians of North America, Waitz says; ". . . they

<sup>\*</sup>See the preface to *Critique of Political Economy* [Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, New York, 1968, 182.]

†In this case, Feuerbach, as I have already said, did not go further than Hegel.

‡*Die Urgesellschaft*, Stuttgart, 1891. [Morgan, *Ancient Society*, Cambridge, Mass., 1964, 28-29.]

have no domesticated animals. This is highly important, for in this circumstance lies the principal reason that forced them to remain at such a low stage of development.”\* Schweinfurth reports that in Africa, when a given locality is overpopulated, part of the inhabitants emigrate and thereupon change their mode of life in accordance with the new geographical environment. “Tribes hitherto agricultural become hunters, while tribes that have lived from their flocks will turn to agriculture.” He also points out that the inhabitants of an area rich in iron, which seems to occupy a considerable part of Central Africa, “naturally began to smelt iron.”†

Nor is that all. Even at the lower stages of development tribes enter into mutual intercourse and exchange some of their products. This expands the boundaries of the geographical environment influencing the development of the productive forces of each of these tribes, and accelerates the course of that development. It is clear, however, that the greater or lesser ease with which such intercourse arises and is maintained also depends on the properties of the geographical environment. Hegel said that seas and rivers bring men closer together, whereas mountains keep them apart. Incidentally, seas bring men closer together when the development of the productive forces has reached a relatively high level; at lower levels, as Ratzel rightly points out, the sea is a great hindrance to intercourse between the tribes which it separates.‡ However that may be, it is certain that the more varied the properties of the geographical environment, the more they favor the development of the productive forces. Marx writes: “It is not the mere fertility of the soil but the differentiation of the soil, the variety of its natural products, the changes of the seasons, which form the physical bases for the social division of labor, and which by changes in the natural surroundings spur man on to the multiplication of his wants,

\**Die Indianer Nordamerikas*, Leipzig, 1865, 91.

†*Au coeur de l'Afrique*, Paris, 1875, I, 199; II, 94. Concerning the influence of climate on agriculture, see also Ratzel, *Die Erde und das Leben*, Leipzig und Wien, 1902, II, 540-41.

‡*Anthropogeographie*, Stuttgart, 1882, 92.

his capabilities, his means and modes of labor.”\* Using almost the same terms as Marx, Ratzel says: “The main thing is, not that there is the greatest ease in procuring food, but that certain inclinations, habits and, finally, wants are aroused in man.”†

Thus, the properties of the geographical environment determine the development of the productive forces, which, in its turn determines the development of the economic forces, and therefore of all other social relations. Marx explains this in the following words: “These social relations into which the producers enter with one another, the conditions under which they exchange their activities and participate in the whole act of production, will naturally vary according to the character of the means of production. With the invention of a new instrument of warfare, fire-arms, the whole internal organization of the army necessarily changed; the relationships within which individuals can constitute an army and act as an army were transformed and the relations of different armies to one another also changed.”‡<sup>34</sup>

To make this explanation still more graphic I shall cite an instance. The Masai of east Africa give their captives no quarter, the reason being, as Ratzel points out, that this pastoral people have no technical possibility of making use of slave labor. But the neighboring Wakamba, who are agriculturists, are able to make use of that labor, and therefore spare their captives' lives and turn them into slaves. The appearance of slavery, therefore, presupposes the achievement of a definite degree in the development of the social forces, a degree that permits the

\**Das Kapital*. [Marx, *Capital*, I, 513-14.]

†*Völkerkunde*, I, Leipzig, 1887, 56.

‡Napoleon I said: “The nature of the weapons decides the composition of the armies, the locales of the campaign, the marches, the positions, the order of battle, the form and nature of fortifications; it is that which places in constant opposition the ancient and the modern systems of war.” *Précis des guerres de César*, Paris, 1836, 87-88.

exploitation of slave labor.\* But slavery is a production relation whose appearance indicates the beginning of division into classes in a society which has hitherto known no other divisions but those of sex and age. When slavery reaches full development, it puts its stamp on the entire economy of society, and, through the economy, on all other social relations, in the first place on the *political structure*. However much the states of antiquity differed in political structure, their chief distinctive feature was that every one of them was a political organization expressing and protecting the interests of freemen alone.

### VII. ROLE OF RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION

We now know that the development of the productive forces, which in the final analysis determines the development of all social relations, is determined by the properties of the geographical environment. But as soon as they have arisen, the social relations themselves exercise a marked influence on the development of the productive forces. Thus that which is initially an effect becomes in its turn a cause; between the development of the productive forces and the social structure there arises an *interaction* which assumes the most varied forms in various epochs.

It should also be remembered that if the *internal relations* existing in a given society are determined by a given state of the productive forces, it is on the latter that, in the final analysis, that society's *external relations depend*. To every stage in the development of the productive forces there corresponds a definite character of armaments, the art of war, and finally of international law, or, to be more precise, of inter-social, i.e., *inter alia*,

\**Völkerkunde*, I, 83. It must be noted that at the early stages of development the enslavement of captives is sometimes nothing more than their forcible incorporation in the conquerors' social organization, with equal rights being granted. Here there is no use of the surplus labor of the captive, but only the common advantage derived from collaboration with him. However, even this form of slavery presupposes the existence of definite productive forces and a definite organization of production.

of intertribal law. Hunting tribes cannot form large political organization precisely because the low level of their productive forces compels them to scatter in small social groups, in search of means of subsistence. But the more these social groups are scattered, the more inevitable is it that even such disputes that in a civilized society could easily be settled in a magistrate's court are settled by means of more or less sanguinary combats. Eyre says that when several Australian tribes join forces for certain purposes in a particular place such contacts are never lengthy; even before a shortage of food or the need to hunt game have obliged the Australians to part company, hostile clashes flare up among them, which very soon lead, as is well known, to pitched battles.\*

Anyone will understand that such clashes may arise from the most varied causes. However, it is noteworthy that most travelers ascribe them to economic causes. When Stanley asked several natives of equatorial Africa how their wars against neighboring tribes arose, the answer was: "Some of our young men go into the woods to hunt game, and they are surprised by our neighbors; then we go to them, and they come to fight us until one party is tired, or one is beaten."† In much the same way, Burton says, "All African wars . . . are for one of two objects, cattle-lifting or kidnapping."‡ Ratzel considers it probable that in New Zealand wars among the natives were frequently caused simply by the desire to enjoy human flesh.\*\* The natives' inclination toward cannibalism is itself to be explained by the paucity of the New Zealand fauna.

Anyone knows to what great extent the outcome of a war depends on the weapons used by each of the belligerents. But those weapons are determined by the state of their productive forces, by their economy, and by their social relations, which

\*Ed. J. Eyre, *Manners and Customs of the Aborigines of Australia*, London, 1847, 243.

†H. Stanley, *In Darkest Africa*, 1890, II, 92.

‡R. Burton, *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, London, 1860, II, 368.

\*\**Völkerkunde*, I, 93.

have arisen on the basis of that economy.\* To say that certain peoples or tribes have been subjugated by other peoples does not yet mean explaining why the social consequences of that subjugation have been exactly what they are, and no other. The social consequences of the Roman conquest of Gaul were not at all the same as those of the conquest of that country by the Germans. The social consequences of the Norman conquest of England were very different from those that resulted from the Mongol conquest of Russia. In all these cases the difference depended ultimately on the difference between the economic structure of the subjugated society on the one hand, and that of the conquering society on the other. The more the productive forces of a given tribe or people developed, the greater are at least its opportunities to better arm itself to carry on the struggle for existence.

There may, however, be many noteworthy exceptions to this general rule. At lower levels of the development of the productive forces, the difference in the weapons of tribes that are at very different stages of economic development—for instance, nomadic shepherds and settled agriculturists—cannot be so

\*This is admirably explained by Engels in the chapters of his *Anti-Dühring* that deal with an analysis of the "force theory." See also the book *Les maîtres de la guerre* by Lieutenant-Colonel Rousset, professor at the *École supérieure de guerre*, Paris.<sup>35</sup> Setting forth the views of General Bonnal, the author of this book writes: "The social conditions obtaining in each epoch of history exert a preponderant influence, not only on the military organization of a nation but also on the character, the abilities, and the trends of its military men. Generals of the ordinary stamp make use of the familiar and accepted methods, and march on toward successes or reverses according to whether attendant circumstances are more or less favorable to them. . . . As for the great captains, these subordinate to their genius the means and procedures of warfare" (20). How do they do it? That is the most interesting part of the matter. It appears that, "guided by a kind of divinatory instinct, they transform the means and procedures in accordance with the parallel laws of a social evolution whose decisive effect (and repercussion) on the technique of their art they alone understand in their day" (*ibid.*). Consequently, it remains for us to discover the causal link between "social evolution" and society's economic development for a materialist explanation to be given to the most unexpected successes in warfare. Rousset is himself very close to giving such an explanation. His historical outline of the latest in the military art, based on General Bonnal's unpublished papers, closely resembles what we find set forth by Engels in the analysis mentioned above. At places the resemblance approaches complete identity.

great as it subsequently becomes. Besides, advance in economic development, which exerts a considerable influence on the character of a given people, sometimes reduces its warlikeness to such a degree that it proves incapable of resisting an enemy economically more backward but more accustomed to warfare. That is why peaceable tribes of agriculturists are not infrequently conquered by warrior peoples. Ratzel remarks that the most solid state organizations are formed by "semi-civilized peoples" as a result of the unifying—by means of conquest—of both elements, the agricultural and the pastoral.\* However correct this remark may be on the whole, it should, however, be remembered that even in such cases (China is a good example) economically backward conquerors gradually find themselves completely subjected to the influence of a conquered but economically more advanced people.

Geographical environment exerts considerable influence, not only on primitive tribes, but also on so-called civilized peoples. As Marx wrote: "It is the necessity of bringing a natural force under the control of society, of economizing, of appropriating or subduing it on a large scale by the work of man's hand, that first plays the decisive part in the history of industry. Examples are the irrigation works in Egypt, Lombardy, Holland, or in India and Persia where irrigation by means of artificial canals, not only supplies the soil with the water indispensable to it, but also carries down to it, in the shape of sediment from the hills, mineral fertilizers. The secret of the flourishing state of industry in Spain and Sicily under the dominion of the Arabs lay in their irrigation works."†

The doctrine of the influence of the geographical environment on mankind's historical development has often been reduced to a recognition of the direct influence of "climate" on social man; it has been supposed that under the influence of "climate" one "race" becomes freedom-loving, another becomes inclined to submit patiently to the rule of a more or less despotic monarch, and yet another race becomes superstitious

\**Völkerkunde*, 19.

†*Das Kapital*. [*Capital*, I, 514.]

and therefore dependent upon a clergy, etc. This view already predominated, for instance, with Buckle.\* According to Marx, the geographical environment affects man through the medium of relations of production, which arise in a given area on the basis of definite productive forces, whose primary condition of development lies in the properties of that environment. Modern ethnology is more and more going over to this point of view, and consequently attributes ever less importance to "race" in the history of civilization. "Possession of certain cultural achievements has nothing to do with race," says Ratzel.†

But as soon as a given level of civilization has been reached, it indubitably influences the bodily and mental qualities of the "race."‡

The influence of geographic environment on social man is a variable magnitude. Conditioned by the properties of that environment, the development of the productive forces increases man's power over Nature, and thereby places him in a new relation toward the geographical environment that sur-

\*See his *History of Civilization in England*, I, Leipzig, 1865, 36-37. According to Buckle, one of the four causes influencing the character of a people, viz., the general aspect of Nature, acts chiefly on the imagination, a highly-developed imagination engendering superstitions, which, in their turn, retard the development of knowledge. By acting on the imagination of the natives, the frequent earthquakes in Peru exercised an influence on the political structure. If Spaniards and Italians are superstitious, that too is the result of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions (*ibid.*, 112-13). This direct psychological influence is particularly strong at the early stages of the development of civilization. Modern science, however, has on the contrary shown the striking similarity of the religious beliefs of primitive tribes standing at the same level of economic development. Buckle's view, borrowed by him from 18th-century writers, dates back to Hippocrates. (See the latter *On Airs, Waters and Places* in the translation of the *Works* by Francis Adams, brought out by the Sydenham Society, London, 1849, I, 205-22.)

†*Völkerkunde*, I, 10. John Stuart Mill, repeating the words of "one of the greatest thinkers of our time," said, "Of all vulgar modes of escaping from the consideration of the effect of social and moral influences on the human mind, the most vulgar is that of attributing the diversities of conduct and character to inherent natural differences." *Principles of Political Economy*, I, 390.

‡Regarding race, see J. Finot's interesting work *Le préjugé des races*, Paris, 1905. Waitz writes: "Certain Negro tribes are striking examples of the link between the main occupation and the national character." *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, II, 107.

rounds him. Thus, the English of today react to that environment in a manner not quite the same as that in which the tribes that inhabited England in Julius Caesar's day reacted to it. Thus it is established that the character of the inhabitants of a given area can be modified substantially, although the geographical properties of that area remain unchanged.

## VIII. BASE AND CULTURE

The legal and political relations\* engendered by a given economic structure exert a decisive influence on the entire mentality of social man. Marx says: "Upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, rises an entire superstructure of distinct and peculiarly formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought and views of life."<sup>36</sup> *Being* determines *thinking*. It may be said that each step made by science in explaining the process of historical development is a fresh argument in favor of this fundamental thesis of contemporary materialism.

As early as 1877 Ludwig Noiré wrote: "It was joint activity directed toward the achievement of a common aim, it was the primordial labor of our ancestors, that produced language and reasoning."† Developing this notable thought, Noiré pointed out that language originally indicated the things of the objective world, not as possessing a certain form, but as having received that form (*nicht als "Gestalten," sondern als "gestaltete"*);

\*Regarding the influence of the economy on the character of the social relations, see Engels, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, [New York, 1942]; also R. Hildebrand, *Recht und Sitte auf den verschiedenen (wirtschaftlichen) Kulturstufen*, I, Jena, 1896. Unfortunately, Hildebrand makes poor use of his economic data. *Rechtsentstehung und Rechtsgeschichte*, an interesting pamphlet by T. Achelis (Leipzig, 1904), considers law as a product of the development of social life, without going deeply into the question of what the latter's development is conditioned by. In M. A. Vaccaro's book, *Les bases sociologiques du droit et de l'état*, Paris, 1898, many scattered individual remarks throw light on certain aspects of the subject; on the whole, however, Vaccaro himself does not seem fully at home in the problem. See also Teresa Labriola's *Revisione critica delle più recenti teorie sulle origini del diritto*, Rome, 1901.

†*Der Ursprung der Sprache*, Mainz, 1877, 331.

not as active and exerting a definite action, but as passive and subjected to that action. He went on to explain this with the sound remark that "all things enter man's field of vision, i.e., become *things* to him, solely in the measure in which they are *subjected* to his action, and it is in conformity with this that they get their designations, i.e., names." In short, it is human activity that, in Noiré's opinion, gives meaning to the initial roots of language.\* It is interesting that Noiré found the first embryo of his theory in Feuerbach's idea that man's essence lies in the community, in man's unity with man. He apparently knew nothing of Marx, for otherwise he would have seen that his view on the role of activity in the formation of language was closer to Marx, who in his epistemology laid stress on human activity, unlike Feuerbach who spoke mostly of "contemplation."

In this connection, it is hardly necessary to remind the reader, with reference to Noiré's theory, that the character of men's activity in the process of production is determined by the state of their productive forces. That is obvious. It will be more useful to note that the decisive influence of *being* upon *thinking* is seen with particular clarity in primitive tribes, whose social and intellectual life is incomparably simpler than that of civilized peoples. Of the natives of Central Brazil, Karl von den Steinen writes that we shall understand them only when we consider them as the outcome (*Erzeugnis*) of their life as hunters. "Animals have been the chief source of their experience," he goes on to say, "and it is mainly with the aid of that experience that they have interpreted Nature and formed their world outlook." The conditions of their life as hunters have determined, not only the world outlook of these tribes, but also their moral concepts, their sentiments, and even, the writer goes on to say, their aesthetic tastes. We see exactly the same thing in pastoral tribes. Among those whom Ratzel terms exclusively herdsmen "the subject of at least 99 per cent of all conversation is cattle, their origin, habits, merits and defects."† For instance, the unfortu-

\**Ibid.*, 341, 347, 369.

†*Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens*, Berlin, 1894, 201, 205-06.

nate *Herreros*,<sup>37</sup> whom the "civilized" Germans recently "pacified" with such brutality, were such "exclusively herdsmen."\*

If beasts are the primitive hunter's foremost source of experience, and if his whole world outlook was based on that experience, then it is not surprising that the *mythology* of hunting tribes at that stage takes the place of philosophy, theology and science, and draws all its content from the same source. "The peculiarity of Bushman mythology," Andrew Lang writes, "is the almost absolute predominance of animals. Except 'an old woman' who appears now and then in these incoherent legends, their myths have scarcely one human figure to show."‡ According to Brough Smith, the Australian aborigines—like the Bushmen, who have not yet emerged from the hunting stage—have as their gods mostly birds and beasts.‡

The religion of primitive tribes has not yet been adequately studied. However, what we already know fully confirms the correctness of the brief thesis of Marx and Feuerbach that "it is not religion that makes man, but man who makes religion." As E. B. Tylor says, "It is obvious that, among all nations, man was the type of divinity. This explains why the structure of human society and its government have become the models

\*Regarding such "exclusively herdsmen" see Gustav Fritsch's book *Die Eingeborenen Süd-Afrikas*, Breslau, 1872. "The Kaffir's ideal," Fritsch says, "the object of his dreams, and that which he loves to sing of, is his cattle, the most valuable of his property. Songs lauding cattle alternate with songs in honor of tribal chiefs, in which the latter's cattle again play an important part" (I, 50). With the Kaffirs, tending cattle is the most honorable of occupations (I, 85), and even war pleases the Kaffir chiefly because it holds the promise of booty in the shape of cattle (I, 79). "Lawsuits among the Kaffirs are the result of conflicts over cattle" (I, 322). Fritsch gives a highly interesting description of the life of Bushman hunters (I, 424 *et seq.*).

‡*Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, London, 1887, II, 15.

‡Worth recalling in this connection is R. Andree's remark that man originally imagined his gods in the shape of animals. "When man later anthropomorphized animals, there arose the mythical transformation of men into animals." (*Ethnographische Parallele und Vergleiche*, neue Folge, Leipzig, 1889, 116.) The anthropomorphization of animals presupposes a relatively high level of the development of the productive forces. See also, Leo Frobenius, *Die Weltanschauung der Naturvölker*, Weimar, 1898, 24.

for celestial society and the government of the heavens.”\* This is unquestionably a materialist view of religion: it is known that Saint-Simon held the opposite view, explaining the social and political system of the ancient Greeks by their religious beliefs. It is, however, far more important that science has already begun to discover the causal link between the technical level of primitive peoples and their world outlook.† (In this respect valuable discoveries evidently lie ahead for science.‡)

In the sphere of the ideology of primitive society, art has been studied better than any other branch; an abundance of material has been collected, testifying in the most unambiguous and convincing manner to the soundness and, one might say, the inevitability of the materialist explanation of history.\*\*

The conclusions arrived at by modern science as regards the beginning of art will be shown by the following quotations from the authors I have enumerated.

“Decorative design,” says Hörnes, “can develop only from industrial activity, which is its material precondition . . . Peoples without any industry . . . have no ornamental design either” (38).

\**La civilisation primitive*, Paris, 1876, II, 322.

†See H. Schurtz, *Vorgeschichte der Kultur*, Leipzig und Wien, 1900, 559-64. I shall return to this matter later, apropos of another question.

‡I shall permit myself to refer the reader to my article in the journal *Sovremenny Mir* [*The Contemporary World*.] entitled “On the So-called Religious Seekings in Russia” (September 1909). In it I also discussed the significance of the mechanical arts for the development of religious conceptions.

\*\*So copious is this material that I can here enumerate only the most important of the works dealing with the subject: Schweinfurth, *Artes Africanæ*, Leipzig, 1875; R. Andree, *Ethnographische Parallelen*, the article entitled “*Das Zeichnen bei den Naturvölkern*”; Von den Steinen, *Über den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens*, Berlin, 1894; G. Mallery, *Picture Writing of the American Indians*, Xth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, Washington, 1893 (reports for the other years contain valuable material on the influence of the mechanical arts, especially weaving, on ornamental design); Hörnes, *Urgeschichte der bildenden Kunst in Europa*, Wien, 1898; Ernst Grosse, *Die Anfänge der Kunst*, also *Kunstwissenschaftliche Studien*, Tübingen, 1900; Yrjö Hirn, *Der Ursprung der Kunst*, Leipzig, 1904; Karl Bücher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, 3. Auflage, 1902; Gabriel et Adrien de Mortillet, *Le préhistorique*, Paris, 1900, pp. 217-30; Hörnes, *Der diluviale Mensch in Europa*, Braunschweig, 1903; Sophus Müller, *L'Europe préhistorique*, trad. du danois par E. Philippot, Paris, 1907; Rich. Wallaschek, *Anfänge der Tonkunst*, Leipzig, 1903.

Von den Steinen thinks that drawing (*Zeichnen*) developed from “*Zeichen*” (making signs), used with the practical aim of indicating objects.

Bücher has formed the conclusion that “at the primitive stage of their development, work, music and poetry were a fused whole, work being the chief element in this trinity, and music and poetry of secondary importance.” In his opinion, “the origin of poetry is to be sought in work,” and he goes on to remark that no language arranges words making up a sentence in ordinary speech in a rhythmical pattern. It is therefore improbable that men arrived at measured, poetical speech through the use of their everyday language—the inner logic of that language operates against that. How, then, is one to explain the origin of measured, poetical speech? Bücher is of the opinion that the measured and rhythmical movements of the body transmitted the laws of their coordination to figurative, poetical speech. This is all the more probable if one recalls that at the lower stages of development rhythmical movements of the body are usually accompanied by singing. But what is the explanation of the coordination of bodily movements? It lies in the nature of the processes of production. Thus, “the origin of poetry is to be sought in productive activities” (342).

Wallaschek formulates his view on the origin of dramatic performances among primitive tribes in the following way (257): The subject of these dramatic performances were:

“1. The chase, war, paddling (among hunters—the life and habits of animals; animal pantomimes; masks\*).

“2. The life and habits of cattle (among pastoral peoples).

“3. Work (among agriculturists: sowing, threshing, vine-dressing).

“The entire tribe took part in the performance, all of them singing (in chorus). The words sung were meaningless, the content being provided by the performance itself (pantomime). Only actions of everyday life were represented, such as were absolutely essential in the struggle for existence.” Wallaschek says that in many primitive tribes, during such performances,

\*Usually depicting animals too.

the chorus split into two opposite parts. "Such," he adds, "was the origin of Greek drama, which was also an animal pantomime at the outset. The goat was the animal that played the most important part in the economy of the Greeks, which accounts for the word 'tragedy' being derived from 'tragos', the Greek for 'goat'."

It would be difficult to give a more striking illustration of the proposition that it is not being that is determined by thinking, but thinking that is determined by being.

### IX. INTERACTION OF BASE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

But economic life develops under the influence of growth in the productive forces. Therefore the mutual relations of people engaged in the process of production undergo changes, and, together with them, changes take place in human mentality. As Marx puts it: "At a certain stage in their development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing production relations or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces, these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change in the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure that rises above it is more or less rapidly transformed. . . . No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed, and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society.\* Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve, since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions of its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation."<sup>39</sup>

\*Certain Marxists in our country are known to have thought otherwise in the autumn of 1905. They considered a *socialist* revolution possible in Russia, since, they claimed, the country's productive forces were sufficiently developed for such a revolution.<sup>38</sup>

Here we have before us a genuine "algebra"—and purely materialist at that—of social development. This algebra has room both for "leaps" (of the epoch of social revolutions) and for gradual changes. Gradual quantitative changes in the properties of a given order of things lead ultimately to a change in quality, i.e., to the downfall of the old mode of production—or, as Marx expresses it here, of the old social order—and to its replacement by a new mode. As Marx remarks, the oriental, the ancient, the feudal and the modern capitalist modes of production may be regarded, generally speaking, as successive ("progressive") epochs in the economic development of society.<sup>40</sup> There is however reason to believe that later, when he had read Morgan's book on ancient society, he modified his view on the relation of the mode of production in antiquity to that of the East. Indeed, the logic of the economic development of the feudal mode of production led to a social revolution that marked the triumph of capitalism. But the logic of the economic development of China or ancient Egypt, for example, did not at all lead to the appearance of the antique mode of production. In the former instance we are speaking of two phases of development, one of which follows the other, and is engendered by it. The second instance, on the other hand, represents rather two coexisting types of economic development. The society of antiquity took the place of the clan social organization, the latter also preceding the appearance of the oriental social system. Each of these two types of economic structure was the outcome of the growth in the productive forces within the clan organization, a process that inevitably led to the latter's ultimate disintegration. If these two types differed considerably from each other, their chief distinctive features were evolved under the influence of the geographical environment, which in one case prescribed one kind of aggregate production relations to a society that had achieved a certain degree of growth in the productive forces, and in the other case, another kind, greatly differing from the first.

The discovery of the clan type of social organization is evidently destined to play the same part in social science as was played in biology by the discovery of the cell. While Marx and Engels



were unfamiliar with this type of organization, there could not but be considerable gaps in their theory of social development, as Engels himself subsequently acknowledged.<sup>41</sup>

But the discovery of the clan type of organization which for the first time provided a key to an understanding of the lower stages of social development, was but a new and powerful argument in favor of the materialist explanation of history, not against that conception. It provided a closer insight into the way in which the first phases of social being take shape and social being then determines social thinking. The discovery thereby gave amazing clarity to the truth that social thinking is determined by social being.

I mention all this only in passing. The main thing deserving of attention is Marx's remark that the property relations existing when the productive forces reach a certain level encourage the further growth of those forces for a time, and then begin to hamper that growth.\* This is a reminder of the fact that though a given state of the productive forces is the *cause* of the given production relations, and in particular of the property relations, the latter (once they have arisen *as a consequence of the aforementioned cause*) begin themselves to influence that cause. Thus there arises an *interaction* between the productive forces and the social economy. Since an entire superstructure of social relations, sentiments and concepts grows on the economic base, that superstructure first fostering and then hindering the economic development, there arises between the superstructure and the base an *interaction* which provides the key to an understanding of all those phenomena which *at first glance* seem to contradict the fundamental thesis of historical materialism.

\*Let us take slavery as an instance. At a certain level of development it fosters the growth of the productive forces, and then begins to hamper that growth. Its disappearance among the civilized peoples of the West was due to their economic development. (Concerning slavery in the ancient world, see Professor Et. Ciccotti's interesting work *Il tramonto della schiavitù*. Turin, 1899.) In his book, *Journal of the Discovery of the Sources of the Nile*, 1863, J. H. Speke says that among the Negroes, slaves consider it dishonest and disgraceful to run away from a master who has paid money for them. To this it might be added that these same slaves consider their condition more honorable than that of the hired laborer. Such an outlook corresponds to the phase "when slavery is still a progressive phenomenon."

Everything hitherto said by "critics" of Marx concerning the supposed one-sidedness of Marxism and its alleged disregard of all other "factors" of social development but the economic, has been prompted by a failure to understand the role assigned by Marx and Engels to the interaction between "base" and "superstructure." To realize, for instance, how little Marx and Engels ignored the significance of the political factor, it is sufficient to read those pages of the *Communist Manifesto* which make reference to the liberation movement of the bourgeoisie. There we are told:

"An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune; here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable 'third estate' of the monarchy (as in France), afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."<sup>42</sup>

The importance of the political "factor" is so clearly revealed here that some "critics" consider it even unduly stressed. But the influence and the force of this "factor," as well as the mode of its operation in each given period of the bourgeoisie's development, are themselves explained in the *Manifesto* by the course of economic development, in consequence of which the variety of "factors" in no way disturbs the unity of the fundamental cause.

Political relations indubitably influence the economic movement, but it is also indisputable that before they influence that movement they are created by it.

The same must be said of the mentality of man as a social being, of that which Stammler has somewhat one-sidedly called social concepts. The *Manifesto* gives convincing proof that its authors were well aware of the importance of the ideological

“factor.” However, in the same *Manifesto* we see that, even if the ideological “factor” plays an important part in the development of society, it is itself previously created by that development.

“When the ancient world was in its last throes, the ancient religions were overcome by Christianity. When Christian ideas succumbed in the 18th century to rationalist ideas, feudal society fought its death battle with the then revolutionary bourgeoisie.”<sup>43</sup> In this connection, however, the concluding chapter of the *Manifesto* is even more convincing. Its authors tell us that the Communists never cease to instil in the minds of the workers the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between the interests of the bourgeoisie and of the proletariat. It is easy to understand that one who attaches no importance to the ideological “factor” has no logical ground for trying to instil any such recognition whatsoever in the minds of any social group.

## X. MAN AND NECESSITY IN HISTORY

I have quoted from the *Manifesto*, in preference to other works by Marx and Engels, because it belongs to the early period of their activities when—as some of their critics assure us—they were especially “one-sided” in their understanding of the relation between the “factors” of social development. We see clearly, however, that in that period too they were distinguished, not by any “one-sidedness,” but only by striving toward monism, an aversion for the eclecticism so manifest in the remarks of their “critics.”

Reference is not infrequently made to two of Engels’ letters, both published in *Sozialistischer Akademiker* [Socialist Academician]. One was written in 1890, the other in 1894. There was a time when Herr Bernstein made much of these letters<sup>44</sup> which, he thought, contained plain testimony of the evolution that had taken place in the course of time in the views of Marx’s friend and collaborator. He made two extracts from them, which he thought most convincing in this respect, and which I consider necessary to reproduce here, inasmuch as they prove the reverse of what Herr Bernstein was out to prove.

Here is the first of these extracts: “Thus there are innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite group of parallelograms of forces which give rise to a resultant, the historical event. This may again itself be viewed as the product of a force which works as a whole, unconsciously and without volition, for what each individual wills is obstructed by everyone else, and what emerges is something that no one willed.” (Letter of 1890).<sup>45</sup>

Here is the second extract: “Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development, is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also on the economic base.” (Letter of 1894).<sup>46</sup> Herr Bernstein finds that “this sounds somewhat different” than the preface to *Critique of Political Economy*, which speaks of the link between the economic “base” and the “superstructure” that rises above it. But in what way does it sound different? Precisely what is said in the preface, is repeated, viz., political and all other kinds of development rest on economic development. Herr Bernstein seems to have been misled by the following words, “but all these react upon one another and also on the economic base.” Herr Bernstein himself seems to have understood the preface to the *Critique* differently, i.e., in the sense that the social and ideological “superstructure” that grows on the economic “base” exerts no influence, in its turn, on that “base.” We already know, however, that nothing can be more mistaken than such an understanding of Marx’s thought. Those who have observed Herr Bernstein’s “critical” exercises can only shrug their shoulders when they see a man who once undertook to popularize Marxism failing to go to the trouble—or, to be more accurate, proving incapable—of first getting an understanding of that doctrine.

The second of the letters quoted by Herr Bernstein contains passages that are probably of greater importance for an understanding of the causal significance of the historical theory of Marx and Engels, than the lines I have quoted, which have been so poorly understood by Herr Bernstein. One of these passages reads as follows: “So it is not, as people try here and there conveniently to imagine, that the economic situation produces an automatic effect. Men make their history themselves, only in

given surroundings which conditions it (*in einem gegebenen, sie bedingenden Milieu*) and on the basis of actual relations already existing, among which the economic relations, however much they may be influenced by the other political and ideological ones, are still ultimately the decisive ones, forming the red thread which runs through them and alone leads to understanding."<sup>47</sup>

As we see, Herr Bernstein himself, in the days of his "orthodox" mood, was among the people "here and there" who interpret the historical doctrine of Marx and Engels in the sense that in history "the economic situation produces an automatic effect." These also include very many "critics" of Marx who have switched into reverse "*from Marxism to idealism.*" These profound thinkers reveal great self-satisfaction when they confront and reproach the "one-sided" Marx and Engels with the formula that history is made by men and not by the automatic movement of the economy. In quoting Marx they are actually misquoting him, and in their boundless simplicity of mind do not even suspect that the "*Marx*" they are "*criticizing*" has nothing in common with the real Marx, with the exception of the name, since he is the creation of their own and really many-sided non-understanding of the subject. It is natural that "critics" of such caliber are utterly incapable of "supplementing" or "amending" anything in historical materialism. Consequently, I shall not deal with them any longer, and shall go over to the "founders" of that theory.

It is of the utmost importance to note that when Engels, shortly before his death, denied the "automatic" understanding of the historical operation of the economy, he was only repeating (almost in the same words) and explaining what Marx had written as far back as 1845, in the third Thesis on Feuerbach, quoted above. There Marx reproached the earlier materialists with having forgotten that if "men are products of circumstances . . . it is men that change circumstances." Consequently the task of materialism in the sphere of history lay, as Marx understood it, precisely in explaining in what manner "circumstances" can be changed by those who are themselves created by them. This problem was solved by the reference to the rela-

tions of production that develop under the influence of conditions independent of the human will. Production relations are the relations among human beings in the social process of production. Saying that production relations have changed means that the mutual relations have changed among people engaged in that process. A change in these relations cannot take place "automatically," i.e., independently of human activity, because they are relations established among men in the process of their activities.

But these relations may undergo changes—and indeed often do undergo changes—in a direction far from that in which people would like them to change. The character of the "economic structure" and the direction in which that character changes depend, not upon human will, but on the state of the productive forces and on the specific changes in production relations which take place and become necessary to society as a result of the further development of those forces. Engels explains this in the following words: "Men make their history themselves, but not as yet with a collective will or according to a collective plan or even in a definitely defined, given society. Their efforts clash, and for that very reason all such societies are governed by *necessity*, which is supplemented by and appears under the forms of *accident.*"<sup>48</sup> Here human activity is itself defined as being not free, but *necessary*, i.e., as being *in conformity with a law*, and therefore capable of becoming an object of scientific study. Thus, while always pointing out that circumstances are changed by men, historical materialism at the same time enables us to examine the process of this change from the standpoint of science. That is why we have every right to say that the materialist explanation of history provides the necessary *prolegomena* to any doctrine on human society claiming to be a science.<sup>49</sup>

This is so true that at present the study of any aspect of social life acquires scientific significance only in the measure in which it draws closer to a materialist explanation of that life. Despite the so highly vaunted "revival of idealism" in the social sciences, that explanation is becoming more and more common wherever researchers refrain from indulging in edifying meditation and

verbiage on the "ideal," but set themselves the scientific task of discovering the causal links between phenomena. Today even people who not only do not adhere to the materialist view on history, but have not the slightest idea of it, are proving materialists in their historical researches. It is here that their ignorance of this view, or their prejudice against it, which hinders an understanding of all its aspects, does indeed lead to one-sidedness and narrowness of concepts.

### XI. ECONOMIC BASE AND IDEOLOGY

Here is a good illustration. Ten years ago Alfred Espinas, the well-known French scholar (and incidentally a bitter enemy of present-day socialists), published an interesting—at least in conception—"sociological study" entitled *Les origines de la technologie*. In this book, the author, proceeding from the purely materialist proposition that *practice* always precedes *theory* in the history of mankind, examines the influence of technology on the development of ideology, or to be more precise, on the development of religion and philosophy in ancient Greece. He arrives at the conclusion that in each period of that development the ancient Greeks' world outlook was determined by the state of their productive forces. This is of course a highly interesting and important conclusion, but anyone accustomed consciously to applying materialism to an explanation of historical events will, on reading Espinas' "study," find that the view expressed therein is one-sided. This is so for the simple reason that the French scholar has paid practically no attention to other "factors" in the development of ideology, such as the class struggle, for example. Yet the latter "factor" is of really exceptional importance.

In primitive society, which knows no division into classes, man's productive activities exert a direct influence on his world outlook and his aesthetic tastes. Decorative design draws its motifs from technology, and dancing—probably the most important of the arts in such a society—often merely imitates the process of production. That is particularly to be seen in

hunting tribes, which stand at the lowest known level of economic development.\* That is why I referred chiefly to them when I was discussing the dependence of primitive man's mentality on his activities in the economy he conducts. However, in a society that is divided into classes the direct influence of those activities becomes far less discernible. That is understandable. If, for instance, one of the Australian aboriginal women's dances reproduces the work of root-gathering, it goes without saying that none of the graceful dances with which, for instance, the fine ladies of 18th-century France amused themselves could depict those ladies' productive work, since they did not engage in such work, preferring in the main to devote themselves to the "science of tender passion." To understand the Australian native women's dance it is sufficient to know the part played in the life of the Australian tribe by the gathering of wild roots by the womenfolk. But to understand the minuet, for instance, it is absolutely insufficient to have a knowledge of the economy of 18th-century France. Here we have to do with a dance expressive of the psychology of a non-productive class. A psychology of this kind accounts for the vast majority of the "customs and conventions" of so-called good society. Consequently, in this case the economic "factor" is second to the psychological. It should, however, not be forgotten that the appearance of non-productive classes in a society is a product of the latter's economic development. Hence, the economic "factor" preserves its predominant significance even when it is second to others. Moreover, it is then that this significance makes itself felt, for it is then that it determines the possibility and the limits of the influence of other "factors."†

\*The hunters were preceded by the gatherers [of fruits and roots] or *Sammelvölker*, as German scholars now term them. But all the savage tribes we know have already passed that stage. In his work on the origin of the family, Engels says that purely hunting peoples exist only in the imagination of scholars. Hunting tribes are "gatherers" at the same time. However, as we have seen, hunting has a most profound influence on the development of the views and tastes of such peoples.

†Here is an example from another field. The "population factor," as it is called by A. Coste (see his *Les facteurs de population dans l'évolution sociale*, Paris, 1901), undoubtedly has a very big influence on social development. But Marx is absolutely right in saying that the abstract laws of propagation exist only for animals

Nor is that all. Even when it participates in the productive process in the capacity of leader, the upper class looks upon the lower class with a disdain they do not trouble to conceal. This too is reflected in the ideologies of the two classes. The French medieval *fabliaux*, and particularly the *chansons de gestes*,<sup>50</sup> depict the peasant of the time in a most unattractive way. If we are to believe them, then:

*Li vilains sont de laide forme  
Ainc si très laide ne vit home;  
Chaucuns a XV piez de granz;  
En auques ressemblent jâianz,  
Mais trop sont de laide manière  
Boçu sont devant et derrière.\**

[*The villeins are ugly in shape.  
No man has seen uglier.  
Each of them is 15 feet in stature,  
Some resemble giants,  
But much too ugly,  
With humps both in front and behind.*]

The peasants, of course, saw themselves in a different light. Indignant at the arrogance of the feudal seigneurs, they sang:

*Nous sommes des hommes, tous comme eux,  
Et capable de souffrir, tout autant qu'eux.  
[We are men, just as they are,  
And capable of suffering, just like they.]*

And they asked:

*When Adam delved and Eve span,  
Who was then the gentleman?*

and plants. In human society the increase or decline of population depends on that society's organization, which is determined by its economic structure. No abstract "law of propagation" will explain anything in the fact that the population of present-day France hardly grows at all. Those sociologists and economists who see in the growth of population the primary cause of social development are profoundly mistaken (see A. Loria, *La legge di popolazione ed il sistema sociale*, Siena, 1882).

\*See *Les classes rurales et le régime domanial en France au moyen âge*, par Henri Sée, Paris, 1901, 554. See also Fr. Meyer, *Die Stände, ihr Leben und Trieben*, Marburg, 1882, 8.

In a word, each of these two classes looked upon things from its own point of view, which was determined by its position in society. The psychology of the contending sides was colored by the class struggle. Such, of course, was the case not only in the Middle Ages and not only in France. The more acute the class struggle grew in a given country and at a given time, the stronger was its influence on the psychology of the conflicting classes. He who would study the history of ideologies in a society divided into classes must give close consideration to this influence; otherwise he will be all at sea. Try to give a bluntly economic explanation of the fact of the appearance of the David school of painting in 18th-century France: nothing will come of your attempt except ridiculous and dull nonsense. But if you regard that school as an ideological reflection of the class struggle in French society on the eve of the great revolution, the matter will at once assume an entirely different aspect: even such qualities in David's art which, it would seem, were so far removed from the social economy that they can in no way be linked up with it, will become fully comprehensible.<sup>51</sup>

The same also has to be said of the history of ideologies in ancient Greece, a history that most profoundly experienced the impact of the class struggle. That impact was insufficiently shown in Espinas' interesting study, in consequence of which his important conclusions were marked by a certain bias. Such instances might be quoted today in no small number, and they would all show that the influence of Marx's materialism on many present-day experts would be of the utmost value in the sense that it would teach them also to take into account "factors" other than the technical and the economic. That sounds paradoxical, yet it is an undeniable truth, which will no longer surprise us if we remember that, though he explains any social movement as the outcome of the economic development of society, Marx very often thus explains that movement only as the ultimate outcome, i.e., he takes it for granted that a number of various other "factors" will operate in the interim.

## XII. AGAINST ONE-SIDEDNESS AND SCHEMATISM

Another trend, diametrically opposed to that which we have just seen in Espinas, is beginning to reveal itself in present-day science—a tendency to explain the history of ideas exclusively by the influence of the class struggle. This perfectly new and as yet inconspicuous trend has arisen under the direct influence of Marxist historical materialism. We see it in the writings of the Greek author, A. Eleutheropoulos, whose principal work\* was published in Berlin in 1900. Eleutheropoulos is convinced that the philosophy of any given period expresses the latter's specific "world outlook and views on life" (*Lebens- und Weltanschauung*). Properly speaking, there is nothing new about this. Hegel already said that every philosophy is only the ideological expression of its time. With Hegel, however, the properties of the various epochs, and of the corresponding phases in the development of philosophy, were determined by the movement of the Absolute Idea, whereas with Eleutheropoulos any given epoch is characterized primarily by its economic condition. The economy of any particular people determines its "world outlook and views on life," which is expressed, among other things, in its philosophy. With a change in the economic basis of society, the ideological superstructure changes too. Inasmuch as economic development leads to the division of society into classes, and to a struggle between them, the "world outlook and views on life" peculiar to a particular period is not uniform in character. It varies in the different classes and undergoes modification in accordance with their position, their needs and aspirations, and the course of their mutual struggle.

Such is the viewpoint from which Eleutheropoulos regards the entire history of philosophy. It is self-evident that this point of view deserves the closest attention and the utmost approval. For quite a considerable period there has been discernible in philosophical literature a dissatisfaction with the usual view of

\**Wirtschaft und Philosophie*. I. *Die Philosophie und die Lebensauffassung des Griechentums auf Grund der gesellschaftlichen Zustände*; and II. *Die Philosophie und die Lebensauffassung der germanisch-romanischen Völker*.

the history of philosophy as merely a filiation of philosophical systems. In a pamphlet published in the late eighties and dealing with ways of studying the history of philosophy, the well-known French writer Picavet declared that, taken by itself, filiation of this kind can explain very little.\* The appearance of Eleutheropoulos' work might have been welcomed as a new step in the study of the history of philosophy, and as a victory of historical materialism in its application to an ideology far removed from economics. Alas, Eleutheropoulos has not displayed much skill in making use of the dialectical method of that materialism. He has oversimplified the problems confronting him, and for that reason alone has failed to bring forward any solutions other than very one-sided and therefore most unsatisfactory ones. Let us cite his appraisal of Xenophanes. According to Eleutheropoulos, Xenophanes expressed, in the realm of philosophy, the aspiration of the Greek proletariat. He was the Rousseau of his time. He wanted social reform in the meaning of the equality and unity of all citizens, and his doctrine of the unity of being was merely the theoretical foundation of his plans for reform. It was from this theoretical foundation of Xenophanes' reformational aspirations that all the details of his philosophy developed, beginning with his view of God, and ending with his doctrine of the illusoriness of representations received through our senses.†

The philosophy of Heraclitus the Obscure, says Eleutheropoulos, was engendered by the reaction of the aristocracy against the revolutionary aspirations of the Greek proletariat. According to that philosophy, universal equality is impossible, for Nature herself has made men unequal. Each man should be content with his lot. It is not the overthrow of the existing order that should be aspired toward in the State, but the elimination of the arbitrary use of power, which is possible both under the rule of a few and under the rule of the masses. Power should belong to Law, which is an expression of divine law. Unity is not precluded by divine law, but unity that is in accord with the latter

\**L'histoire de la philosophie, ce qu'elle a été, ce qu'elle peut être*, Paris, 1888.

†*Wirtschaft und Philosophie*, I, 98-101.

is a unity of opposites. The implementation of Xenophanes' plans would be a breach of the divine law. Developing and substantiating this idea, Heraclitus created his dialectical doctrine of Becoming (*Werden*).\*

That is what Eleutheropoulos says. Lack of space prevents me from quoting more samples of his analysis of the causes determining the development of philosophy. There is hardly any need to do so. The reader, I hope, will see for himself that this analysis must be found unsatisfactory. The process of the development of ideologies is, in general, incomparably more complex than Eleutheropoulos imagines.† When you read his oversimplified notions of the influence of the class struggle on the history of philosophy, you begin to regret that he seems quite ignorant of the aforementioned book by Espinas: the one-sidedness inherent in the latter work, if superimposed on his own one-sidedness, might perhaps have corrected a good deal in his analysis.

Nevertheless, Eleutheropoulos' unsuccessful attempt to shed light on the history of philosophy testifies anew to the proposition—a surprise to many—that a more thorough assimilation of Marx's historical materialism would be useful to many contemporary investigators, precisely because it will save them from one-sidedness. Eleutheropoulos is acquainted with that materialism, but only poorly. That is borne out by the "correction" he has thought fit to introduce into it.

He remarks that the economic relations of a given people determine only "the *necessity* of its development." The latter itself is a matter of individuality, so that this people's "world outlook and views on life" is determined in its content, first, by its character and the character of the country it inhabits; secondly, by its needs; and thirdly, by the personal qualities of those who come forward from its midst as reformers. It is only in this sense, according to Eleutheropoulos, that we can speak of the

\**Ibid.*, 103-07.

†To say nothing of the fact that in his references to the economy of ancient Greece, Eleutheropoulos gives no concrete presentation of it, confining himself to general statements which here, as everywhere else, explain nothing.

relation of philosophy to the economy. Philosophy fulfils the demands of its time, and does so in conformity with the personality of the philosopher.

Eleutheropoulos probably thinks that this view on the relation of philosophy to the economy differs from the materialist view of Marx and Engels. He deems it necessary to give a new name to his interpretation of history, calling it "the Greek theory of Becoming" (*griechische Theorie des Werdens*\*). This is simply ridiculous, and all one can say in this connection is that "the Greek theory of Becoming," which in fact is nothing but rather poorly digested and clumsily expounded historical materialism, nevertheless promises far more than is actually given by Eleutheropoulos when he proceeds from describing his method to applying it, for then he departs completely from Marx.

As for the "personality of the philosopher" and, in general, of any person who leaves an impress on the history of mankind, those who imagine that the theory of Marx and Engels has no room for it are in gross error. Marxism has left room for that, but at the same time it has been able to avoid the impermissible contraposing of the activities of any "personality" to the course of events, which is determined by economic necessity. Anybody who resorts to such contraposing thereby proves that he has understood very little of the materialist explanation of history. The fundamental thesis of historical materialism, as I have repeated more than once, is that history is made by men. That being so, it is manifest that it is made also by "great men." It only remains to establish what the activities of such men are determined by. Here is what Engels writes in this connection, in one of the two letters quoted above:

"That such and such a man and precisely that man arises at that particular time in that particular country is of course pure accident. But cut him out and there will be a demand for a substitute, and this substitute will be found, good or bad, but in the long run he will be found. That Napoleon, just that particular Corsican, should have been the military dictator whom the French Republic, exhausted by its own war, had rendered neces-

\**Ibid.*, I, 16-17.

sary, was an accident; but that, if a Napoleon had been lacking, another would have filled the place, is proved by the fact that the man was always found as soon as he became necessary: Caesar, Augustus, Cromwell, etc. While Marx discovered the materialist conception of history, Thierry, Mignet, Guizot, and all the English historians up to 1850 are the proof that it was being striven for, and the discovery of the same conception by Morgan proves that the time was ripe for it and that it indeed *had* to be discovered.

“So with all the other accidents, and apparent accidents, of history. The further the particular sphere which we are investigating is removed from the economic sphere and approaches that of pure abstract ideology, the more shall we find it exhibiting accidents in its development, the more will its curve run in a zig-zag. So also you will find that the axis of this curve will approach more and more nearly parallel to the axis of the curve of economic development the longer the period considered and the wider the field dealt with.”<sup>52</sup>

The “personality” of anyone who has won distinction in the spiritual or social sphere is among those instances of *accident* whose appearance do not prevent the “average” axis of mankind’s intellectual development running parallel to that of its economic development.\* Eleutheropoulos would have understood that better had he given more careful thought to Marx’s historical theory, and been less concerned with producing his own “Greek theory.”†

It need hardly be added that we are still far from being always capable of discovering the causal link between the appearance of a given philosophical view and the economic situation of the period in question. The reason is that we are only beginning to work in this direction; were we in a position to answer all the questions—or at least most of the questions—that arise in this connection, that would mean that our work was already com-

\*See my article “On the Role of the Individual in History” in my book *Twenty Years*. [See Appendix of present volume.]

†He called it *Greek* because, as he put it, “its fundamental theses had been expressed by the Greek Thales, and later further developed by another Greek” (*op.cit.*, 17), i.e., by Eleutheropoulos.

pleted, or approaching completion. What is of decisive significance in this case is not the fact that we cannot yet cope with all the difficulties facing us in this field; there is not, nor can there be, a method that can remove at one stroke all the difficulties arising in a science. The important thing is that it is incomparably easier for the materialist explanation of history to cope with them than it is for the idealist or the eclectic explanations. That is borne out by the fact that scientific thought in the sphere of history has been most strongly attracted toward the materialist explanation of events, has, been persistently seeking for it since the Restoration period.\* It has to this day continued to gravitate toward it and to seek it, despite the fine indignation that arises in any self-respecting ideologist of the bourgeoisie whenever he hears the word *materialism*.

A third illustration of the present inevitability of attempts to find a materialist explanation of all aspects of human culture is provided by Franz Feuerherd’s book [on the history of art]. “In conformity with the dominant mode of production and the form of State thereby conditioned, the human intelligence moves in certain directions, and is excluded from others. Therefore the existence of any style [in art—*G. P.*] presupposes the existence of people who live in quite definite political conditions, are engaged in production under quite definite production relations, and have quite definite ideals. Given these conditions, men create the appropriate style with the same natural necessity and inevitability as the way linen bleaches, as bromide of silver turns black, and a rainbow appears in the clouds as soon as the sun, as the cause, brings about all these effects.”† All this is true, of course, and the circumstance that this is acknowledged by a historian of art is of particular interest. When, however, Feuerherd goes on to ascribe the origins of the various Greek styles to economic conditions in ancient Greece, what he produces is too schematic. I do not know whether the second part

\*See my preface to the second edition of my Russian translation of the *Communist Manifesto*.

†*Die Entstehung der Stil aus der politischen Ökonomie*, Part I, Brunswick and Leipzig, 1902, 19-20.<sup>53</sup>



of his book has come out; I have not been interested in the matter, because it is clear to me how poorly he has learnt the modern materialist method. In their schematism his arguments are reminiscent of those of our primitive Friches and Rozhkovs, who, like Feuerherd, may be well advised first and foremost to make a study of modern materialism. Only Marxism can save all of them from falling into schematism.

### XIII. PSYCHOLOGY OF THE EPOCH

In a controversy with me, the late Nikolai Mikhailovsky once declared that Marx's historical theory would never gain much acceptance in the scholarly world. We have just seen, and will again see from what follows below, that this statement is not quite correct. But first we must remove certain other misconceptions which prevent a proper understanding of historical materialism.

If we wanted to express in a nutshell the view held by Marx and Engels with regard to the relation between the now celebrated "*base*" and the no less celebrated "*superstructure*," we would get something like the following:

- (1) the state of the productive forces;
- (2) the economic relations these forces condition;
- (3) the socio-political system that has developed on the given economic "*base*";
- (4) the mentality of men living in society, a mentality which is determined in part directly by the economic conditions obtaining, and in part by the entire socio-political system that has arisen on that foundation;
- (5) the various ideologies that reflect the properties of that mentality.

This formula is comprehensive enough to provide proper room for all "*forms*" of historical development, and at the same time it contains absolutely nothing of the eclecticism that is incapable of going beyond the interaction between the various social forces, and does not even suspect that the fact that these forces do interact has provided no solution of the problem

of their origin. This formula is a monist one, and this monist formula is thoroughly imbued with materialism. In his *Philosophy of Mind* Hegel said that the Spirit is history's only motive principle. It is impossible to think otherwise, if one accepts the viewpoint of the idealism which claims that being is determined by thinking. Marx's materialism shows in what way the history of thinking is determined by the history of being. Hegel's idealism, however, did not prevent him from recognizing economic factors as a cause "conditioned by the development of the spirit." In exactly the same way, materialism did not prevent Marx from recognizing the action, in history, of the "spirit" as a force whose direction is determined at any given time and in the final analysis by the course of economic development.

That all ideologies have one common root—the psychology of the epoch in question—is not hard to understand; anyone who makes even the slightest study of the facts will realize that. As an example we might make reference to French romanticism. Victor Hugo, Eugène Delacroix, and Hector Berlioz worked in three entirely different spheres of art. All three differed greatly from one another. Hugo, at least, did not like music, while Delacroix had little regard for romanticist musicians. Yet it is with good reason that these three outstanding men have been called *the trinity of romanticism*; their works are a reflection of one and the same psychology. It can be said that Delacroix's painting "Dante and Vergil" expresses the same temper as that which dictated his *Hernani* to Victor Hugo, and his *Symphonie fantastique* to Berlioz. This was sensed by their contemporaries, i.e., by those of them who in general were not indifferent to literature and art. A classicist in his tastes, Ingres called Berlioz "the abominable musician, monster, bandit, and antichrist."\* This is reminiscent of the flattering opinions voiced by the classicists regarding Delacroix, whose brush they compared to a drunken besom. Like Hugo, Berlioz was the object of fierce attacks.† It is common knowledge, too, that he achieved victory

\*See *Souvenirs d'un hugolâtre* by Augustin Challamel, Paris, 1885, 259. In this case Ingres revealed more consistency than Delacroix, who, while he was a romanticist in painting, retained a predilection for classical music.

†*Ibid.*, 258.

with incomparably more effort and far later than Hugo did. Why was this so, despite the fact that his music expressed the same psychology as did romanticist poetry and drama? To answer this question, it would be necessary to understand many details in the comparative history of French music and literature,\* details which may remain uninterpreted for long, if not always. What is beyond doubt, however, is that the psychology of French romanticism will be understood by us only if we come to regard it as the psychology of a definite class that lives in definite social and historical conditions.† “The movement of the thirties in literature and art,” Jean-Baptiste Tiersot says, “was far from having the character of a people’s revolution.”‡ That is perfectly true. The movement referred to was bourgeois in its essence. But that is not all. The movement did not enjoy universal sympathy among the bourgeoisie itself. In Tiersot’s opinion, it expressed the strivings of a small “élite” sufficiently farsighted to be able to discern genius wherever it lay in hiding.\*\* These words are a superficial, i.e., idealist expression of the fact that the French bourgeoisie of the time did not understand much about the aspirations and feelings of its own ideologists in the sphere of literature and art. Such dissonance between

\*And especially in the history of the part each of them played therein, in expressing the temper of the times. As we know, various ideologies and various branches of ideology come to the fore at various times. For instance, in the Middle Ages theology played far more important a part than at present; in primitive society dancing is the most important art, whilst it is far from that nowadays, and so on.

†E. Chesneau’s book *Les chefs d’école*, Paris, 1883, 378-79,<sup>54</sup> contains the following subtle observation regarding the romanticists’ psychology. The author points out that romanticism made its appearance after the Revolution and the Empire. “In literature and in art there was a crisis similar to that which occurred in morals after the Terror—a veritable orgy of the senses. People had been living in fear, and that fear had gone. They gave themselves up to the pleasures of life. Their attention was taken up exclusively with external appearances and forms. Blue skies, brilliant lights, the beauty of women, sumptuous velvet, iridescent silk, the sheen of gold, and the sparkle of diamonds filled them with delight. People lived only with the eyes . . . they had stopped thinking.” This has much in common with the psychology of the times we are living through in Russia. In both cases, however, the course of events leading up to this state of mind was itself the outcome of the course of economic development.

‡Hector Berlioz *et la société de son temps*, Paris, 1904, 190.

\*\**Ibid.*, 190.

ideologists and the class whose aspirations and tastes they express is by no means rare in history, and explains the many specific peculiarities in the intellectual and artistic development of mankind. In the case we are discussing, this dissonance was the cause, among other things, of the contemptuous attitude of the “refined” elite toward the “obtuse bourgeois”—an attitude which still misleads naive people, and wholly prevents them from realizing the arch-bourgeois character of romanticism.\* But here, as everywhere, the origin and the character of this dissonance can be ultimately explained only by the economic position, the economic role, of the social class in whose midst it has appeared. Here, as everywhere, only being sheds light on the “secrets” of thinking. And that is why here—again as everywhere—it is only materialism that is capable of giving a scientific explanation of the “course of ideas.”

#### XIV. CLASS STRUGGLE AND IDEAS

In their efforts to explain the course of ideas, the idealists have never proved able to view it from the standpoint of the “*course of things*.” Thus, Taine thinks that it is the characteristics of the artist’s environment that account for a work of art. But what characteristics is he referring to? To the *psychological*, that is to say, to the general psychology of the period in question, which itself requires explanation.† When it explains the psychology of a particular society or a particular class, materialism addresses itself to the social structure created by the economic development, and so on. But Taine, who was an idealist, attempted to explain the origin of a social system through the medium of social psychology, thereby getting himself entangled in irresolvable contradictions. Idealists in all lands show little liking for Taine nowadays. The reason is obvious: by environment he

\*Here we have the same *qui pro quo* as that which makes the adherents of the arch-bourgeois Nietzsche look truly ridiculous when they attack the bourgeoisie.

†“The work of art,” he writes, “is determined by the environment as a whole, which is the general state of the spirit and mores of the time.” [H. Taine, *Philosophie de l’art*, 5th edition, Paris, 1890, I, 116.]

understood the general psychology of the masses, the psychology of the "man in the street" at a particular time and in a particular class. To him this psychology was the court of last instance to which the researcher could appeal. Consequently, he thought that a "great" man always thinks and feels at the behest of the "man in the street," at dictation from "mediocrities." Now this is wrong in point of fact; and, besides, offends bourgeois "intellectuals," who are always prone, at least in some small measure, to count themselves in the category of great men. Taine was a man who, after saying "A", was unable to carry on and say "B", thus ruining his own case. The only escape from the contradictions in which he got entangled is through historical materialism, which finds the right place for both the "individual" and the "environment," for both "the man in the street" and "the man of destiny."

It is noteworthy that in France—where from the Middle Ages to 1871, the socio-political development and the struggle between social classes assumed a form most typical for Western Europe—it is easier than anywhere else to discover the causal nexus between that development and that struggle, on the one hand, and the history of ideologies on the other.

Seeking to explain why the ideas of the theocratic school of philosophy were so widespread during the Restoration in France, Robert Flint has had the following to say: "The success of such a theory would have been inexplicable, had not the way for it been prepared by the sensationalism<sup>55</sup> of Condillac, and had it not been so obviously fitted to serve the interests of a party which represented the opinions of large classes of French society before and after the Restoration."\* This is true, of course, and it is easy to realize which class it was whose interests found ideological expression in the theocratic school. Let us, however, delve further into French history and ask ourselves: is it not also possible to discover the social causes of the success achieved by sensationalism in pre-revolutionary France? Was not the intellectual movement that produced the theoreticians

\**The Philosophy of History in France and Germany*, Edinburgh and London, 1874, 149.

of sensationalism in its turn an expression of the aspirations of a particular social class? It is known that this was the case; this movement expressed the emancipatory aspirations of the French "middle class."\* Were we to proceed in the same direction we would see, for instance, that the philosophy of Descartes reflected clearly the requirements of the economic development and the alignment of social forces of his time.† Finally, if we went back as far as the 14th century and turned our attention to the romances of chivalry, which enjoyed such great popularity at the French court and among the French aristocracy of the period, we would have no difficulty in discovering that these romances mirrored the life and the tastes of the class in question.‡ In a word, the curve of the intellectual movement in this remarkable country, which but recently had every right to claim that it "marched at the head of nations," runs parallel to the curve of economic development, and that of the socio-political development conditioned by the latter. In view of this, the history of ideology in France is of particular interest to sociology.

Of this, those who have "criticized" Marx in various tones and keys have had not the least idea. Though criticism is of course a splendid thing, they have never understood that criticism requires a certain prerequisite i.e., an understanding of what is being criticized. Criticizing a given method of scientific investigation means determining to what extent it can help discover the causal links existing between phenomena. That can be

\*In his polemic against the Bauer brothers, Marx wrote: "The French Enlightenment of the 18th century, in particular *French materialism*, was not only a struggle against the existing political institutions and the existing religion and theology; it was just as much an *open*, clearly expressed struggle against *metaphysics of the 17th century*, and against all metaphysics, in particular that of *Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza and Leibniz*." [Marx, *The Holy Family*, 168.] This is now common knowledge.

†Sec G. Lanson, *Histoire de la littérature française*, Paris, 1896, 394-97, which gives a lucid explanation of the links between certain aspects of Descartes' philosophy and the psychology of the ruling class in France during the first half of the 17th century.

‡Sismondi (*Histoire des Français*, X, 59) has voiced an interesting opinion of the significance of these romances, an opinion that provides material for a sociological study of imitation.

ascertained only through experience, i.e., by application of that method. Criticizing historical materialism means making a test of the method of Marx and Engels in a study of the historical movement of mankind. Only then can the strong and the weak points of the method be ascertained. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," as Engels said when explaining his theory of cognition. This applies in full to historical materialism as well. To criticize this dish you must first have a taste of it. To taste the method of Marx and Engels, you must first be able to use it. To use it properly presupposes a far higher degree of scientific grounding and far more sustained intellectual effort than are revealed in pseudo-critical verbiage on the theme of the "one-sidedness" of Marxism.

"Critics" of Marx declare—some with regret, some in reproach, and some with malice—that to this day no book has appeared containing a theoretical substantiation of historical materialism. By a "book" they usually mean something on the order of a brief manual on world history written from the materialist viewpoint. At present, however, no such guide can be written either by an individual scholar, however extensive his knowledge, or by a whole group of scholars. A sufficiency of material for that does not yet exist, nor will it exist for a long time. Such material can be accumulated only by a long series of investigations carried out in the respective fields of science, with the aid of the Marxist method. In other words, those "critics" who demand a "book" would like to have matters started from the end, i.e., they want a preliminary explanation, from the materialist viewpoint, of that very historical process which is to be explained. In actual fact, a "book" in defense of historical materialism is being written to the extent which contemporary scholars—mostly, as I have said, without realizing that they are doing so—are forced by the present-day state of social science to furnish a materialist explanation of the phenomena they are studying. That such scholars are not so few in number is shown convincingly enough by the examples I have quoted above.

It has been said by Laplace that 50 years elapsed before Newton's great discovery was supplemented to any significant degree. Such a long period was required for this great truth to be

generally understood and for those obstacles to be overcome which were placed in its way by the vortex [Cartesian] theory and also perhaps by the wounded pride of mathematicians of Newton's time.\*

The obstacles met by present-day materialism as a harmonious and consistent theory are incomparably greater than those that Newton's theory confronted on its appearance. Against it are directly and decisively ranged the interests of the class now in power, to whose influence most scholars subordinate themselves of necessity. The materialist dialectic, "which regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement and . . . lets nothing impose upon it," cannot have the sympathy of the conservative class which is the Western bourgeoisie today. It stands in such contradiction to the frame of mind of this class that its ideologists naturally tend to look upon it as something impermissible, improper, and unworthy of the attention both of "respectable" people in general, and of "esteemed" men of learning in particular.† It is not surprising that each of these pundits considers himself morally obliged to avoid any suspicion of sympathy with materialism. Often enough such pundits denounce materialism the more emphatically, the more insistently they adhere to a materialist viewpoint in their special research.‡ The result is a kind of semi-subconscious "conventional lie," which, of course, can have only a most injurious effect on theoretical thinking.

\**Exposition du système du monde*, Paris. L'an IV, II, 291-92.

†Regarding this, see, *inter alia*, Engels' article "On Historical Materialism." [First published in *Die Neue Zeit*; see *Engels On Historical Materialism*, New York, 1940.]

‡The reader will remember how vehemently Lamprecht justified himself when he was accused of materialism, and also how Ratzel defended himself against the same accusation in his *Die Erde und das Leben*, II, 631. Nevertheless, he wrote the following: "The sum total of the cultural acquirements of each people at every stage of its development is made up of material and spiritual elements. . . . They are acquired, not with identical means, or with equal facility, or simultaneously. . . . Spiritual acquirements are based on the material. Spiritual activity appears as a luxury only after material needs have been satisfied. Therefore all questions of the origin of culture boil down to the question of what it is that promotes the development of the material foundations of culture" (*Völkerkunde*, I, 1. Auflage, 17). This is unmitigated historical materialism, only far less considered, and therefore not of such sterling quality as the materialism of Marx and Engels.

## XV. NECESSITY AND FREEDOM

The "conventional life" of a society divided into classes becomes ever more enhanced, the more the existing order of things is shaken by the impact of the economic development and the class struggle caused thereby. Marx very truly said that the greater the development of the contradiction between the growing productive forces and the existing social order, the more does the ideology of the master class become imbued with hypocrisy. The more the falseness of this ideology is revealed by life, the more elevated and virtuous does the language of that class become.\* The truth of this remark is being brought home with particular force today, when, for instance, the spread of loose morals in Germany, as revealed by the Harden-Moltke trial,<sup>57</sup> goes hand in hand with a "renaissance of idealism" in social science. In our country, even among "theorists of the proletariat," people are to be found who do not understand the social cause of this "renaissance," and have themselves succumbed to its influence, such as the Bogdanovs, the Bazarovs, and the like.

Incidentally, so immense are the advantages provided to the researcher by the Marxist method that even those who have submitted willingly to the "conventional lies" of our time are beginning to recognize them publicly. Among such people, for instance, is the American, Edwin Seligman, author of a book published in 1902 under the title, *The Economic Interpretation of History*. Seligman frankly admits that scholars have shied away from the theory of historical materialism because of the socialist conclusions drawn from it by Marx. However, he thinks that you can eat your cake and have it too: "one can be an economic materialist" and yet remain hostile to socialism. As he puts it, "The fact that Marx's economics may be defective has no bearing on the truth or falsity of his philosophy of history."† In actual fact, Marx's economic views were intimately bound up with his political views. A proper understanding of *Capital* ab-

\*Sankt Marx, *Dokumente des Sozialismus*, August 1904, 370-71.<sup>58</sup>

†*The Economic Interpretation of History*, 24 and 109.

solutely implies the *necessity* of previous and careful thought on the celebrated preface to *Critique of Political Economy*. However, we are unable here either to set forth Marx's economic views or to demonstrate the incontrovertible fact that they form merely an indispensable component of the doctrine known as historical materialism.\* I shall add only that Seligman is sufficiently a "pundit" to be scared of materialism as well. This economic "materialist" thinks it is going to intolerable extremes "to make religion depend on economic forces" or to "seek the explanation of Christianity itself in economic facts alone."‡ All this goes to show clearly how deep are the roots of those prejudices—and consequently of the obstacles—that Marxist theory has to fight against. Yet the very fact of the appearance of Seligman's book, and even the very nature of the reservations he makes, give some reason to hope that historical materialism—even in a truncated or "purified" form—will in the end achieve recognition by those ideologists of the bourgeoisie who have not given up the idea of bringing order into their historical views.‡

But the struggle against socialism, materialism and other unpleasant extremes presupposes possession of a "spiritual wea-

\*A few incidental words in explanation of what has been said. According to Marx, "economic categories are only the theoretical expressions, the abstractions of the social relations of production" (*The Poverty of Philosophy*, Chapter II, Second Observation [New York, 109.]). This means that Marx regards the categories of political economy likewise from the viewpoint of the mutual relations among men in the social process of production, relations whose development provides him with the basic explanation of mankind's historical movement.

‡*The Economic Interpretation of History*, 137. Kautsky's *Foundations of Christianity* [New York, 1925], as an "extremist" book, is of course reprehensible from Seligman's point of view.

‡The following parallel is highly instructive. Marx says that materialist dialectics, while explaining that which exists, at the same time explains its inevitable destruction. In this he saw its value, its progressive significance. But here is what Seligman says: "Socialism is a theory of what ought to be; historical materialism is a theory of what has been" (*ibid.*, 108). For that reason alone he considers it possible for himself to defend historical materialism. This means, in other words, that this materialism may be ignored when it comes to explaining the inevitable destruction of that which is and may be used to explain that which has been in the past. This is one of the numerous instances of the use of a double standard in the field of ideology, a phenomenon also engendered by economic causes.

pon.” What is known as subjective political economy and more or less adroitly falsified statistics at present constitute the spiritual weapon mainly used in the struggle against socialism. All possible brands of Kantianism form the principal bulwark in the struggle against materialism. In the field of social science Kantianism is utilized for this purpose, as a dualist doctrine, which tears asunder the tie between being and thinking. Since consideration of economic questions does not come within the province of this book, I shall confine myself to an appraisal of the philosophical spiritual weapon employed by bourgeois reaction in the ideological sphere.

Concluding his booklet, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Engels remarks that when the mighty means of production created by the capitalist epoch have become the property of society, and when production is organized in conformity with social needs, men will at last become masters of their social relations, and hence lords over Nature and their own masters. Only then will they begin consciously to make their own history: only then will the social causes they bring into play produce, in ever greater measure, effects that are desirable to them. “This will be mankind’s leap from the kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom.”<sup>58</sup>

These words of Engels’ have evoked objections from those who, unable in general to stomach the idea of “leaps,” have been either unable or unwilling to understand any such “leap” from the kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom. Such a “leap” seemed to them to contradict that view of freedom which Engels himself voiced in the first part of his *Anti-Dühring*. Therefore, if we would see our way through the confusion in the minds of such people, we must recall exactly what Engels said in the book mentioned above.

And here is what he said. Explaining Hegel’s words that “Necessity is blind only insofar as it is not understood,” Engels stated that freedom consists in exercising “control over ourselves and over external nature, a control founded on knowledge of natural necessity.”\* This idea is set forth by Engels with

\*Herr Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft [Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 125].

a clarity quite sufficient for people familiar with the Hegelian doctrine referred to. The trouble is that present-day Kantians only “criticize” Hegel, but do not study him. Since they have no knowledge of Hegel, they have been unable to understand Engels. To the author of *Anti-Dühring* they have made the objection that where there is submission to necessity there is no freedom. This is quite consistent on the part of people whose philosophical views are imbued with a dualism that is incapable of uniting thinking with being. From the viewpoint of this dualism, the “leap” from necessity to freedom remains absolutely incomprehensible. But Marx’s philosophy, like that of Feuerbach, proclaims the unity of being and thinking. Although, as we have already seen above in the section on Feuerbach, Marxist philosophy understands that unity quite differently from the sense in which it is understood by absolute idealism, Marxist philosophy does not at all disagree with Hegelian doctrine in the question we are concerned with, viz., the relation of freedom to necessity.

The gist of the whole matter is: What precisely should be understood by *necessity*? Aristotle\* already pointed out that the concept of necessity contains many shades of meaning: medicine is necessary for a cure to be effected; breathing is necessary for life; a trip to Aegina is necessary for a debt to be collected. All these are, so to say, *conditional* necessities—we *must* breathe *if* we want to live; we *must* take medicine *if* we want to get rid of an illness, and so on. In the process of acting on the world about him, man constantly has to contend with necessity of this kind—he *must of necessity* sow *if* he would reap, shoot an arrow *if* he would kill game, stock fuel *if* he would get a steam-engine operating, and so on. From the viewpoint of the neo-Kantian “criticism of Marx,” it has to be admitted that there is an element of submission in this conditional necessity. Man would be freer if he were able to satisfy his wants without expending any labor at all. He always submits to Nature, even when he forces her to serve him. This submission, however, is

\**Metaphysics*, V, Chapter 5.

a condition of his becoming free; by submitting to Nature, he thereby increases his power over her, i.e., his freedom. It would be the same under planned organization of social production. By submitting to certain demands of technical and economic necessity, men would put an end to that preposterous order of things under which they are dominated by the products of their own activities, that is to say, they would increase their freedom to a tremendous degree. Here, too, their submission would become a source of freedom to them.

Nor is that all. "Critics" of Marx, who have become used to considering that a gulf separates thinking and being, know of only one shade of necessity; to use Aristotle's wording, they imagine necessity only as a force that prevents us from acting according to our desires, and compels us to do that which is contrary to them. Necessity of this kind is indeed the opposite of freedom, and cannot but be irksome in greater or lesser degree. But we must not forget that a force seen by man as external coercion which is in conflict with his wishes may, in other circumstances, be seen by him in an entirely different light. As an illustration, let us take the agrarian question in Russia today. To the intelligent landlord who is a Constitutional-Democrat, the "forcible alienation of the land"<sup>59</sup> may seem more or less a sad historical necessity—sad, that is to say, in reverse proportion to the size of the "fair compensation" given. But to the peasant who yearns for land, the reverse is true; the "fair compensation" will present itself as a more or less sad necessity, while "forcible alienation" is bound to be seen as an expression of his own unfettered will, and the most precious security of his freedom.

In saying this, I am touching perhaps upon the most important point in the doctrine of freedom—a point not mentioned by Engels only, of course, for its being self-evident to one who has gone through the Hegelian school.

In his philosophy of religion Hegel says, "*Die Freiheit ist dies: nichts zu wollen als sich,*"\* i.e., "Freedom lies in willing nothing

\*Hegel's *Werke*, 12, 98.

but oneself."\* This observation sheds strong light on the entire question of freedom, insofar as that question bears upon social psychology. The peasant who demands that the landlord's land should be transferred to him wants "nothing but himself"; the Constitutional-Democratic landlord who agrees to give him land no longer wants "himself" but that which history compels him to want. The former is free, while the latter wisely submits to necessity.

As with the peasant, it would be the same for the proletariat which converts the means of production into social property and organizes social production on a new foundation. It would wish nothing "but itself," and would feel quite free. As for the capitalists, they would, of course, at best feel that they were in the position of the landlord who has accepted the Constitutional-Democratic agrarian program; they could not but think that freedom is one thing, and historical necessity another.

As it seems to me, those "critics" who have objected to Engels' stand have failed to understand him, because while they are able to imagine themselves in the position of the capitalist, they are totally unable to imagine themselves in the proletariat's shoes. I hold the opinion that this, too, has its social—and ultimately economic—cause.

## XVI. NECESSITY AND REVOLUTION

Dualism, to which ideologists of the bourgeoisie are now so prone, has another charge to make against historical materialism. Through Stammler it imputes that historical materialism fails to take social teleology into account. This second imputation, which incidentally is highly akin to the first, is equally groundless.

\*Spinoza already said (*Ethics*, Part III, Proposition 2, *Scholium*) that many people think they act freely because they know their actions but not the causes of those actions. "Thus the babe believes that it seeks the breast of its own free will; the angry urchin—that he seeks vengeance of his own free will, and the coward—that he seeks flight of his own free will." The same idea was expressed by Diderot, whose materialist doctrine was, on the whole, Spinozism liberated from its theological setting.

Marx says, "In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations."<sup>60</sup> Stammler makes reference to this formula as proof that, despite his theory, Marx was unable to avoid teleological considerations; Marx's words, in Stammler's opinion, mean that men *consciously* enter into the mutual relations without which production is impossible. Consequently these relations are the outcome of expedient action.\*

It is easy to see in what part of this argument Stammler makes a logical error that leaves its impress on all his further critical remarks.

Let us take an example. Savages who live by hunting are pursuing a quarry, an elephant, let us say. For this they gather together and organize their forces in a definite way. What is the aim of this, and the means? The aim obviously is to catch or to kill the elephant, and the means to join forces to pursue the animal. By what is the aim prompted? By the wants of the human organism. Now by what are the means determined? By the conditions of the chase. Do the wants of the human body depend on man's will? No, they do not; in general, that is the department of physiology, not of sociology. Now what then can we demand of sociology in this connection? We can demand an explanation of the reason *why* men, in seeking to satisfy their wants—for instance, the need for food—sometimes enter into certain kinds of mutual relations, and sometimes into quite other kinds. Sociology—in the person of Marx—explains this circumstance as the outcome of the state of their productive forces. Now the question is: Does the state of these forces depend on human will and the aims pursued by men? To this, sociology, again in the person of Marx, replies that it does not. If there is no such dependence this means that these forces are brought into being by virtue of a definite necessity, one that is determined by given conditions external to man.

What is the inference to be made? It is that if hunting is an expedient activity on the part of the savage, then this fact in no way detracts from the significance of Marx's observation that the production relations arising among savages who are

\**Wirtschaft und Recht*, zweite Auflage, 421.

hunters come into being by virtue of conditions that do not fully depend on that expedient activity. In other words, if the primitive hunter consciously strives to kill as much game as possible, it does not follow therefrom that the communism characteristic of that hunter's everyday life has evolved as the expedient outcome of his activities. No, this communism has arisen, or rather has been preserved of itself (seeing that it came into being long ago) as the *unconscious*, i.e., *necessary*, result of an organization of labor, in character quite independent of the will of men.\* It is this that the Kantian Stammler has failed to grasp; it is here that he has lost his bearings, and led astray our Struves, Bulgakovs and other temporary Marxists, whose names are known to the Lord alone.†

Continuing his critical observations, Stammler says that if social development were to take place exclusively in virtue of causal necessity, it would be patently senseless to try to further it consciously. The following is the alternative, in his opinion: either I consider a given phenomenon a necessity, i.e., inevitable, in which case there is no need for me to help achieve it, *or* else my activity is essential for that phenomenon to take place, in which case it cannot be termed a necessity. Who would attempt to assist the necessary, i.e., inevitable, rising of the sun?‡

This is an amazingly vivid revelation of dualism characteristic of people steeped in Kantianism: with them, thinking is always divorced from being.

The rising of the sun is in no way connected with men's social relations, either as cause or as effect. As a natural phenomenon, it therefore can be contraposed to men's conscious aspiration, which, too, have no causal tie with it. But it is quite different when we have to deal with social phenomena, with history. We already know that history is made by men; therefore, human

\*"Necessity, in its contraposition to liberty, is nothing else but the unconscious." Schelling, *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, 1800, 424.

†This aspect of the matter is discussed in fairly great detail in various parts of my book on *historical monism*.<sup>61</sup>

‡*Wirtschaft und Recht*, 421 *et seq.* See also Stammler's article entitled "Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung" in *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, 2. Auflage, V. 735-37.



aspirations cannot but be a factor of the movement of history. But men make history in one way and not in another, in consequence of a particular necessity which we have already dealt with above. Once this necessity is given, then given too, as its effect, are those human aspirations which are an inevitable factor of social development. Men's aspirations do not exclude necessity, but are themselves determined by it. It is therefore a grave logical error to contrapose them to necessity.

When a social revolution is brought about by a class striving for its liberation, that class acts in a way that is more or less expedient in achieving the aim desired; in any case its activities are the cause of that revolution. However, together with all the aspirations that have brought them about, these activities are themselves a consequence of a definite course of economic development, and therefore are themselves determined by necessity.

Sociology becomes a science only in the measure in which it succeeds in understanding the appearance of aims in social man (social "teleology"), as a necessary consequence of a social process ultimately determined by the course of economic development.

Highly characteristic is the circumstance that consistent antagonists of the materialist explanation of history see themselves forced to prove the impossibility of sociology as a science.<sup>62</sup> This means that the "critical approach" is now becoming an obstacle to further scientific development in our times. In this connection, an interesting problem arises for those who are trying to find a scientific explanation of the history of philosophical theories. That is the problem of determining in what way the "critical approach" is linked up with the struggle of the classes in present-day society.

If I endeavor to participate in a movement whose triumph I consider a historical necessity, it means that I look upon my own activity as an indispensable link in the chain of conditions whose sum necessarily will ensure the triumph of a movement that I hold dear. It means nothing more nor less than that. A dualist will fail to understand, but all this will be perfectly clear to

anybody who has assimilated the theory of the unity of subject and object, and has understood how that unity reveals itself in social phenomena.

Highly noteworthy is the fact that theoreticians of Protestantism in the United States of America seem unable to understand the contraposition of freedom and necessity that has been exercising the minds of so many ideologists of the European bourgeoisie. H. Bargy says that "in America the most positive instructors in the field of energy (*professeurs d'énergie*) are little prone to recognize freedom of the will."<sup>\*</sup> He ascribes this to their preference, as men of action, for "fatalist solutions." He is wrong, however, since fatalism has nothing to do with the matter. This is to be seen in his own remarks about the moralist, Jonathan Edwards: "Edwards' point of view . . . is that of any man of action. To anyone who has had an aim once in his lifetime freedom is the faculty of putting all his soul in the service of that aim."<sup>†</sup> This is well put, and closely resembles Hegel's "willing nothing but oneself." But when a man "wills nothing but himself" he is in no way a fatalist; it is precisely then that he is a man of action.

Kantianism is not a philosophy of struggle, or a philosophy of men of action. It is a philosophy of half-hearted people, a philosophy of compromise.

The means of removing the existing social evil, Engels says, must be discovered in the existing material conditions of production, not invented by one social reformer or another.<sup>63</sup> Stammler is in agreement with this, but accuses Engels of unclear thinking, since in Stammler's opinion the gist of the matter lies in ascertaining "the method with the aid of which this discovery must be made."<sup>‡</sup> This objection, which only reveals vague thinking on the part of Stammler, is eliminated by simply mentioning the fact that though the nature of the "method" is in such cases determined by a great variety of "factors," the latter ultimately can all be related to the course of the economic development.

<sup>\*</sup>H. Bargy, *La religion dans la société aux États-Unis*, Paris, 1902, 88-89.

<sup>†</sup>*Ibid.*, 97-98.

<sup>‡</sup>*Handwörterbuch*, V, 736.

The very fact of the appearance of Marx's theory was determined by the development of the capitalist mode of production, whereas the predominance of utopianism in pre-Marxist socialism is quite understandable in a society suffering not only from the development of the aforementioned mode of production, but also (and in greater degree) from the insufficiency of that development.

It would be superfluous to dilate on the matter. Perhaps the reader will not complain if, in concluding this article, I draw his attention to the way in which the tactical "method" of Marx and Engels is intimately bound up with the fundamental theses of their historical theory.

This theory tells us, as we already know, that mankind always sets itself only such tasks that it can solve, "for the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation." Where these conditions already exist, the state of things is not quite the same as it is where they are still "in the process of formation." In the former instance the time for a "leap" has already arrived; in the latter instance the "leap" is, for the time being, a matter of the more or less distant future, "an ultimate aim" whose approach is prepared by a series of "gradual changes" in the mutual relations between social classes. What role should be played by innovators during the period in which a "leap" is still impossible? It evidently remains for them to contribute to the "gradual changes," i.e., they must, in other words, try to bring about reforms. In this way both the "ultimate aim" and reforms find their place, and the very contraposition of reform and "ultimate aim" loses all meaning, is relegated to the sphere of utopian legends. Those who would make such a contraposition—whether they are German "revisionists" like Eduard Bernstein, or Italian "revolutionary syndicalists" like those who took part in the latest syndicalist congress in Ferrara—will show themselves equally incapable of understanding either the spirit or the method of modern scientific socialism. This is a good thing to remember at present, when reformism and syndicalism profess to speak for Marx.

And what healthy optimism breathes in the words that mankind always sets itself only such tasks that it can solve! They do not of course mean that any solution of mankind's great problems, as suggested by the first utopian one meets, is a good one. A utopian is one thing; mankind, or, more precisely, a social class representative of mankind's highest interests in a given period, is something else. As Marx has very well said, "With the thoroughness of the historical action, the size of the mass whose action it is will therefore increase."<sup>64</sup> This is conclusive condemnation of a utopian attitude toward great historical problems. If nevertheless Marx thought that mankind never sets itself unachievable tasks, then his words are, from the viewpoint of theory, only a new way of expressing the idea of the unity of subject and object in its application to the process of historical development. From the viewpoint of practice they express that calm and courageous faith in the achievement of the "ultimate aim" which once prompted our unforgettable N. G. Chernyshevsky to exclaim fervently, "Come what may, we shall win."<sup>65</sup>

**APPENDIX**

## THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY<sup>1</sup>

### I

We must confess that it was with no little prejudice that we took up the book of this Roman professor. We had been rather frightened by certain works of some of his compatriots—A. Loria, for example (see, in particular, *La teoria economica della costituzione politica*). But a perusal of the very first pages was enough to convince us that we had been mistaken, and that Achille Loria is one thing and Antonio Labriola another. And when we reached the end of the book we felt that we would like to discuss it with the Russian reader. We hope that he will not be annoyed with us. For after all, “So rare are books that are not banal!”

Labriola's book first appeared in Italian. The French translation is clumsy, and in places positively infelicitous. We say this without hesitation, although we have not the Italian original before us. But the Italian author cannot be held responsible for the French translator. At any rate, Labriola's ideas are clear even in the clumsy French translation. Let us examine them.

Mr. Kareyev, who, as we know, very zealously reads and most successfully manages to distort every “work” having any relation at all to the *materialist conception* of history, would probably inscribe our author in the list of “*economic materialists*.”\* But that would be wrong. Labriola firmly, and fairly consistently, adheres to the materialist conception of history, but he does not regard himself as an “economic materialist.” He is of the opinion that this title applies more fittingly to writers like Thorold Rogers than to himself and those who think like him. And that is perfectly true, although at a first glance it may not seem quite clear.

\*The contemporary English-speaking reader is more familiar with this concept under the term “economic determinist,” just as “economic determinism” is widely used for Plekhanov's “economic materialism.”—*Ed.*

Ask any Narodnik<sup>2</sup> or subjectivist what is an economic materialist, and he will answer that an economic materialist is one who attributes predominant importance to the economic factor in social life. That is how our Narodniks and subjectivists understand economic materialism. And it must be confessed that undoubtedly there are people who attribute to the economic "factor" a predominant role in the life of human society. Mr. Mikhailovsky more than once has cited Louis Blanc as one who had spoken of the predominance of this factor long before a certain master of certain Russian disciples. But one thing we do not understand: Why did our venerable subjective sociologist pick on Louis Blanc? He should have known that in this respect Louis Blanc had many predecessors. Guizot, Minier, Augustin Thierry and Toqueville all recognized the predominant role of the economic "factor," at least in the history of the Middle Ages and of modern times. Consequently, all these historians were economic materialists. In our days, the said Thorold Rogers, in his *Economic Interpretation of History*, also revealed himself as a convinced economic materialist; he too recognized the predominant importance of the economic "factor."

It is not to be concluded from this, of course, that Thorold Rogers' social and political views were identical with those, say, of Louis Blanc: Rogers held the view of the bourgeois economists, whereas Louis Blanc was at one time an exponent of Utopian Socialism. If Rogers had been asked what he thought of the bourgeois economic system, he would have said that at the basis of this system lie the fundamental attributes of human nature, and that, consequently, the history of its rise is the history of the gradual removal of obstacles that at one time hindered, and even totally precluded, the manifestation of these attributes. Louis Blanc, on the other hand, would have declared that capitalism itself was one of the obstacles raised by ignorance and violence to the creation of an economic system which would at last really correspond to human nature. This, as you see, is a very material difference.

Who would be nearer to the truth? To be frank, we think that both these writers were almost equally remote from it, but we have neither the wish nor the opportunity to dwell on

this point here. What is important to us now is something else. We would request the reader to observe that in the opinion of both Louis Blanc and Thorold Rogers the economic factor, which predominates in social life, was itself, as the mathematicians put it, a *function* of human nature, and chiefly of the human mind and human knowledge. The same must be said of the above-mentioned French historians of the Restoration period. Well, and what name shall we give to the views on history of people who, although they assert that the economic factor predominates in social life, yet are convinced that this factor—the economics of society—is in its turn the fruit of human knowledge and ideas? Such views can only be called *idealistic*.

We thus find that economic materialism does not necessarily preclude historical idealism. And even that is not quite accurate; we say that it does not necessarily preclude idealism—but what we should say is that perhaps it is nothing but a variety of idealism as it has been mostly hitherto. After this, it will be clear why men like Antonio Labriola do not regard themselves as economic materialists: it is because they are consistent materialists and because, as regards history, their views are the direct opposite of historical idealism.

## II

"However," Mr. Kudrin will probably tell us, "you, with the habit common to many of the 'disciples,' are resorting to paradoxes, are juggling with words, deceiving the eye and sword-swallowing. As you put it, it is the idealists who are economic materialists. But in that case, what would you have us understand by genuine and consistent materialists? Do they reject the idea of the predominance of the economic factor? Do they believe that side by side with this factor there are other factors operating in history, and that it would be vain for us to investigate which of them predominates over all the others? We can only rejoice at the genuine and consistent materialists if they really are averse to dragging in the economic factor everywhere."

Our reply to Mr. Kudrin is that, indeed, the genuine and consistent materialists really are averse to dragging in the

economic factor everywhere. What is more, even to ask which factor predominates in social life seems to them pointless. But Mr. Kudrin need not hurry to rejoice. It was by no means under the influence of Messrs. the Narodniks and subjectivists that the genuine and consistent materialists arrived at this conviction. The objections these gentlemen raise to the domination of the economic factor are only calculated to evoke hilarity among the genuine and consistent materialists. What is more, these objections of our friends, the Narodniks and subjectivists, are rather belated. The inappropriateness of asking which factor predominates in social life became very noticeable even in the time of Hegel. Hegelian idealism precluded the very possibility of such questions. All the more is it precluded by modern dialectical materialism. Since the appearance of the *Critique of Critical Criticism*,<sup>3</sup> and especially since the publication of Marx's well known *Critique of Political Economy*,<sup>4</sup> only people backward in theory are capable of wrangling about the relative importance of the various historico-social factors. We are quite aware that Mr. Kudrin is not the only one who will be surprised at this, and so we hasten to explain.

What are the historico-social factors? How does the idea of them originate?

Let us take an example. The Gracchi tried to check the process of appropriation of the public domain by the wealthy Romans which was so fatal to Rome. The wealthy Romans resisted the Gracchi. A struggle ensued. Each of the contending sides passionately pursued its own aims. If I were to describe this struggle, I might depict it as a conflict of human passions. Passions would thus appear as "factors" in the internal history of Rome. But in this struggle both the Gracchi and their adversaries took advantage of the weapons furnished them by Roman public law. I would not fail, of course, to speak of this in my narrative, and thus Roman public law would also appear as a factor in the internal development of the Roman republic.

Further, the people who opposed the Gracchi had a material interest in preserving a deep-rooted abuse. The people who sup-

ported the Gracchi had a material interest in abolishing it. I would mention this circumstance, too, and as a result the struggle I am describing would appear as a conflict of material interests, as a conflict of classes, a conflict of the poor and the rich. And so already I have a third factor, and this time the most interesting of all: the famous economic factor. If you have the time and inclination, dear reader, you may discuss at length which of the factors in the internal development of Rome predominated over the rest; you will find in my historical narrative sufficient data to support any opinion on this subject.

As for myself, as long as I stick to the role of simple narrator, I shall not worry much about the factors. Their relative importance does not interest me. As a narrator my one task is to depict the given events in as accurate and lively a manner as possible. For this purpose I have to establish a certain, even if only outward, connection between them, and to arrange them in a certain perspective. If I mention the passions that stirred the contending parties, or the system prevailing in Rome at the time, or, lastly, the inequality of property that existed there, I do so with the sole purpose of presenting a connected and lively account of the events. If I achieve this purpose, I shall be quite satisfied, and, unconcerned, I shall leave it to the philosophers to decide whether passions predominate over economics, or economics over passions, or, lastly, maybe, that nothing predominates over anything, each "factor" following the golden rule: Live and let live!

All this will remain as long as I stick to the role of simple narrator to whom all inclination to "subtle speculation" is foreign. But what if I do not stick to this role, and start philosophizing about the events I am describing? Then I shall not be satisfied with a mere outward connection of events; I shall want to disclose their inherent causes; and those same factors—human passions, public law and economics—which I formerly stressed and gave prominence to, guided almost exclusively by artistic instinct, will now acquire a new and vast importance in my eyes. They will appear to me as those sought-for inherent causes, those "latent forces," to the influence of which events are to be attributed. I shall create a theory of factors.

And, indeed, one or another variety of such a theory is bound to arise whenever people who are interested in social phenomena pass from simply contemplating and describing them to investigating the connections that exist between them.

The theory of factors, moreover, grows with the growing division of labor in social science. All the branches of this science—ethics, politics, jurisprudence, political economy, etc.—investigate one and the same thing, the activity of social man. But each investigates it from its own special angle. Mr. Mikhailovsky would say that each of them “controls” a special “chord.” Each of the “chords” may be regarded as a factor of social development. And, in fact, we may now count almost as many factors as there are distinct “disciplines” in social science.

We hope that what is meant by the historico-social factors and how the idea of them originates will now be clear.

A historico-social factor is an *abstraction*, and the idea of it originates as the result of a process of *abstraction*. Thanks to the process of abstraction, various *sides* of the social *complex* assume the form of separate *categories*, and the various manifestations and expressions of the activity of social man—morals, law, economic forms, etc.—are converted in our minds into separate forces which appear to give rise to and determine this activity and to be its ultimate causes.

Once the theory of factors had come into being, disputes were bound to arise as to which factor was to be considered the predominant one.

### III

The “factors” are subject to reciprocal action; each influences the rest and in its turn is influenced by the rest. The result is such an intricate web of reciprocal influences, of direct actions and reflected reactions, that whoever sets out to elucidate the course of social development begins to feel his head swim and experiences an unconquerable necessity to find at least some sort of clue out of the labyrinth. Since bitter experience has taught him that the view of reciprocal action only leads to dizziness, he begins to seek for another view; he tries

to simplify his task. He asks himself whether one of the historico-social factors is not the prime and basic cause of all the rest. If he succeeds in finding an affirmative answer to this basic question, his task would indeed be simplified immeasurably. Let us suppose that he reaches the conviction that the rise and development of all the social relations of any particular country are determined by the course of its intellectual development, which, in its turn, is determined by the attributes of human nature (the idealist view). He will then escape easily from the vicious circle of reciprocal action and create a more or less harmonious and consistent theory of social development. Subsequently, as a result of a further study of the subject, he may perhaps perceive that he was mistaken, and that man’s intellectual development cannot be regarded as the prime cause of all social movement. Admitting his mistake, probably at the same time he will observe that his temporary conviction that the intellectual factor dominates over all the rest was after all of some use to him, for without it he could never have escaped from the blind alley of reciprocal action and would not have advanced a single step toward an understanding of social phenomena.

It would be unfair to condemn such attempts to establish some hierarchy among the factors of historico-social development. They were just as indispensable in their time as the appearance of the theory of factors itself was inevitable. Antonio Labriola, who has given a fuller and better analysis of this theory than any other materialist writer, quite rightly remarks that “the historic factors indicate something which is much less than the truth, but much more than a simple error.”<sup>5</sup> The theory of factors has contributed its mite to the benefit of science. “The separate study of the historico-social factors has served, like any other empirical study which does not transcend the apparent movement of things, to improve the instrument of observation and to permit us to find again in the facts themselves, which have been artificially abstracted, the keystones which bind them into the social *complexus*.”<sup>6</sup> Today a knowledge of the special social sciences is indispensable to anyone who would reconstruct any portion of man’s past life. Historical science would not have gotten very far without

philology. And the one-sided Romanists, who believed that Roman law was dictated by Reason itself—was it a mean service they rendered to science?

But however legitimate and useful the theory of factors may have been in its time, today it will not stand the light of criticism. It dismembers the activity of social man and converts his various aspects and manifestations into separate forces, which are supposed to determine the historical movement of society. In the development of social science this theory has played a part similar to that played by the theory of separate physical forces in natural science. The progress of natural science has led to the theory of the *unity* of these forces, to the modern theory of energy. In just the same way, the progress of social science was bound to lead to the replacement of the theory of factors, that fruit of social analysis, by a *synthetic view of social life*.

This synthetic view of social life is not peculiar to modern dialectical materialism. We find it already in Hegel, who conceived the task to be to find a scientific explanation of the entire historico-social process in its totality, that is, among other things, including all those aspects and manifestations of the activity of social man which people with an abstract cast of thought pictured as separate factors. But as an "absolute idealist," Hegel explained the activities of social man by the attributes of the Universal Spirit. Given these attributes, the whole history of mankind is given *an sich* [in itself], and its ultimate results as well. Hegel's synthetic view was at the same time a *teleological* view. Modern dialectical materialism has completely eliminated teleology from social science.

It has shown that man makes his history not in order to march along a line of predetermined progress, and not because he must obey the laws of some abstract (metaphysical, Labriola calls it) evolution. He does so in the endeavor to satisfy his own needs, and it is for science to explain how the various methods of satisfying these needs influence man's social relations and spiritual activity.

The methods by which social man satisfies his needs, and to a large extent these needs themselves, are determined by

the nature of the implements with which he subjugates nature in one degree or another; in other words, they are determined by the state of his productive forces. Every considerable change in the state of these forces is reflected in man's social relations, and, therefore, in his economic relations, as part of these social relations. The idealists of all species and varieties held that economic relations were functions of *human nature*; the dialectical materialists hold that these relations are functions of the *social productive forces*.

It therefore follows that if the dialectical materialists thought it permissible to speak of factors of social development with any other purpose than to criticize these antiquated fictions, they would first of all have to rebuke the so-called *economic* materialists for the *inconstancy* of their "predominant" factor; the modern materialists do not know of any economic system in conformity with human nature, all social economic systems being the result of one or another degree of violence to human nature. The modern materialists teach that *any* economic system in conformity with the state of the productive forces at the given time is in conformity with human nature. And, conversely, any economic system begins to contradict the demands of human nature as soon as it comes into contradiction with the state of the productive forces. The "predominant" factor is thus found to be itself *subordinate* to another "factor." And that being the case, how can it be called "predominant"?

If that is so, then it is evident that a veritable gulf divides the dialectical materialists from those who, not without justification, may be called economic materialists. And to what trend do those altogether unpleasant disciples of a not altogether pleasant teacher belong whom Messrs. Kareyev, Mikhailovsky, Krivenko and other clever and learned people quite recently attacked so vehemently, if not so happily? If we are not mistaken, the "disciples" fully adhered to the view of dialectical materialism. Why then did Messrs. Kareyev, Mikhailovsky, Krivenko and the other clever and learned people foist on them the views of the economic materialists and fulminate against them for supposedly attaching exaggerated importance to the economic factor? It may be presumed that these



clever and learned people did so because the arguments of the late lamented economic materialist are easier to refute than the arguments of the dialectical materialists. Again, it may be presumed that our learned opponents of the "disciples" have grasped the latter's views but poorly. This presumption is even the more probable one.

It may be objected that the "disciples" themselves sometimes called themselves economic materialists, and that the term "economic materialism" first was used by one of the French "disciples." That is so. But neither the French nor the Russian "disciples" ever associated with the term "economic materialism" the idea which our Narodniks and the subjectivists associate with it. We have only to recall that in the opinion of Mr. N. Mikhailovsky, both Louis Blanc and Mr. Y. Zhukovsky were "economic materialists," like our present-day supporters of the materialist view of history. Confusion of concepts could go no further.

#### IV

By entirely eliminating teleology from social science and explaining the activity of social man by his needs and by the means and methods of satisfying them, prevailing at the given time, dialectical materialism\* for the first time imparts to this science the "strictness" of which her sister—the science of nature—would often boast over her. It may be said that the science of society itself is becoming a *natural* science: "our natural doctrine of history," as Labriola justly says. But this does not mean that he merges the sphere of biology with the sphere of social science. Labriola is an ardent opponent of "*Darwinism, political and social*," which "has, like an epidemic, for many years invaded the mind of more than one thinker, and many more of the advocates and declaimers of sociology,"<sup>7</sup> and as a fashionable habit has even influenced the language of practical men of politics.

\*Labriola calls it *historical* materialism—a term borrowed from Engels.

Without doubt man is an animal connected by ties of affinity to other animals. He has no privileges of origin; his organism is nothing more than a particular case of general physiology. Originally, like all other animals, he was completely under the sway of his natural environment, which was not yet subject to his modifying action; he had to adapt himself to it in his struggle for existence. In Labriola's opinion races are a result of such—*direct*—adaptation to natural environment, in so far as they differ in physical features—as, for example, the white, black and yellow races—and do not represent secondary historico-social formations, that is to say, nations and peoples. The primitive instincts of sociability and the first rudiments of sexual selection similarly arose as a consequence of adaptation to natural environment in the struggle for existence.

But our ideas of "primitive man" are merely conjectures. All men who inhabit the earth today, like all who in the past were observed by trustworthy investigators, are found, and were found, already quite a long way removed from the moment when man ceased to live a purely animal life. The Iroquois Indians, for example, with their *maternal gens*—studied and described by [Lewis Henry] Morgan—had already made a comparatively big advance along the road of *social* development. Even the present-day Australians not only have a language—which may be called a condition and instrument, a cause and effect of social life—are not only acquainted with the use of fire, but live in societies possessing a definite structure, with definite customs and institutions. The Australian tribes have their own territory and their art of hunting; they have certain weapons of defense and attack, certain utensils for the preservation of supplies, certain methods of ornamenting the body; in a word, the Australian already lives in a definite, although to be sure, very elementary, *artificial* environment, to which accordingly he adapts himself from earliest childhood. This artificial—social—environment is an essential condition for all further progress. The degree of its development serves as a measure of the degree of savagery or barbarism of all other tribes.

This primary social formation corresponds to what is called the *pre-history* of man. The beginning of historical life presumes an even greater development of the artificial environment and a far greater power of man over nature. The complex internal relations of societies entering on the path of historical development are by no means due to the immediate influence of natural environment. They presuppose the invention of certain implements of labor, the domestication of certain animals, the ability to extract certain metals, and the like. These implements and means of production changed in very different ways in different circumstances; they showed signs of progress, stagnation, or even retrogression, but never have these changes returned man to a purely animal life, that is, to a life directly influenced by the natural environment.

"Historical science, then, has as its first and principal object the determination and investigation of this artificial foundation, its origin, its composition, its changes and its transformations. To say that all this is only a part and prolongation of nature is to say a thing which by its too abstract and too generic character has no longer any meaning."<sup>8</sup>

Critical as he is of "political and social Darwinism," Labriola is no less critical of the efforts of certain "amiable dilettantes" to combine the materialist conception of history with the theory of universal evolution, which, as he harshly but justly remarks, many have converted into a mere metaphysical metaphor. He also scoffs at the naiveté of "amiable dilettantes" in trying to place the materialist conception of history under the patronage of the philosophy of Auguste Comte or Spencer, "which is to say that they wish to give us for our allies our most open adversaries."

The remark about dilettantes evidently refers, among others, to Professor Enrico Ferri, the author of a very superficial book entitled *Spencer, Darwin, Marx*, which has been published in a French translation under the title *Socialisme et science positive* [Paris, 1897].

## V

Thus, man makes history in striving to satisfy his needs. These needs, of course, originally are imposed by nature; but later they are modified considerably, quantitatively and qualitatively, by the character of the artificial environment. The productive forces at man's disposal determine all his social relations. First of all, the state of the productive forces determines the relations in which men stand toward each other in the social process of production, that is, their *economic relations*. These relations naturally give rise to definite interests, which are expressed in law. "Every system of law protects a definite interest," Labriola says. The development of productive forces divides society into classes, whose interests are not only different, but in many—and, moreover, essential—aspects are diametrically antagonistic. This antagonism of interests gives rise to conflicts, to a struggle among the social classes. The struggle results in the replacement of the *tribal* organization, the purpose of which is to protect the dominant interests. Lastly, social relations, determined by the given state of productive forces, give rise to common *morality*—the morality that guides people in their common, everyday life.

Thus the law, the state system and the morality of any given people are determined *directly* and *immediately* by its characteristic economic relations. These economic relations also determine—but *indirectly* and *mediately*—all the creations of the mind and imagination: art, science, etc.

To understand the history of scientific thought or the history of art in any particular country, it is not enough to be acquainted with its economics. One must know how to proceed from economics to *social psychology*, without a careful study and grasp of which a materialist explanation of the history of ideologies is impossible.

That does not mean, of course, that there is a social soul or a collective national "spirit," developing in accordance with its own special laws and manifesting itself in social life. "That is pure mysticism," Labriola says. All that the materialist can speak of in this case is the prevailing state of sentiment and

thought in the particular social class of the particular country at the particular time. This state of sentiment and thought is the result of social relations. Labriola is firmly persuaded that it is not the forms of man's consciousness that determine the forms of his social being, but, on the contrary, the forms of his social being that determine the forms of his consciousness. But once the forms of his consciousness have sprung from the soil of social being, they become a part of history. Historical science cannot limit itself to the mere anatomy of society; it embraces the *totality of phenomena* that are *directly or indirectly* determined by social economics, including the work of the imagination. There is no historical fact that did not owe its origin to social economics; but it is no less true that there is no historical fact that was not preceded, not accompanied, and not succeeded by a definite state of consciousness. Hence the tremendous importance of social psychology. For if it has to be reckoned with even in the history of law and of political institutions, in the history of literature, art, philosophy, and so forth, not a single step can be taken without it.

When we maintain that a given work is fully in the spirit, let us say, of the Renaissance, it means that it corresponds completely with the then prevailing sentiments of the classes which set the tone in social life. So long as the social relations do not change, the psychology of society does not change either. People get accustomed to the prevailing beliefs, concepts, modes of thought and means of satisfying given aesthetic requirements. But should the development of productive forces lead to any substantial change in the economic structure of society and, as a consequence, in the reciprocal relations of the social classes, the psychology of these classes will also change, and with it the "spirit of the times" and the "national character." This change is manifested in the appearance of new religious beliefs or new philosophical concepts, of new trends in art or new aesthetic requirements.

Another thing to be borne in mind, in Labriola's opinion, is that in ideologies a very important part is often played by the *survivals* of concepts and trends inherited from earlier generations and preserved only by tradition. Furthermore, ideologies are also influenced by nature.

As we already know, the artificial environment very powerfully modifies the influence of nature on social man. From a *direct* influence, it becomes an *indirect* influence. Nevertheless it does not cease to exist. The temperament of every nation preserves certain peculiarities, induced by the influence of the natural environment, which are to a certain extent modified, but never completely destroyed, by adaptation to the social environment. These peculiarities of national temperament constitute what is known as *race*. Race exercises an undoubted influence on the history of some ideologies—art, for example; and this still further complicates the already far from easy task of explaining it scientifically.

## VI

We have set forth in fair detail and, we hope, accurately, Labriola's view that social phenomena depend on the economic structure of society, which, in its turn, is determined by the state of its productive forces. For the most part, we are in full agreement with him. But in places his views give rise to certain doubts, concerning which we would like to make a few remarks.

To begin with the following point: According to Labriola, the state is an organization for the rule of one social class over another or others. That is so. But it scarcely expresses the whole truth. In states like China or ancient Egypt, where civilized life was impossible without highly complex and extensive works for the regulation of the flow and overflow of big rivers and for irrigation purposes, the rise of the state may be explained largely by the direct influence of the needs of the social productive process. There can be no doubt that inequality, in one or another degree, existed in these countries even in prehistoric times, both *within* the tribes that constituted the state—which often differed completely in ethnographical origin—and *among* the tribes. But the ruling classes which appear in the history of these countries held their more or less exalted social position owing to the state organization called into being by the needs of the social productive process. Hardly is there room

for doubt that the Egyptian priestly caste owed its supremacy to the highly important part which its rudimentary scientific knowledge played in the system of Egyptian agriculture.\* In the West—where Greece, of course, must be included—we do not observe that the direct needs of the social process of production, which there did not entail extensive social organization, had any influence on the rise of the state. But even there the appearance of the state in a large measure must be attributed to the need for a social division of labor called forth by the development of the social productive forces. At the same time, of course, this did not prevent the state from being an organization for the rule of a privileged minority over a more or less enslaved majority.† But the above must not be lost sight of under any circumstances, if an incorrect and one-sided idea of the historical role of the state is to be avoided.

And now let us examine Labriola's views on the historical development of ideologies. We have seen that in his opinion this development is complicated by the action of racial peculiarities and by the influence exercised on man by his natural environment generally. It is a great pity that our author did not think it necessary to support and explain his opinion by any illustrations; it would have made it easier to understand him. At any rate, it is clear that it cannot be accepted in the form in which he expounds it.

The American Indian tribes do not, of course, belong to the same race as the tribes which in pre-historic times inhabited the Greek archipelago or the Baltic coast. It is beyond question that in these different localities primitive man experienced the influences of the natural environment in very different ways. It

\*One of the Chaldean kings says: "I have mastered the secrets of the rivers for the benefit of man. . . . I have led the waters of the rivers into the wilderness; I have filled the parched ditches with them. . . . I have watered the desert plains; I have brought them fertility and abundance. I have turned them into habitations of joy." For all its boastfulness, this is a fairly accurate description of the role of the oriental state in organizing the social process of production.

†Just as in certain cases this did not prevent the state from being an outcome of the conquest of one people by another. Force plays a big part in the replacement of old institutions by new. But force in no way can explain either the possibility of such a replacement or its social consequences.

might have been expected that these different influences would be reflected in the rudimentary art of the primitive inhabitants of the localities mentioned. Yet, we do not observe this to be the case. In all parts of the earth, however much they may differ from each other, we find similar stages in the development of art corresponding to similar stages in the development of primitive man. We know of the art of the Stone Age and of the art of the Iron Age; but we do not know of any distinctive arts of the different races: white, yellow, etc. The state of the productive forces is reflected even in details. For example, in pottery ornamentations we first meet only with straight and broken lines; squares, crosses, zigzags, etc. This form of ornamentation was borrowed by primitive art from the even more primitive handicrafts: weaving and plaiting. In the Bronze Age, with the appearance of the art of working metals, which are capable of assuming all sorts of geometrical shapes, we observe the appearance of curved ornamentation. And, lastly, with the domestication of animals, their figures, and especially the figure of the horse, make their appearance.\*

To be sure, in the depictions of human beings the influence of racial features was bound to affect the "ideals of beauty" peculiar to the primitive artists. We know that every race, especially in its early stages of social development, considers itself the most beautiful, and rates very highly the features that distinguish it from other races.† But, firstly, the influence of these peculiarities of racial aesthetics—as far as they have any permanency at all—cannot alter the course of development of art; and, secondly, these peculiarities themselves have only a temporary durability, lasting, that is, only as long as certain definite conditions prevail. When a tribe is forced to admit the superiority of another, more developed, tribe, its racial complacency tends to disappear and give place to an imitation of alien tastes which formerly were considered ridiculous or even shameful and disgusting. Here we find occurring to the savage what occurs to the peasant in civilized society, who at first scoffs

\*See Wilhelm Lubke's introduction to his *History of Art* [Paris, 1892].

†See Charles Darwin, *Descent of Man*.

at the manners and dress of the town-dweller, and then, with the growing supremacy of the town over the country, tries to copy them to the best of his ability.

Passing to historical nations, we must first point out that in relation to them the word *race* cannot and should not be used at all. We do not know of any historical nation that can be regarded as racially pure; each of them is the product of an extremely lengthy and intense process of interbreeding and intermingling of different ethnic elements.

Now try, after this, to determine the influence of "race" on the history of the ideologies of any nation!

At first glance it seems that nothing could be simpler and more correct than the idea that natural environment influences national temperament and, through temperament, the history of the nation's intellectual and aesthetic development. But if Labriola had only recalled the history of his own country, he would have been convinced of the erroneousness of this idea. The modern Italians are surrounded by the same natural environment as that in which the ancient Romans lived, yet how unlike is the "temperament" of our modern tributaries of Menelik to the temperament of the stern conquerors of Carthage! If we were, for example, to undertake to explain the history of Italian art by the Italian temperament, we should very soon be confronted by the baffling question why this temperament, for its part, varied so profoundly at different times and in different parts of the Appenine Peninsula.

## VII

The author of the *Essays on the Gogol Period in Russian Literature* says in one of his commentaries to the first volume of J. S. Mill's work on political economy:

"We would not say that race has no significance whatever; the development of the natural and historical sciences has not yet reached such perfection of analysis as to enable us in most cases to say unreservedly: here that element is absolutely lacking. For all we know, this steel pen may contain a particle of platinum; it

cannot be denied absolutely. All we can say is that chemical analysis shows that this pen contains such a quantity of undoubtedly steel particles that the portion of its composition that might consist of platinum is perfectly negligible; and even if such a portion did exist, it could be ignored for all practical purposes. . . . As far as practical action is concerned, you may treat this pen as you would steel pens in general. In just the same way, pay no attention in practical affairs to people's race; treat them simply as people. . . . It may be that the race of a nation did have some influence in determining that its state today is what it is, and no other; it cannot be denied absolutely; historical analysis has not yet achieved mathematical and absolute accuracy; like present-day chemical analysis, it still leaves a small, a very small, residuum, which demands more subtle methods of investigation, methods that are still unavailable in the present state of science. But this residuum is very small. In the determination of the present state of any nation, such a large part was due to the action of circumstances that are in no way dependent on inherent tribal characteristics that even if such peculiar qualities differing from general human nature do exist, the place left for their action is very small, immeasurably, microscopically small."

We were reminded of these words when reading Labriola's views on the influence of race on the history of man's spiritual development. The author of the *Essays on the Gogol Period* was interested in the significance of race chiefly from the practical standpoint, but what he says should likewise be borne in mind constantly by those who are engaged in purely theoretical inquiries. Social science will gain greatly if we at last abandon the bad habit of attributing to race everything that seems incomprehensible in the spiritual history of a given nation. It may be that racial characteristics did have some influence on its history. But this hypothetical influence was probably so minute that it were better in the interests of the inquiry to regard it as non-existent and to consider the peculiarities observed in the development of the given nation as the product of the special historical conditions in which that development took place, and not as a result of the influence of race. Needless to say, in

quite a number of cases we shall be unable to indicate exactly what were the conditions that gave rise to the peculiarities in which we are interested. But what does not yield to the methods of scientific investigation today may well yield to them tomorrow. As to references to racial characteristics, they are inconvenient because they terminate the investigation just at the point where it should begin. Why is the history of French poetry unlike the history of German poetry? For a very simple reason: the temperament of the French nation was such as not to permit of the rise of a Lessing, or a Schiller, or a Goethe. Well, thanks for the explanation; now it's all perfectly clear.

Labriola, of course, would have said that nothing was further from his mind than explanations of this sort, which explain nothing. And that would be true. Generally speaking, he is fully aware of their utter futility, and he also knows very well from what side a problem like the one we have posed should be approached. But by granting that the spiritual development of nations is complicated by their racial characteristics, he ran the risk of leading his readers gravely astray and betrayed a readiness, even if only in minor particulars, to make certain concessions to the old way of thinking that are prejudicial to social science. It is against such concessions that our remarks are directed.

When we say that the view we are contesting as to the influence of race on the history of ideologies is an old one, it is not without good reason. It is nothing but a variation of a theory which was very prevalent in the last century, and which endeavored to explain the whole course of history by the characteristics of human nature. This theory is absolutely incompatible with the materialist conception of history. According to the new view, the nature of social man changes as *social relations* change. Consequently, the general characteristics of human nature can offer no explanation of history. But although an ardent and convinced believer in the materialist conception of history, Labriola also granted—if only in a very small degree—some truth to the old view. But it is not for nothing that the Germans say: *Wer A sagt, muss auch B sagen* [He who says A, must also say B]. Having granted truth to the old view in one instance,

Labriola had to grant it in others too. Need it be said that this combination of two diametrically opposite views was bound to impair the harmony of his world outlook?

### VIII

The organization of any given society is determined by the state of its productive forces. As this state changes, the social organization is bound sooner or later to change too. Consequently, it is in a state of unstable equilibrium wherever the social productive forces are developing. Quite rightly Labriola remarks that it is this instability, together with the social movements and the struggle of social classes to which it gives rise, that preserves man from mental stagnation. Antagonism is the principal cause of progress, he says, repeating the thought of a very well-known German economist. But right away he makes a reservation. It would be a great mistake, in his opinion, to suppose that men always and in all cases have a proper understanding of their situation and clearly perceive the social tasks with which it confronts them. "To suppose that," he says, "is to suppose the improbable and, indeed, the unreal."

We would request the reader to pay careful attention to this reservation. Labriola develops his thought as follows:

"Forms of law, political acts and attempts at social organization were, and they still are, sometimes fortunate, sometimes mistaken, that is to say, disproportionate and unsuitable. History is full of errors; and this means that if all was necessary, granted the relative intelligence of those who have to solve a difficulty or to find a solution for a given problem, if everything in it has a sufficient reason, yet everything in it was not reasonable, in the sense which the optimists give to this word. To state it more fully, the determining causes of all changes, that is to say the modified economic conditions, have ended and end by causing to be found, sometimes through tortuous ways, the suitable forms of laws, the appropriate political orders and the more or less perfect means of social adjustment. But it must not be thought that the instinctive wisdom of the reasoning animal has been manifested, or is manifested, definitely and simply,

in the complete and clear understanding of all situations, and that we have left only the very simple task of following the deductive road from the economic situation to all the rest. Ignorance—which, in its turn, may be explained—is an important reason for the manner in which history has proceeded; and to ignorance we must add the brutishness which is never completely subdued, and all the passions, and all the injustices, and the various forms of corruption, which were and are the necessary product of a society organized in such a way that the domination of man over man in it is inevitable, and that from this domination falsehood, hypocrisy, presumption and baseness were and are inseparable. We may, without being utopians . . . foresee, as we do in fact foresee, the coming of a society which, developing from the present society and from its very contrasts by the laws inherent in its historic development, will end in an association without class antagonisms. . . . But that is the future, and it is neither the present nor the past. . . . Regulated production will eliminate from life the element of chance which, thus far, has been revealed in history as a multiform cause of accidents and incidents.”<sup>9</sup>

There is a good deal of truth in all this. But, fantastically interwoven with error, truth itself here assumes the form of a not altogether felicitous paradox.

Labriola is undoubtedly right when he says that men do not always by far have a clear understanding of the social situation and are not always properly aware of the social tasks to which it gives rise. But when, on this basis, he talks of ignorance or superstition as being the historical cause of many forms of social life and many customs, he himself unwittingly reverts to the viewpoint of the enlighteners of the 18th century. Before speaking of ignorance as an important reason “for the manner in which history has proceeded,” he should have defined the precise sense in which this word may here be used. It would be a great mistake to think that this is self-evident. No, it is far from being as evident or as simple as it seems. Take France of the 18th century as an example. All intelligent representatives of the Third Estate had a burning desire for liberty and equality. In furtherance of this aim they demanded

the abolition of many antiquated social institutions. But the abolition of these institutions implied the triumph of capitalism, which, as we now know very well, can scarcely be called the kingdom of liberty and equality. It therefore may be said that the lofty aim of the philosophers of the last century was not attained. It likewise may be said that the philosophers were unable to indicate the means for its attainment; and therefore they may be accused of *ignorance*, as they actually were by many Utopian Socialists.

Labriola himself is astonished at the contradiction between the real economic tendencies in France in those days and the ideals of its thinkers. “A singular spectacle and a singular contrast!” he exclaims. But what is there singular about it? And wherein lay the “ignorance” of the French enlighteners? Was it in the fact that their idea of the means of achieving universal happiness was not the same as ours today? But, after all, there could be no question of such means in those days—they *had not yet been created* by man’s historical movement, or, more correctly, by *the development of his productive forces*. Read Mably’s *Doutes, proposés aux philosophes économistes*, read Morelly’s *Le code de la nature* [1755], and you will find that in so far as these writers differed with the great majority of the enlighteners as to the conditions of human happiness, and in so far as they dreamed of the abolition of private property, they, firstly, came into obvious and crying contradiction with the most vital and general needs of the people of their times, and, secondly, vaguely conscious of this, they themselves regarded their dreams as *utterly unrealizable*.

And, therefore, we once more ask—wherein lay the ignorance of the enlighteners? Was it in the fact that, while realizing the social needs of their times and indicating the proper means of satisfying them (abolition of the old privileges, etc.), they attached an entirely exaggerated significance to these means, that is, as a way toward universal happiness? That is not such a preposterous ignorance; and, taking the practical view, it must even be admitted that it had its uses, for the more the enlighteners believed in the universal value of the reforms they demanded, the more energetically they were bound to fight for them.

Undoubtedly, the enlighteners betrayed ignorance in not being able to find the thread connecting their views and aspirations with the economic condition of France at that period, and not even suspecting that such a thread existed. They looked upon themselves as exponents of *absolute* truth. We know today that there is no such thing as absolute truth, that everything is relative, that everything is dependent on the conditions of time and place; but precisely for that reason, we should be very cautious in judging the "ignorance" of various historical periods. Their ignorance, to the extent that it is manifested in their characteristic social movement, aspirations and ideals, is *also* relative.

## IX

How does law arise? It may be said that all law represents the supersession or modification of an older law or custom. Why are old customs superseded? Because they cease to conform to the new "conditions," that is, to the new actual relations in which men stand toward each other in the social process of production. Primitive communism disappeared owing to the development of productive forces. However, productive forces develop but gradually. Hence the new actual relations of man to man in the social process of production also develop but gradually. And hence, too, the restrictiveness of the old laws or customs, and, consequently, the need to provide a corresponding *legal* expression for the new *actual* (economic) relations of men also develop but gradually. The instinctive wisdom of the reasoning animal usually follows in the wake of these actual changes. If old laws hamper a section of society in attaining its material aims, in satisfying its urgent wants, it will infallibly, and with the greatest ease, become conscious of their restrictiveness: this requires very little more intelligence than is necessary for the consciousness that tight shoes or heavy weapons are uncomfortable. But, of course, from being conscious of the restrictiveness of an existing law to *consciously striving to abolish it* is a very far cry. At first, men simply try to get round it in each particular case. Let us recall what used to happen in our country

in large peasant families, when, under the influence of nascent capitalism, new sources of earnings arose which were not equal for all members of the family. The customary family code thereupon became restrictive for the lucky ones who earned more than the others. But it was not so easy for these lucky ones to make up their minds to revolt against the old custom, and they did not do so all at once. For a long time they simply resorted to subterfuge, concealing part of their earnings from the elders. But the new economic system gradually grew stronger, and the old family life more and more shaken: those members of the family who were interested in its abolition grew bolder and bolder; sons more and more frequently separated from the common household, and in the end the old custom disappeared and was replaced by a new custom, arising out of the new conditions, the new *actual* relations, the new *economics* of society.

Man's cognition of his situation as a rule, lags, more or less, behind the development of the new actual relations which cause that situation to change. But it does keep in the wake of the actual relations. Where man's conscious striving for the abolition of old institutions and the establishment of a new legal system is weak, there the way for the new system has not yet been properly *paved by the economics of the society*. In other words, in history, lack of clear cognition—"the blunders of immature thought," "ignorance"—not infrequently signifies only one thing, namely, that the object to be cognized, that is, the new, *nascent thing*, is still but poorly developed. And, obviously, ignorance of this kind—lack of knowledge or understanding of what does not yet exist, of what is still in process of becoming—is only *relative* ignorance.

There is another kind of ignorance—ignorance of nature. That may be called *absolute* ignorance. Its criterion is nature's power over man. And as the development of productive forces signifies the increasing power of man over nature, it is clear that any increase in productive forces implies a diminution in absolute ignorance. Natural phenomena which man does not understand and therefore cannot control give rise to various kinds of superstition. At a certain stage of social development,



superstitions become closely interwoven with man's moral and legal ideas, to which they then lend a peculiar hue.\* In the process of the struggle—called forth by the development of the new actual relations of men in the social process of production—religious views often play a very important part. Both the innovators and the conservatives invoke the aid of the gods, placing various institutions under their protection or even claiming that they are an expression of divine will. It goes without saying that the Eumenides, whom the ancient Greeks regarded as the upholders of the mother right, did as little in its defense as Minerva did for the triumph of the power of the father, which was supposedly so dear to her heart. Men simply wasted their time and effort in calling upon the aid of gods and fetishes; but the ignorance which made belief in the Eumenides possible did not prevent the Greek conservatives of the time from realizing that the old legal system (or, more precisely, the old customary law) was a better guarantee of their interests. Similarly, the superstition that permitted the innovators to base their hopes on Minerva did not prevent them from realizing the inconvenience of the old order of life.

The use of the wedge in the cutting of wood was unknown to the Dayaks of Borneo. When the Europeans introduced it, the native authorities solemnly banned its use.† That evidently

\*M. M. Kovalevsky, in his *Law and Custom in the Caucasus*, says: "An examination of the religious beliefs and superstitions of the Ishavs leads us to conclude that, beneath the official cover of Orthodox religion, this people is still at the stage of development which Tylor has so happily called animism. This stage, as we know, is usually marked by the decided subordination of both social morality and law to religion." (II, 82.)

But the fact of the matter is that, according to E. B. Tylor, primitive animism has no influence either on morals or on law. At this stage of development "there is no reciprocal relation between morality and law, or else this relation is only embryonic. . . . The animism of the savage is almost completely exempt from that moral element which in the eyes of civilized man is the essence of every practical religion. . . . Moral laws have their own special foundation, etc." (*La civilisation primitive*, Paris, 1876, II, 463-4) [*Primitive Culture*, 2 vols., London, 1871]. Hence it would be more correct to say that religious superstitions become interwoven with moral and legal ideas only at a certain, and relatively high, stage of social development. We regret very much that we are unable, by considerations of space, to show here how this is explained by modern materialism.

†Tylor, *La civilisation primitive*, I, 82.

was a proof of their *ignorance*, for what could be more senseless than refusing to use a tool that helps to lighten labor? But just think a little, and you will perhaps grant that there may have been extenuating circumstances. The ban on the employment of European tools was probably one manifestation of the struggle against European influences, which were beginning to undermine the old aboriginal order. The native authorities had a vague apprehension that if European customs were introduced, not a single stone of their order would be left standing. For some reason the wedge was more suggestive in their minds of destructive power of European influences than any other European implement. And so we find them solemnly prohibiting its use. Why, precisely, was it the wedge that came to be the symbol of dangerous innovations in their eyes? To that question we may furnish a sufficient answer: we do not know why the wedge associated itself in the minds of the natives with the idea of the danger that menaced their old form of life; but we can say with certainty that the natives were perfectly right in fearing for the stability of their old order. European influences do very rapidly and very seriously impair—if not altogether destroy—the customs of the savages and barbarians who fall beneath their sway.

Tylor tells us that while the Dayaks publicly condemned the use of the wedge, they nevertheless used it when they could do so in secret. Here you have "hypocrisy" added to ignorance. But why? It was evidently due to a recognition of the advantages of the new method of cutting wood, accompanied, however, by a fear of public opinion, or of prosecution by the authorities. Thus we find the instinctive wisdom of the reasoning animal criticizing the very measure for which it itself was responsible. And it was right in its criticism, for prohibiting the use of European tools by no means meant eliminating European influences.

We might borrow Labriola's expression and say that in this instance the Dayaks adopted a measure which was unsuitable and disproportionate to their situation. We would be perfectly right. And we might add to Labriola's remark that people very often devise measures that are disproportionate and unsuitable

to their situation. But what follows? Only that we must try to discover whether some sort of dependence does not exist between this kind of mistake and the character or degree of development of man's social relations. Such a dependence undoubtedly does exist. Labriola says that ignorance may be explained in its turn. We say: *not only can it be explained, but it should be explained, if social science is capable at all of becoming a strict science.* If "ignorance" may be attributed to social causes, then there is no point in citing it, there is no point in saying that it explains the enigma why history proceeded thus and not otherwise. The answer lies not there, but in the social causes that gave rise to it and lent it one form rather than another, one character rather than another. Why restrict your investigation by simply talking about ignorance, which explains nothing? *Where a scientific conception of history is concerned, for the investigator to talk of ignorance only testifies to his own ignorance.*

## X

All positive law is a defense of some definite interest. How do these interests arise? Are they a product of human will and human consciousness? No, they are created by man's economic relations. Once they have arisen, interests are reflected in one way or another in man's *consciousness*. In order to defend an interest, there must be consciousness of it. Hence every system of positive law may and should be regarded as a product of consciousness.\* It is not man's consciousness that calls into being the interests that the law protects, and, consequently,

\*"Law is not something which, like the so-called physical, natural forces, exists apart from man's actions. . . . On the contrary, it is a system established by men for themselves. Whether man in his activities is governed by the law of causality, or whether he acts of his own free will, is a matter of indifference in the present case. However that may be, both by the rule of causality and by the rule of free will, law is not created apart from, but on the contrary, only through man's activities, through his mediation." (N. M. Korkunov, *Lectures on the General Theory of Law*, St. Petersburg, 1894, 279.) This is quite correct, although very badly put. But Mr. Korkunov forgot to add that the interests defended by law are not created by men for themselves, but are determined by their mutual relations in the social process of production.

it is not man's consciousness that determines the content of law; but the state of social consciousness (social psychology) in the given era does determine *the form which the reflection of the given interest takes in the mind of man.* Unless we take the state of the social consciousness into account we shall be absolutely unable to explain the history of law.

In this history, it is always essential to draw a careful distinction between *form* and *content*. In its *formal* aspect, law, like every ideology, is subject to the influence of all, or, at least of some of, the other ideologies: religious beliefs, philosophical concepts, and so on. This in itself hinders to some extent—and sometimes to a very large extent—the disclosure of the dependence between men's legal concepts and their mutual relations in the social process of production. But that is only half the trouble.\* The real trouble is that at different stages of social development a given ideology is subject to the influence of other ideologies in very unequal degrees. For example, ancient Egyptian, and partly Roman, law was under the sway of religion; in more recent history law has developed (we repeat, and request it to be noted, that we are here speaking of the *formal* aspect) under the strong influence of philosophy. Philosophy had to put up a big fight before it succeeded in eliminating the influence of religion on law and substituting its own influence. This fight was nothing but a reflection in the realm of ideas of the social struggle between the third estate and the clergy, but, nevertheless, it greatly hampered the formation of a correct view of the origin of legal institutions, for, thanks to it, these institutions seemed to be the obvious and indubitable product of a struggle between abstract ideas. Generally speaking it goes

\*Although it, too, very unfavorably affects even such works as Mr. M. Kovalevsky's *Law and Custom in the Caucasus*, in which law is often regarded as a product of religious beliefs. The proper path of inquiry for Mr. Kovalevsky would have been to regard both the religious beliefs and the legal institutions of the Caucasian peoples as a product of their social relations in the process of production, and, having ascertained the influence exerted by one ideology on the other, to have tried to discover the sole cause of that influence. Mr. Kovalevsky, one would think, would have been all the more inclined toward this method of inquiry since he himself, in other works, has definitely recognized the causal dependence of legal systems on the modes of production.

without saying that Labriola realizes perfectly what kind of actual relations are concealed behind such a conflict of concepts. But when he comes to particulars, he lays down his materialist weapons in face of the difficulties of the problem and considers it possible, as we have seen, to confine himself to adducing ignorance or the power of tradition as an explanation. What is more, he speaks of "symbolism" as the final cause of many customs.

It is true that symbolism has been a "factor" of no little importance in the history of certain ideologies. But as the final cause of customs it will not do at all. Let us take an example like the following: Among the Ishavs of the Caucasus it is the custom for a woman to cut off her braid of hair on the death of a brother, but not on the death of her husband. This is a symbolical act; it is a substitution for the older custom of self-immolation on the grave of the dead man. But why does the woman perform this symbolical act on the grave of a brother and not on the grave of her husband? Mr. Kovalevsky says that this feature "can only be regarded as a survival from those remote times when the chief of the clan—which was united by its real or imaginary descent from a woman, the foremother of the clan—was the oldest descendant on the mother's side, the nearest cognate."\* It therefore follows that symbolical acts are comprehensible only when we understand the meaning and origin of the *relations* they symbolize. How do these relations arise? Of course, the answer to this question must not be sought in symbolical acts, although they may sometimes furnish useful clues. The origin of the symbolical custom by which a woman cuts off her braid on the grave of a brother is to be explained by the history of the family; and the explanation of the history of the family is to be sought in the history of economic development.

In the example we have cited, this rite has survived the form of kinship to which it owed its origin. Here we have an example of that influence of tradition of which Labriola speaks. But tradition can only preserve what already exists. It not only fails to

\**Law and Custom in the Caucasus*, II, 75.

explain the origin of the given rite or of the given form in general, but even fails to explain its preservation. Force of tradition is a force of inertia. When examining the history of ideologies we are often constrained to ask ourselves why a particular rite or custom should have survived when not only the relations to which it owed its origin, but other cognate customs or rites which originated in the same relations disappeared. That is equivalent to asking why the destructive effect of the new relations spared just this particular rite or custom while eliminating others. To answer this question by talking about the force of tradition is nothing more than reiterating the question in an affirmative form. How are we to get out of the difficulty? By turning to *social psychology*.

Old customs begin to disappear and old rites to break down when men enter into new reciprocal relations. The conflict of social interests finds expression in a conflict between the new customs and rites and the old. No symbolical rite or custom, *taken by itself*, can influence the development of the new relations either positively or negatively. If the conservatives passionately uphold the old customs, it is because in their minds the idea of an advantageous, precious and customary social system is firmly associated with the idea of these customs. If the innovators detest and scoff at these customs, it is because in their minds the idea of these customs is associated with the idea of restrictive, disadvantageous and objectionable social relations. Consequently, *the whole point lies in an association of ideas*. When we find that a particular tie has survived not only the relations which gave rise to it, but also cognate rites that arose from these same relations, we have to conclude that in the minds of the innovators it was not so strongly associated with the idea of the old, detested order as other customs were. Why so? To answer this question is sometimes easy, but at others it is quite impossible for lack of the necessary psychological data. But even when we are constrained to admit that the question is unanswerable—at least, in the existing state of our knowledge—we must nevertheless remember that the point does not lie in the *force of tradition*, but in definite associations of ideas produced by definite actual relations of men in society.

The history of ideologies to a large extent is to be explained by the rise, modification and breakdown of associations of ideas under the influence of the rise, modification and breakdown of definite combinations of social forces. Labriola has not given this side of the question all the attention it deserves. This is shown clearly in his view of philosophy.

## XI

According to Labriola, in its historical development, philosophy partly merges with theology and partly represents the development of human thought in relation to the objects which come within the field of our experience. In so far as it is distinct from theology, it is occupied with the same problems as scientific investigation, in the proper sense of the term. In doing so, it either strives to anticipate science by offering its own conjectural solutions, or simply summarizes and submits to further logical elaboration the solutions already found by science. That, of course is true. But it is not the whole truth. Take modern philosophy. Descartes and Bacon held that it was one of the most important functions of philosophy to multiply our scientific knowledge in order to increase man's power over nature. Accordingly we find that in their time philosophy was occupied with the same problems as the natural sciences. It therefore might be thought that the solutions it furnished were determined by the state of natural science. But that is not quite the case. Descartes' attitude to certain philosophical questions, as, for example, the soul, cannot be explained by the state of the natural sciences in those days; but this attitude well can be explained by the *social* state of France at the time. Descartes made a strict distinction between the spheres of faith and of reason. His philosophy did not contradict Catholicism; on the contrary, it endeavored to confirm some of its dogmas by new arguments. In this respect it was a good reflection of the sentiments of Frenchmen at that period. After the prolonged and sanguinary conflicts of the 16th century, a universal desire for peace and order arose in France. In the realm of *politics*, this desire was expressed in a sympathy for the absolute monarchy;

in the realm of *thought*, it was expressed in a certain religious tolerance and anxiety to avoid all controversial questions that might recall the recent civil war. These were religious questions. So that they might be avoided, a line of demarcation had to be drawn between the realm of faith and the realm of reason. That, as we have said, was what Descartes did. But this demarcation was not enough. Social peace demanded that philosophy solemnly admit the truth of religious dogma. And through Descartes this, too, was done. That is why the system of this thinker, although at least three-quarters materialistic, was sympathetically greeted by many ecclesiastics.

A logical sequel to the philosophy of Descartes was the materialism of La Mettrie. But *idealistic* conclusions might have been drawn from it just as readily. And if the French did not do so, there was a very definite social reason for it, namely, the hostility of the third estate to the clergy of 18th-century France. Whereas the philosophy of Descartes sprang from a desire for social peace, the materialism of the 18th century was the herald of new social upheavals. It will be seen from this alone that the development of philosophical thought in France is to be explained not only by the development of natural science, but also by the direct influence of developing social relations. This is revealed even more clearly when the history of French philosophy is examined carefully from another angle.

Descartes, as we already know, held that the chief purpose of philosophy was to increase man's power over nature. The French materialists of the 18th century held that their prime duty was to replace certain old concepts by new ones, on which normal social relations might be erected. The French materialists practically made no mention of increasing the social forces of production. That is a highly important difference. To what was it due?

The development of productive forces in France in the 18th century was being severely hampered by the antiquated social relations of production, by archaic social institutions. The abolition of these institutions was absolutely essential for the further development of the productive forces. And it was in their abolition that the whole meaning of the social movement

in France of that period lay. In philosophy, the necessity for this abolition found expression in a struggle against antiquated abstract concepts which had sprung from the antiquated relations of production.

In the time of Descartes these relations were still by no means antiquated. Like the social institutions which had sprung from them, they were not hindering, but facilitating the development of productive forces. Hence it never occurred to anybody to abolish them. That is why philosophy set itself the direct task of increasing productive forces, this being the prime practical task of the nascent bourgeois society.

We say this in objection to Labriola. But it may be that our objection is superfluous, that he merely expressed himself inaccurately, while at the bottom in agreement with us. We should be very glad if it were so; it is pleasant to have intelligent people agree with you.

And if he did not agree with us, regretfully we would repeat that this intelligent man is mistaken. In doing so we might be furnishing our subjectivist old gentlemen with an excuse for one more jibe to the effect that it is difficult to distinguish the "authentic" adherents of the materialist conception of history from the "unauthentic." But our reply to the subjectivist old gentlemen would be: "They are *jeering at themselves*." Anybody who has grasped properly the meaning of a philosophical system easily can distinguish its true adherents from the false. If our friends the subjectivists had taken the trouble to ponder over the materialist explanation of history, they would have known themselves who are the authentic "disciples," and who the imposters that take the great name in vain. But since they have not taken that trouble and never will, they must of necessity remain in perplexity. That is the common fate of all who fall behind and drop out of the marching army of progress.

Incidentally, a word about progress. Do you recall, dear reader, the days when the "metaphysicians" were abused, when the textbooks of philosophy were "Lewes"<sup>10</sup> and partly Mr. Spasovich's "manual of criminal law," and when, for the benefit of "progressive" readers, special "formulas" were in-

vented, so simple that even a child of tender age might understand them? What glorious days those were! But they are gone, they have vanished like smoke. "Metaphysics" is again beginning to attract Russian minds, "Lewes" is going out of use, and the celebrated formulas of progress universally are being forgotten. Today it is very rare even for the subjectivist sociologists themselves—now grown so "venerable" and "hoary"—to recall these formulas. It is noteworthy, for instance, that nobody recalled them even when apparently there was a most urgent need for them, namely, when the argument was raging whether we could turn from the path of capitalism to the path of utopia. Our utopians used to hide behind the skirts of a man who, while advocating his fantastic "popular industry," at the same time claimed to be an adherent of modern dialectical materialism. Dialectical materialism, turned into a sophistry, thus proved to be the only weapon in the hands of the utopians worthy of any attention. In view of this, it would be very useful to discuss how "progress" is regarded by the adherents of the materialist conception of history. To be sure, this question repeatedly has been discussed in our press. But, firstly, the modern materialist view of progress is still not clear to many, and, secondly, in Labriola's book it is illustrated by some very happy examples and explained by some very correct arguments, although, unfortunately, it is not expounded systematically and fully. Labriola's arguments should be supplemented. We hope to do so at a more convenient opportunity. Meanwhile it is time to draw to a close.

But before laying down our pen, we would once more request the reader to remember that what is known as economic materialism, against which the objections—and very unconvincing ones at that—of our friends the Narodniks and subjectivists are directed, has very little in common with the modern materialist conception of history. From the standpoint of the theory of factors, human society is a heavy load which various "forces"—morality, law, economics, etc., etc.—each in its own way drag along the path of history. From the standpoint of the modern materialist conception of history, the whole thing assumes a different aspect. It turns out that the historical "factors"

are mere abstractions, and when the mist surrounding them is dispelled, it becomes clear that men do not make several distinct histories—the history of law, the history of morals, the history of philosophy, etc.—but only one history, the history of their own social relations, which are determined by the state of the productive forces in each particular period. *What is known as ideologies is nothing but a multiform reflection in the minds of men of this single and indivisible history.*

## THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN HISTORY<sup>1</sup>

### I

In the second half of the seventies the late Kablitz wrote an article entitled, "The Mind and the Senses as Factors of Progress," in which, referring to Spencer, he argued that the senses played the principal role in human progress, and that the mind played only a secondary role, and quite a subordinate one at that. A certain "esteemed sociologist" replied to Kablitz, expressing amusement and surprise at a theory which placed the mind "on the footboard." The "esteemed sociologist" was right, of course, in defending the mind. He would have been much more right, however, had he proved without going into the details of the question that Kablitz had raised, that his very method of presenting it was impossible and impermissible.

Indeed, the "factors" theory is unsound in itself, for it arbitrarily picks out different sides of social life, hypostasizes them, converts them into forces of a special kind, which, from different sides and with unequal success, draw the social man along the path of progress. But this theory is still less sound in the form presented by Kablitz, who converted into special sociological hypostases, not the various sides of the activities of the *social man*, but the different spheres of the *individual mind*. This is a veritable Herculean pillar of abstraction; beyond this one cannot go, for beyond it lies the comic kingdom of utter and obvious absurdity. It is to this that the "esteemed sociologist" should have drawn the attention of Kablitz and his readers.

Perhaps, after revealing the depths of abstraction into which the effort to find the predominating "factor" in history had led Kablitz, the "esteemed sociologist" might, by chance, have made some contribution to the critique of this "factors" theory. This would have been very useful for all of us at that time. But he proved unequal to his mission. He himself subscribed to that theory, differing from Kablitz only in his leanings toward *eclecticism*, and, consequently, all the "factors" seemed to him

equally important. Subsequently, the eclectic nature of his mind found particularly striking expression in his attacks on dialectical materialism, which he regarded as a doctrine that sacrifices all other factors to the economic "factor" and reduces the role of the individual in history to nothing. It never occurred to the "esteemed sociologist" that the "factors" point of view is alien to dialectical materialism, and that only one who is utterly incapable of thinking logically can see in it any justification of so-called *quietism*. Incidentally, it must be observed that the slip made by our "esteemed sociologist" is not unique; very many others have made it, are making it and, probably, will go on making it.

Materialists were accused of leanings toward quietism even before they had worked out their dialectical conception of nature and of history. Without making an excursion into the "depth of time," we will recall the controversy between the celebrated English scientists, Priestley and Price. Analyzing Priestley's theories, Price argued that materialism was incompatible with the concept of free will, and that it precluded all independent activity on the part of the individual. In reply Priestley referred to everyday experience. He would not speak of himself, he said, though by no means the most apathetic of creatures, but where would one find more mental vigor, more activity, more force and persistence in the pursuit of extremely important aims than among those who subscribe to the doctrine of necessity? Priestley had in view the religious, democratic sect they known as Christian Necessarians.\* We do not know whether this sect was as active as Priestley, who belonged to it, thought it was. But that is not important.

There can be not the slightest doubt that the materialist conception of the human will is quite compatible with the most vigorous practical activity. Lanson observes that "all the doctrines which called for the utmost exertion of human will asserted, in principle, that the will was impotent; they rejected

\*A Frenchman of the 17th century would have been surprised at this combination of materialism and religious dogma. In England, however, nobody thought it strange. Priestley himself was very religious. Different countries, different customs.

free will and subjected the world to fatalism."\* Lanson was wrong in thinking that every repudiation of what is called free will leads to fatalism; but this did not prevent him from noting an extremely interesting historical fact. Indeed, history shows that even fatalism was not always a hindrance to energetic, practical action; on the contrary, in certain epochs it was a *psychologically necessary basis for such action*. In proof of this, we will point to the Puritans, who in energy excelled all the other parties in England in the 17th century; and to the followers of Mohammed, who in a short space of time subjugated an enormous part of the globe, stretching from India to Spain. Those who think that as soon as we are convinced of the inevitability of a certain series of events we lose all psychological possibility to help bring on, or to counteract, these events, are very much mistaken.†

Here, everything depends upon whether my activities constitute an inevitable link in the chain of inevitable events. If they do, then I waver less and the more resolute are my actions. There is nothing surprising in this. When we say that a certain individual regards his activities as an inevitable link in the chain of inevitable events, we mean, among other things, that for this individual, lack of free will is tantamount to *incapability of inaction*, and that this lack of free will is reflected in his mind as the *impossibility of acting differently from the way he is acting*. This is precisely the psychological mood that can be expressed in the celebrated words of Luther: "Here I stand, I can do no other," and thanks to which men display the most indomitable energy,

\*See his *Histoire de la littérature française*, I.

†It is well known that, according to the doctrines of Calvin, all men's actions are predetermined by God: "By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he within himself has ordained what it behoves shall happen to each man" (*Institutio*, III, Ch. 5). According to the same doctrine, God chooses certain of his servants to liberate unjustly oppressed peoples. Such was Moses, who liberated the people of Israel. Everything goes to show that Cromwell also regarded himself as such an instrument of God; he always called his actions the fruits of the will of God, and probably he *quite sincerely* was convinced that they were so. *For him*, all these actions were *colored by necessity beforehand*. This did not prevent him from striving for victory after victory; it even gave this striving indomitable power.

perform the most astonishing feats. Hamlet never knew this mood; that is why he was only capable of moaning and reflecting. And that is why Hamlet would never have accepted a philosophy according to which freedom is merely necessity transformed into mind. Fichte rightly said: "As the man is, so is his philosophy."

## II

Some people have taken seriously Stammler's remarks about the allegedly insoluble contradiction that is said to be characteristic of a certain West European social-political theory [Marxism]. We have in mind the well-known example of the eclipse of the moon. As a matter of fact, this is a supremely absurd example. The combination of conditions that are necessary to cause an eclipse of the moon does not, and cannot under any circumstances, include human action; and, for this reason alone, a party to assist the eclipse of the moon can arise only in a lunatic asylum. But even if human action did serve as one of these conditions, none of those who keenly desired to see an eclipse of the moon would join the eclipse of the moon party if they were convinced that it would certainly take place *without their aid*. In this case, "their quietism" would merely be abstention from *unnecessary*, i.e., *useless*, action and would have no affinity with real quietism.

If the example of the eclipse of the moon were no longer to appear nonsensical to the above-mentioned party, it must be entirely changed. We would have to imagine that the moon is endowed with a mind, and that her position in celestial space, which causes her eclipse, appears to her as the fruit of the self-determination of her own will; that this position not only gives her enormous pleasure, but is absolutely necessary for her peace of mind; and that this is why she always passionately strives to occupy it.\* After imagining all this, the question would have to

\*"It is as if the compass needle took pleasure in turning toward the north, believing that its movement was independent of any other cause, and unaware of the imperceptible movements of magnetic matter." Leibniz, *Théodicée*, Lausanne, 1760, 598.

be asked: What would the moon feel if she discovered, at last, that it is not her will and not her "ideals" which determine her movement in celestial space, but, on the contrary, that her movement determines her will and her "ideals"? According to Stammler, such a discovery would certainly make her incapable of moving, unless she succeeded in extricating herself from her predicament by some logical contradiction. But such an assumption is totally groundless. This discovery might serve as a *formal* reason for the moon's bad temper, for feeling out of harmony with herself, for the contradiction between her "ideals" and mechanical reality. But since we are assuming that the "moon's psychological state" *in general*, is determined, in the last analysis, by her movement, the cause of her disturbed peace of mind must be sought for in her movement. On careful examination, it might be found that when the moon was at her apogee she grieved over the fact that her will was not free; and when she was at her perigee, this very circumstance served as a new, formal cause of her happiness and good spirits. Perhaps, the opposite might have happened; perhaps it would have transpired that she found the means of reconciling free will with necessity, not at her perigee, but at her apogee.

Be that as it may, such a reconciliation is undoubtedly possible; being conscious of necessity is quite compatible with the most energetic, practical action. At all events, this has been the case in history so far. Men who have repudiated free will often have excelled all their contemporaries in strength of will, and asserted their will to the utmost. Numerous examples of this can be cited. They are known universally. They can be forgotten, as Stammler evidently does, only if one deliberately refuses to see historical reality as it actually is. This attitude is strongly marked among our subjectivists, for example, and among some German philistines. Philistines and subjectivists, however, are not men, but mere *phantoms*, as Belinsky would have said.

However, let us examine more closely the case in which a man's own actions—past, present or future—seem to him entirely colored by necessity. We already know that such a man, regarding himself as a messenger of God, like Mohammed, as one chosen by ineluctable destiny, like Napoleon, or as the ex-



pression of the irresistible force of historical progress, like some of the public men in the 19th century, displays almost elemental strength of will, and sweeps from his path like a house of cards all the obstacles set up by the small-town Hamlets and Hamletkins.\* But this case interests us now from another angle, namely: When the consciousness of my lack of free will presents itself to me only in the form of the complete subjective and objective impossibility of acting differently from the way I am acting, and when, at the same time, my actions are to me the most desirable of all other possible actions, then in my mind necessity becomes identified with freedom and freedom with necessity; and then, I am unfree only in the sense that *I cannot disturb this identity between freedom and necessity*, I cannot oppose one to the other, *I cannot feel the restraint of necessity*. But such a *lack of freedom* is at the same time its *fullest manifestation*.

Zimmel says that freedom is always freedom from something, and, when freedom is not conceived as the opposite of restraint it is meaningless. That is so, of course. But this slight, elementary truth cannot serve as a ground for refuting the thesis that freedom means being conscious of necessity, which constitutes one of the most brilliant discoveries ever made by philosophic thought. Zimmel's definition is too narrow; it applies only to freedom from external restraint. As long as we are discussing only such restraints it would be extremely ridiculous to identify freedom with necessity: a pickpocket is not free to steal your pocket-handkerchief while you are preventing him from doing so and until he has overcome your resistance in one way or another. In addition to this elementary and superficial conception of freedom, however, there is another, incomparably

\*We will quote another example, which vividly illustrates how strongly people of this category feel. In a letter to her teacher, Calvin Renée, the Duchess of Ferrara (of the house of Louis XII) wrote as follows: "No, I have not forgotten what you wrote me: that David bore mortal hatred toward the enemies of God. And I will never act differently, for if I knew that the King, my father, the Queen, my mother, the late lord, my husband (*feu monsieur mon mari*) and all my children had been cast out by God, I would hate them with a mortal hatred and would wish them in Hell".... What terrible, all-destroying energy the people who felt like this could display! And yet these people denied that there was such a thing as free will.

more profound. For those who are incapable of thinking philosophically this concept does not exist at all; and those who are capable of thinking philosophically grasp it only when they have cast off dualism and realize that, contrary to the assumption of the dualists, there is no gulf between the subject and the object.

The Russian subjectivist opposes his utopian ideals to our capitalist reality and goes no further. The subjectivists are stuck in the bog of dualism. The ideals of the so-called Russian "disciples" [the Marxists] resemble capitalist reality far less than the ideals of the subjectivists. Notwithstanding this, however, the "disciples" have found a bridge which unites ideals with reality. The "disciples" have elevated themselves to monism. In their opinion, in the course of its development, capitalism will lead to its own negation and to the realization of their, the Russian "disciples"—and not only the Russian—ideals. This is historical *necessity*. The "disciple" serves as *an instrument of this necessity* and cannot help doing so, owing to his social status and to his mentality and temperament, which were created by his status.

This, too, is an *aspect of necessity*. Since his social status has imbued him with this character and no other, he not only serves as an instrument of necessity and cannot help doing so, but he *passionately desires, and cannot help desiring*, to do so. This is *an aspect of freedom*, and, moreover, of freedom that has grown out of necessity, i.e., to put it more correctly, it is freedom that is identical with necessity—it is necessity transformed into freedom.\* This freedom is also freedom from a certain amount of restraint; it is also the antithesis of a certain amount of restriction. Profound definitions do not refute superficial ones, but, supplementing them, include them in themselves.

But what sort of restraint, what sort of restriction, is in question in this case? This is clear: the moral restraint which curbs the energy of those who have not cast off dualism; the

\*\*Necessity becomes freedom, not by disappearing, but only by the external expression of their inner identity." Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Nürnberg, 1816.

restriction suffered by those who are unable to bridge the gulf between ideals and reality. Until the individual has won this freedom by heroic effort in philosophical thinking he does not fully belong to himself, and his mental tortures are the shameful tribute he pays to external necessity that stands opposed to him. But as soon as this individual throws off the yoke of this painful and shameful restriction he is born for a new, full life, hitherto never experienced; and his *free* actions become the *conscious and free* expression of necessity. Then he will become a great social force; and then nothing can, and nothing will, prevent him from

*Bursting on cunning falsehood  
Like a storm of wrath divine...*

### III

Again, being conscious of the absolute inevitability of a given phenomenon can only increase the energy of a man who sympathizes with it and who regards himself as one of the forces which called it into being. If such a man, conscious of the inevitability of this phenomenon, folded his arms and did nothing he would show that he was ignorant of arithmetic.

Indeed, let us suppose that phenomenon A must necessarily take place under a given sum of circumstances. You have proved to me that a part of this sum of circumstances already exists and that the other part will exist in a given time, T. Being convinced of this, I, the man who sympathizes with phenomenon A, exclaim: "Good!" and then go to sleep until the happy day when the event you have foretold takes place. What will be the result? The following: In your calculations, the sum of circumstances necessary to bring about phenomenon A included *my activities*, equal, let us say to *a*. As, however, I am immersed in deep slumber, the sum of circumstances favorable for the given phenomenon at time T will be, not S, but  $S - a$ , which changes the situation. Perhaps my place will be taken by another man, who was also on the point of inaction but was saved by the sight of my apathy, which to him appeared to be pernicious.

In that case, force *a* will be replaced by force *b*, and if *a* equals *b*, the sum of circumstances favorable for A will remain equal to S, and phenomenon A will take place, after all at time T.

But if my force cannot be regarded as being equal to zero, if I am a skilful and capable worker, and nobody has replaced me, then we will not have the full sum S, and phenomenon A will take place later than we assumed, or not as fully as we expected, or it may not take place at all. This is as clear as daylight; and if I do not understand it, if I think that S remains S even after I am replaced, it is only because I am unable to count. But am I the only one unable to count? You, who prophesied that the sum S would certainly be available at time T, did not foresee that I would go to sleep immediately after my conversation with you; you were convinced that I would remain a good worker to the end—the force was less reliable than you thought. Hence, you too counted badly. But let us suppose that you had made no mistake, that you had made allowance for everything. In that case, your calculations will assume the following form: you say that at time T the sum S will be available. This sum of circumstances will include my replacement as a *negative magnitude*; and it will also include, as a *positive magnitude*, the stimulating effect on strong-minded men of the conviction that their strivings and ideals are the subjective expression of objective necessity. In that case, the sum S indeed will be available at the time you appointed, and phenomenon A will take place.

I think this is clear. But if this is clear, why was I confused by the idea that phenomenon A was inevitable? Why did it seem to me that it condemned me to inaction? Why, in discussing it, did I forget the simplest rules of arithmetic? Probably because, owing to the circumstances of my upbringing, I already had a very strong leaning toward inaction and my conversation with you served as the drop which filled the cup of this laudable inclination to overflowing. That is all. Only in this sense—as the cause that revealed my moral flabbiness and uselessness—did the consciousness of necessity figure here. It cannot possibly be regarded as the *cause* of this flabbiness; the causes of it are the circumstances of my upbringing. And so... and so—arithmetic is

a very respectable and useful science, the rules of which should not be forgotten even by—I would say, particularly by—philosophers.

But what effect will the consciousness of the necessity of a given phenomenon have upon a strong man who does *not sympathize* with it and *resists* its taking place? Here the situation is somewhat different. It is very possible that it will cause the vigor of his resistance to relax. But when do the opponents of a given phenomenon become convinced that it is inevitable? When the circumstances favorable to it are very numerous and very strong. The realization by its opponents that the phenomenon is inevitable and the relaxation of their energy are merely manifestations of the force of circumstances favorable to it. Such manifestations, in their turn, are a part of the favorable circumstances.

But the vigor of resistance will not be relaxed among all the opponents; among some of them the consciousness that the phenomenon is inevitable will cause the resistance to grow and become transformed into the vigor of despair. History in general, and the history of Russia in particular, provides not a few instructive examples of this sort of vigor. We hope the reader will be able to recall these without our assistance.

Here we are interrupted by Mr. Kareyev, who, while of course disagreeing with our views on freedom and necessity and, moreover, disapproving of our partiality for the “extremes” to which strong men go, nevertheless, is pleased to encounter in the pages of our journal the idea that the individual may be a great social force. The worthy professor joyfully exclaims: “I have always said that!” And this is true. Mr. Kareyev, and all the subjectivists, have always ascribed a very important role to the individual in history. And there was a time when they enjoyed considerably sympathy among advanced young people who were imbued with noble strivings to work for the commonweal and, therefore, naturally were inclined to attach great importance to individual initiative.

In essence, however, the subjectivists have never been able to solve, or even to present properly, the problem of the role of the individual in history. As against the influence of the *laws*

of social-historical progress, they advanced the “activities of critically thinking individuals,” and thus created, as it were, a new species of the factors theory: critically thinking individuals were *one factor* of this progress; its own laws were the *other factor*. This resulted in an extreme incongruity, which one could put up with as long as the attention of the active “individuals” was concentrated on the practical problems of the day and they had no time to devote to philosophical problems. But the calm which ensued in the eighties gave those who were capable of thinking enforced leisure for philosophical reflection, and since then the subjectivist doctrine has been bursting at all its seams, and even falling to pieces, like the celebrated overcoat of Akakii Akakievich. No amount of patching was of any use, and one after another thinking people began to reject subjectivism as an obviously and utterly unsound doctrine.

As always happens in such cases, however, the reaction against this doctrine caused some of its opponents to go to the opposite extreme. While some subjectivists, striving to ascribe the widest possible role to the “individual” in history, refused to recognize the historical progress of mankind as a process expressing laws, some of their later opponents, striving to bring out more sharply the coherent character of this progress, were evidently prepared to forget that *men make history, and, therefore, the activities of individuals cannot help being important in history*. They have declared the individual to be a *quantité négligeable*. In theory, this extreme is as impermissible as the one reached by the more ardent subjectivists. It is as unsound to sacrifice the thesis to the antithesis as to forget the antithesis for the sake of the thesis. The correct point of view will be found only when we succeed in uniting the points of truth contained in them into a synthesis.\*

#### IV

This problem has been of interest to us for some time, and we have long wanted to invite our readers to join us in tackling

\*In our striving for a synthesis, we were forestalled by the same Mr. Kareyev. Unfortunately, however, he went no farther than to admit the truism that man consists of a soul and a body.

it. We were restrained, however, by certain fears: we thought that perhaps our readers had already solved it for themselves and that our proposal would be belated.

These fears have now been dispelled. The German historians have dispelled them for us. We are quite serious in saying this. The fact of the matter is that lately a rather heated controversy has been going on among the German historians over great men in history. Some have been inclined to regard the political activities of these men as the main and almost the *only* spring of historical development, while others have been asserting that such a position is one-sided and that the science of history must have in view, not only the activities of great men, and not only political history, but historical life as a whole (*das Ganze des geschichtlichen Lebens*).

One of the representatives of the latter trend is Karl Lamprecht, author of *The History of the German People*. Lamprecht's opponents accused him of being a "collectivist" and a materialist; he was even placed on a par with—*horrible dictu* [horrible to say]—the "Social-Democratic atheists," as he expressed it in winding up the debate. When we became acquainted with his views we found that the accusations hurled against this poor savant were utterly groundless. At the same time we were convinced that the present-day German historians were incapable of solving the problem of the role of the individual in history. We then decided that we had a right to assume that the problem was still unsolved even for a number of Russian readers, and that something could still be said about it that would not be altogether lacking in theoretical and practical interest.

Lamprecht gathered a whole collection (*eine artige Sammlung*, as he expresses it) of the views of prominent statesmen on their own activities in the historical milieu in which they pursued them; in his polemics, however, he confined himself for the time being to references to some of the speeches and opinions of Bismarck. He quoted the following words, uttered by the Iron Chancellor in the North German Reichstag on April 16, 1869:

"Gentlemen, we can neither ignore the history of the past nor create the future. I would like to warn you against the mistake

that causes people to advance the hands of their clocks, thinking that thereby they are hastening the passage of time. My influence on the events I took advantage of is usually exaggerated; but it would never occur to anyone to demand that *I should make history*. I could not do that even in conjunction with you, although together, we could resist the whole world. We cannot make history; we must wait while it is being made. We will not make fruit ripen more quickly by subjecting it to the heat of a lamp; and if we pluck the fruit before it is ripe we will only prevent its growth and spoil it."

Referring to the evidence of Joly, Lamprecht also quotes the opinions which Bismarck expressed more than once during the Franco-Prussian war. Again, the idea that runs through these opinions is that "we cannot make great historical events, but must adapt ourselves to the natural course of things and limit ourselves to securing what is already ripe." Lamprecht regards this as the profound and whole truth. In his opinion, a modern historian cannot think otherwise, provided he is able to peer into the depths of events and not restrict his field of vision to too short an interval of time. Could Bismarck have caused Germany to revert to natural economy? He would have been unable to do this even at the height of his power. General historical circumstances are stronger than the strongest individuals. For a great man, the general character of his epoch is "*empirically given necessity*."

This is how Lamprecht reasons, calling his view a universal one. It is not difficult to see the weak side of this "universal" view. The above quoted opinions of Bismarck are very interesting as a psychological document. One may not sympathize with the activities of the late German Chancellor, but one cannot say that they were insignificant, that Bismarck was distinguished for "quietism." It was about him that Lassalle said: "The servants of reaction are no orators; but God grant that progress has servants like them." And yet this man, who at times displayed truly iron energy, considered himself absolutely impotent in face of the natural course of things, evidently regarding himself as a simple instrument of historical development. This proves once again that one can see phenomena in the light of necessity

and at the same time be a very energetic statesman. But it is only in this respect that Bismarck's opinions are interesting; they cannot be regarded as a solution of the problem of the role of the individual in history.

According to Bismarck, events occur of themselves, and we can secure what they prepare for us. But every act of "securing" is also an historical event. What is the difference between such events and those that occur of themselves? Actually, nearly every historical event is simultaneously an act of the "securing" by somebody of the already ripened fruit of preceding development and a link in the chain of events which are preparing the fruits of the future. How can acts of "securing" be opposed to the natural course of things? Evidently, Bismarck wanted to say that individuals and groups of individuals operating in history never were and never will be all-powerful. This, of course, is beyond all doubt. Nevertheless, we would like to know what their power—far from omnipotent, of course—depends on; under what circumstances it grows and under what circumstances it diminishes. Neither Bismarck nor the learned advocate of the "universal" conception of history who quotes him answers these questions.

It is true that Lamprecht gives more reasonable quotations.\* For example, he quotes the following words of Monod, one of the most prominent representatives of contemporary historical science in France:

"Historians are too much in the habit of paying attention only to the brilliant, clamorous and ephemeral manifestations of human activity, to great events and great men, instead of depicting the great and slow changes of economic conditions and social institutions, which constitute the really interesting and intransient part of human development—the part which, to a certain extent, may be reduced to laws and subjected, to a certain extent, to exact analysis. Indeed, important events and individuals are important precisely as signs and symbols

\*Leaving aside Lamprecht's other philosophical and historical essays, we refer to his essay, "Der Ausgang des geschichtswissenschaftlichen Kampfes," *Die Zukunft* 1897, No. 41.

of different moments of the aforesaid development. But most of the events that are called historical have the same relation to real history as the waves which rise up from the surface of the sea, gleam in the light for a moment and break on the sandy shore, leaving no trace behind them, have to the deep and constant motion of the tides."

Lamprecht declares that he is prepared to put his signature to every one of these words. It is well known that German savants are reluctant to agree with French savants and the French are reluctant to agree with the German. That is why the Belgian historian Pirenne was particularly pleased to emphasize in *Revue Historique* the fact that Monod's conception of history coincides with that of Lamprecht. "This harmony is extremely significant," he observed. "Evidently, it shows that the future belongs to the new conception of history."

## V

We do not share Pirenne's pleasant expectations. The future cannot belong to vague and indefinite views, and such, precisely, are the views of Monod and particularly of Lamprecht. Of course, one cannot but welcome a trend which declares that the most important task of the science of history is to study social institutions and economic conditions. This science will make great progress when such a trend definitely becomes consolidated.

In the first place, however, Pirenne is wrong in thinking that this is a new trend. It arose in the science of history as far back as the twenties of the 19th century; Guizot, Mignet, Augustin Thierry and, subsequently, Tocqueville and others, were its brilliant and consistent representatives. The views of Monod and Lamprecht are but a faint copy of an old but excellent original. Secondly, profound as the views of Guizot, Mignet and the other French historians may have been for their time, much in them has remained unelucidated. They do not provide a full and definite solution of the problem of the role of the individual in history. And the science of history must provide this solution if its representatives are destined to rid themselves

of their one-sided conception of their subject. The future belongs to the school that finds the best solution of this problem, among others.

The views of Guizot, Mignet and the other historians who belonged to this trend were a reaction against the views on history that prevailed in the 18th century and constituted their antithesis. In the 18th century the students of the philosophy of history reduced everything to the conscious activities of individuals. True, there were exceptions to the rule even at that time: the philosophical-historical field of vision of Vico, Montesquieu and Herder, for example, was much wider. But we are not speaking of exceptions; the great majority of the thinkers of the 18th century regarded history exactly in the way we have described.

In this connection it is very interesting to peruse once again the historical works of Mably, for example. According to Mably, Minos created the whole of the social and political life and ethics of the Cretes, while Lycurgus performed the same service for Sparta. If the Spartans "spurned" material wealth, it was due entirely to Lycurgus, who "descended, so to speak, into the depths of the hearts of his fellow-citizens and there crushed the germ of love for wealth" (*descendit pour ainsi dire jusque dans le fond du cœur des citoyens*, etc.).\* And if, subsequently, the Spartans strayed from the path the wise Lycurgus had pointed out to them, the blame for this rests on Lysander, who persuaded them that "new times and new conditions called for new rules and a new policy."† Researches written from the point of view of such conceptions have very little affinity with science, and were written as sermons solely for the sake of the moral "lessons" that could be drawn from them.

It was against such conceptions that the French historians of the period of the Restoration revolted. After the stupendous events at the end of the 18th century it was absolutely impossible any longer to think that history was made by more or less prominent and more or less noble and enlightened individuals

\**Œuvres Complètes de l'abbé de Mably*, London, 1783, IV, 3, 14-22, 24, 192.

†*Ibid.*, 10.

who, at their own discretion, imbued the unenlightened but obedient masses with certain sentiments and ideas. Moreover, this philosophy of history offended the plebeian pride of the bourgeois theoreticians. They were prompted by the same feelings that revealed themselves in the 18th century in the rise of bourgeois drama. In combating the old conceptions of history, Thierry used the same arguments that were advanced by Beaumarchais and others against the old aesthetics.\* Lastly, the storms which France had just experienced very clearly revealed that the course of historical events by no means was determined solely by the conscious actions of men; this circumstance alone was enough to suggest the idea that these events were due to the influence of some hidden necessity, operating blindly like the elemental forces of nature, but in accordance with certain immutable laws.

It is an extremely remarkable fact—which nobody, as far as we know, has pointed to before—that the French historians of the period of the Restoration applied the new conception of history as a process conforming to laws most consistently in their works on the French Revolution. This was the case, for example, in the works of Mignet. Chateaubriand called the new school of history fatalistic. Formulating the tasks which it set the investigator, he said:

"This system demands that the historian shall describe without indignation the most brutal atrocities, speak without love about the highest virtues and with his glacial eye see in social life only the manifestation of irresistible laws due to which every phenomenon occurs exactly as it inevitably had to occur."†

This is wrong, of course. The new school did not demand that the historian should be impassive. Augustin Thierry even said quite openly that political passion, by sharpening the mind of the investigator, may serve as a powerful means of discovering

\*Compare his first letter on *l'Histoire de France* with *l'Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux* in the first volume of *Œuvres complètes de Beaumarchais*.

†*Œuvres complètes de Chateaubriand*, Paris, 1804, VII, 58. We also recommend the next page to the reader; one might think that it was written by Mr. N. Mikhailovsky.

the truth.\* Even only slight familiarity with the historical works of Guizot, Thierry or Mignet would show that they strongly sympathized with the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the lords temporal and spiritual, as well as with its efforts to suppress the demands of the rising proletariat. What is incontrovertible is the following: The new school of history arose in the twenties of the 19th century at a time when the bourgeoisie had already vanquished the aristocracy, although the latter was still striving to restore some of its old privileges.

The proud consciousness of the victory of their class was reflected in all the arguments of the historians of the new school. And as the bourgeoisie was never distinguished for knightly chivalry, one can sometimes discern a note of harshness toward the vanquished in the arguments of its scientific representatives. "*Le plus fort absorbe le plus faible*," says Guizot, in one of his polemical pamphlets, "*et il est de droit*." [The strongest absorbs the weakest, and he has a right to do so.] His attitude toward the working class is no less harsh. It was this harshness, which at times assumed the form of calm detachment, that misled Chateaubriand. Moreover, at that time it was not yet quite clear what was meant when it was said that history conformed to certain laws. Lastly, the new school may have appeared to be fatalistic because, striving firmly to adopt this point of view, it paid little attention to the great individuals in history.† Those who had been brought up on the historical ideas of the 18th century found it difficult to accept this. Objections to the views of the new historians poured in from all sides, and then the controversy flared up which, as we have seen, has not ended to this day.

\*See "Considérations sur l'histoire de France," appendix to *Récits des temps Mérovingiens*, Paris, 1840, 72.

†In a review of the third edition of Mignet's *History of the French Revolution*, Sainte-Beuve characterized that historian's attitude toward great men as follows: "In face of the vast and profound popular emotions which he had to describe, and of the impotence and nullity to which the sublimest genius and the saintliest virtue are reduced when the masses arise, he was seized with pity for men as individuals, could see in them, taken in isolation, only their weakness, and would not allow them to be capable of effective action, except through union with the multitude."

In January 1826, in a review in the *Globe* of the fifth and sixth volumes of Mignet's *History of the French Revolution*, Sainte-Beuve wrote as follows:

"At any given moment by the sudden decision of his will, a man may introduce into the course of events a new, unexpected and changeable force, which may alter that course, but which itself cannot be measured owing to its changeability."

It must not be thought that Sainte-Beuve assumed that "sudden decisions" of human will occur without cause. No, that would have been too naive. He merely asserted that the mental and moral qualities of a man who is playing a more or less important role in public life, his talent, knowledge, resoluteness or irresoluteness, courage or cowardice, etc., cannot help having a marked influence on the course and outcome of events; and yet these qualities cannot be explained solely by the general laws of development of a nation; they are always, and to a considerable degree, acquired as a result of the action of what may be called the accidents of private life. We will quote a few examples to explain this idea, which, incidentally, seems to me clear enough as it is.

During the War of the Austrian Succession the French army achieved several brilliant victories and it seemed that France was in a position to compel Austria to cede fairly extensive territory in what is now Belgium; but Louis XV did not claim this territory because, as he said, he was fighting as a king and not as a merchant, and France got nothing out of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. If, however, Louis XV had been a man of a different character, the territory of France would have been enlarged and as a result her economic and political development would have taken a somewhat different course.

As we know, France waged the Seven Years' War in alliance with Austria. It is said that this alliance was concluded as a result of the strong pressure of Madame Pompadour, who had been extremely flattered by the fact that, in a letter to her, proud Maria-Theresa had called her "cousin" or "dear friend" (*bien bonne amie*). Hence, one can say that had Louis XV been a man of stricter morals, or had he submitted less to his favorite's

influence, Madame Pompadour would not have been able to influence the course of events to the extent that she did, and they would have taken a different turn.

Further, France was unsuccessful in the Seven Years' War; her generals suffered several very shameful defeats. Speaking generally, their conduct was very strange, to say the least. Richelieu engaged in plunder, and Soubise and Broglie were constantly hindering each other. For example, when Broglie was attacking the enemy at Villinghausen, Soubise heard the gunfire but did not go to his comrade's assistance, as had been arranged and as he undoubtedly should have done, and Broglie was obliged to retreat.\* The extremely incompetent Soubise enjoyed the protection of the aforesaid Madame Pompadour. We can say again that had Louis XV been less lascivious, or had his favorite refrained from interfering in politics, events would not have turned out so unfavorably for France.

French historians say that there was no need whatsoever for France to wage war on the European continent, and that she should have concentrated all her efforts on the sea in order to resist England's encroachments on her colonies. The fact that she acted differently was again due to the inevitable Madame Pompadour, who wanted to please "her dear friend," Maria-Theresa. As a result of the Seven Years' War, France lost her best colonies, which undoubtedly greatly influenced the development of her economic relations. In this case, feminine vanity appears in the role of the influential "factor" of economic development.

Do we need any other examples? We will quote one more, perhaps the most astonishing one. During the aforesaid Seven Years' War, in August 1761, the Austrian troops, having united with the Russian troops in Silesia, surrounded Frederick near Striegau. Frederick's position was desperate but the Allies were tardy in attacking, and General Buturlin, after facing the enemy for twenty days, withdrew his troops from Silesia, leaving only a

\*Incidentally, others say that Broglie was to blame for not waiting for his comrade, as he did not want to share the laurels of victory with him. This makes no difference to us, as it does not alter the case in the least.

part of his forces as reinforcements for the Austrian General Laudon. Laudon captured Schweidnitz, near which Frederick was encamped, but this victory was of little importance. Suppose, however, Buturlin had been a man of firmer character? Suppose the Allies had attacked Frederick before he had time to entrench himself? They might have routed him, and he would have been compelled to yield to all the victors' demands. And this occurred barely a few months before a new accidental circumstance, the death of Empress Elizabeth, immediately changed the situation greatly in Frederick's favor. We would like to ask: What would have happened had Buturlin been a man of more resolute character, or had a man like Suvorov been in his place?

In examining the views of the "fatalist" historians, Sainte-Beuve gave expression to another opinion which is also worthy of attention. In the aforementioned review of Mignet's *History of the French Revolution*, he argued that the course and outcome of the French Revolution were determined, not only by the general causes which had given rise to the Revolution, and not only by the passions which in turn the Revolution had roused, but also by numerous minor phenomena which had escaped the attention of the investigator and which were not even a part of social phenomena, properly so called. He wrote:

"While the passions [roused by social phenomena] were operating, the physical and physiological forces of nature were not inactive: stones continued to obey the law of gravity; the blood did not cease to circulate in the veins. Would not the course of events have changed had Mirabeau, say, not died of fever, had Robespierre been killed by the accidental fall of a brick or by a stroke of apoplexy, or if Bonaparte had been struck down by a bullet? And will you dare to assert that the outcome would have been the same? Given a sufficient number of accidents, similar to those I have assumed, the outcome might have been the very opposite of what, in your opinion, was inevitable. I have a right to assume the possibility of such accidents because they are precluded neither by the general causes of the Revolution nor by the passions roused by these general causes."



Then he goes on to quote the well-known observation that history would have taken an entirely different course had Cleopatra's nose been somewhat shorter; and, in conclusion, admitting that very much more could be said in defense of Mignet's view, he again shows where this author goes wrong. Mignet ascribes solely to the action of general causes those results which many other, minor, dark and elusive causes had helped to bring about; his stern logic, as it were, refuses to recognize the existence of anything that seems to him to be lacking in order and law.

## VI

Are Sainte-Beuve's objections sound? I think they contain a certain amount of truth. But what amount? To determine this we will first examine the idea that a man can "by the sudden decision of his will" introduce a new force into the course of events which is capable of changing the course considerably. We have quoted a number of examples, which we think very well explain this. Let us ponder over these examples.

Everybody knows that during the reign of Louis XV military affairs steadily went from bad to worse in France. As Henri Martin has observed, during the Seven Years' War the French army, which always had numerous prostitutes, tradesmen and servants in its train, and which had three times as many pack horses as saddle horses, had more resemblance to the hordes of Darius and Xerxes than to the armies of Turenne and Gustavus-Adolphus.\* Archenholtz says in his history of this war that the French officers, when appointed for guard duty, often deserted their posts to go dancing somewhere in the vicinity, and obeyed the orders of their superiors only when they thought fit.

This deplorable state of military affairs was due to the deterioration of the aristocracy, which, nevertheless, continued to occupy all the high posts in the army, and to the general dislocation of the "old order," which was rapidly drifting to its

\**Histoire de France*, 4th edition, XV, 520-21.

doom. These *general* causes alone would have been quite sufficient to make the outcome of the Seven Years' War unfavorable to France. But undoubtedly the incompetence of generals like Soubise greatly increased the chances of failure for the French army which these general causes already provided. Soubise retained his post, thanks to Madame Pompadour; and so we must count the proud Marquise as one of the "factors" significantly reinforcing the unfavorable influence of these general causes on the position of French affairs.

The Marquise de Pompadour was strong, not because of her own strength, but because of the power of the king who was subject to her will. Can we say that the character of Louis XV was exactly what inevitably it was bound to be, in view of the general course of development of social relations in France? No, given the same course of development a king might have appeared in his place with a different attitude toward women. Sainte-Beuve would say that the action of obscure and intangible physiological causes was sufficient to account for this. And he would be right. But, if that is so, the conclusion emerges that these obscure physiological causes, by affecting the progress and results of the Seven Years' War, also in consequence affected the subsequent development of France, which would have proceeded differently if the Seven Years' War had not deprived her of a great part of her colonies. Does not this conclusion, we then ask, contradict the conception of a social development conforming to laws?

No, not in the least. The effect of personal peculiarities in the instances we have discussed is undeniable; but no less undeniable is the fact that such an effect could occur only *in the given social conditions*. After the battle of Rosbach, the French became fiercely indignant with Soubise's protectress. Every day she received numbers of anonymous letters, full of threats and abuse. This very seriously disturbed Madame Pompadour; she began to suffer from insomnia.\* Nevertheless, she continued to protect Soubise. In 1762 she remarked in one of her letters to him that he was not justifying the hopes that had been placed in him, but

\*See *Memoires de madame du Haliffet*, Paris, 1824, 181.

she added: "Have no fear, however, I will take care of your interests and try to reconcile you with the king."\* As you see, she did not yield to public opinion.

Why did she not yield? Probably because French society of that day *had no means of compelling* her to do so. But why was French society of that day unable to do so? It was prevented from doing so by its form of organization, which in turn was determined by the relation of social forces in France at that time. Hence, it is the relation of social forces in the last analysis, which explains the fact that Louis XV's character and the caprices of his favorite could have such a deplorable influence on the fate of France. Had it not been the king who had a weakness for the fair sex, but the king's cook or groom, this would not have had any historical significance.

Clearly, it is not the weakness that is important here, but the social position of the person afflicted with it. The reader will understand that these arguments can be applied to all the above-quoted examples. In these arguments it is necessary to change only what needs changing, for example, to put Russia in the place of France, Buturlin in place of Soubise, etc. That is why we will not repeat them.

It follows, then, that by virtue of particular traits of their character individuals can influence the fate of society. Sometimes this influence is very considerable; but the possibility of exercising this influence, and its extent, are determined by the form of organization of society, by the relation of forces within it. The character of an individual is a "factor" in social development only where, when, and to the extent that social relations permit it to be such.

We may be told that the extent of personal influence may also be determined by the talents of the individual. We agree. But the individual can display his talents only when he occupies the position in society necessary for this. Why was the fate of France in the hands of a man who lacked totally the ability and desire to serve society? Because such was the form of organization of that society. It is the form of organization that in any given period

\*See *Lettres de la marquise de Pompadour*, London, 1772, I.

determines the role and, consequently, the social significance that may fall to the lot of talented or incompetent individuals.

But if the role of individuals is determined by the form of organization of society, how can their social influence, which is determined by the role they play, contradict the conception of social development as a process expressing laws? It does not contradict it; on the contrary, it serves as one of its most vivid illustrations.

Here, however, we must observe the following. The possibility—determined by the form of organization of society—that individuals may exercise social influence opens the door to the role of so-called *accident* in the historical destiny of nations. Louis XV's lasciviousness was an inevitable consequence of the state of his physical constitution, but in relation to the general course of France's development the state of his constitution was *accidental*. Nevertheless, as we have said, it did influence the fate of France and served as one of the causes which determined this fate. The death of Mirabeau, of course, was due to pathological processes which obeyed definite laws. The inevitability of these processes, however, did not arise out of the general course of France's development, but out of certain particular features of the celebrated orator's constitution and out of the physical conditions under which he had contracted his disease. In relation to the general course of France's development these features and conditions were *accidental*. And yet, Mirabeau's death influenced the further course of the Revolution and served as one of the causes which determined it.

Still more astonishing was the effect of accidental causes in the above-mentioned example of Frederick II, who succeeded in extricating himself from an extremely difficult situation only because of Buturlin's irresolution. Even in relation to the general cause of Russia's development Buturlin's appointment may have been accidental, in the sense that we have defined that term, and, of course, it had no relation whatever to the general course of Prussia's development. Yet it is not improbable that Buturlin's irresolution saved Frederick from a desperate situation. Had Suvorov been in Buturlin's place, the history of Prussia might have taken a different course.

It follows, then, that sometimes the fate of nations depends on accidents, which may be called *accidents of the second degree*. "*In allem Endlichen ist ein Element des Zufälligen*," said Hegel. [In everything finite there are accidental elements.] In science we deal only with the "finite"; hence we can say that all the processes studied by science contain some accidental elements. Does not this preclude the scientific cognition of phenomena? No. *Accident is relative*. It appears only at the point of intersection of *inevitable* processes. For the inhabitants of Mexico and Peru, the appearance of Europeans in America was *accidental* in the sense that it did not follow from the social development of these countries. But the passion for navigation which possessed West Europeans at the end of the Middle Ages was not accidental; nor was the fact that the European forces easily overcame the resistance of the natives. The consequences of the conquest of Mexico and Peru by Europeans were also not accidental; in the last analysis, these consequences were determined by the resultant of two forces: the economic position of the conquered countries on the one hand, and the economic position of the conquerors on the other. And these forces, like their resultant, can fully serve as objects of scientific investigation.

The accidents of the Seven Years' War exercised considerable influence upon the subsequent history of Prussia. But their influence would have been entirely different at a different stage of Prussia's development. Here, too, the accidental consequences were determined by the resultant of two forces: the social-political conditions of Prussia on the one hand, and the social-political condition of the European countries that influenced her, on the other. Hence, here too, accidents do not in the least hinder the scientific investigation of phenomena.

We know now that individuals often exercise considerable influence upon the fate of society, but this influence is determined by the internal structure of that society and by its relation to other societies. But this is not all that has to be said about the role of the individual in history. We must approach this question from still another side.

Sainte-Beuve thought that had there been a sufficient number of petty and dark causes of the kind that he had mentioned,

the outcome of the French Revolution would have been the opposite of what we know it to have been. This is a great mistake. No matter how intricately the petty, psychological and physiological causes may have been interwoven, under no circumstances would they have eliminated the great social needs that gave rise to the French Revolution; and as long as these needs remained unsatisfied the revolutionary movement in France would have continued. To make the outcome of this movement the opposite of what it was, the needs that gave rise to it would have had to be the opposite of what they were; and this, of course, no combination of petty causes would ever be able to bring about.

The causes of the French Revolution lay in the character of *social relations*; and the petty causes assumed by Sainte-Beuve could lie only in the *personal qualities of individuals*. The final cause of social relationships lies in the state of the productive forces. This depends on the qualities of individuals only in the sense, perhaps, that these individuals possess more or less talent for making technical improvements, discoveries and inventions. Sainte-Beuve did not have these qualities in mind. No other qualities, however, enable individuals directly to influence the state of productive forces, and, hence, the social relations which they determine, i.e., *economic relations*. No matter what the qualities of the given individual may be, they cannot eliminate the given economic relations if the latter conform to the given state of productive forces. But the personal qualities of individuals make them more or less fit to satisfy those social needs which arise out of the given economic relations, or to counteract such satisfaction.

The urgent social need of France at the end of the 18th century was the substitution for the obsolete political institutions of new institutions that would conform more to her economic system. The most prominent and useful public men of that time were those who were more capable than others of helping to satisfy this most urgent need.

We will assume that Mirabeau, Robespierre and Napoleon were men of that type. What would have happened had premature death not removed Mirabeau from the political stage?

The constitutional monarchist party would have retained its considerable power for a longer period; its resistance to the republicans would, therefore, have been more energetic. But that is all. No Mirabeau could, at that time, have averted the triumph of the republicans. Mirabeau's power rested entirely on the sympathy and confidence of the people; but the people wanted a republic, as the Court irritated them by its obstinate defense of the old order. As soon as the people had become convinced that Mirabeau did not sympathize with their republican strivings they would have ceased to sympathize with him; and then the great orator would have lost nearly all influence, and in all probability would have fallen a victim to the very movement that he vainly would have tried to check.

Approximately the same thing may be said about Robespierre. Let us assume that he was an absolutely indispensable force in his party; but even so, he was not the only force. If the accidental fall of a brick had killed him, say, in January 1793, his place, of course, would have been taken by somebody else, and although this person might have been inferior to him in every respect, nevertheless, events would have taken *the same course* as they did when Robespierre was alive. For example, even under these circumstances the Gironde would probably not have escaped defeat; but it is possible that Robespierre's party would have lost power somewhat earlier and we would now be speaking, not of the *Thermidor*<sup>2</sup> reaction, but of the *Floreal*, *Prairial* or *Messidor* reaction. Perhaps some will say that with his inexorable Terror, Robespierre did not delay but hastened the downfall of his party. We will not stop to examine this supposition here; we will accept it as if it were quite sound. In that case we must assume that Robespierre's party would have fallen not in *Thermidor*, but in *Fructidor*, *Vendemiaire* or *Brumaire*. In short, it may have fallen sooner or perhaps later, but it certainly would have fallen, because the section of the people which supported Robespierre's party was totally unprepared to hold power for a prolonged period. At all events, results "opposite" to those which arose from Robespierre's energetic action are out of the question.

Nor could they have arisen even if Bonaparte had been struck down by a bullet, let us say, at the Battle of Arcole. What he did in the Italian and other campaigns other generals would have done. Probably they would not have displayed the same talent as he did, and would not have achieved such brilliant victories; nevertheless the French Republic would have emerged victorious from the wars it waged at that time because its soldiers were incomparably the best in Europe.

As for the 18th of *Brumaire* and its influence on the internal life of France, here too, *in essence*, the general course and outcome of events would probably have been the same as they were under Napoleon. The Republic, mortally wounded by the events of the 9th of *Thermidor*, was slowly dying. The *Directoire* was unable to restore order which the bourgeoisie, having rid itself of the rule of the aristocracy, now desired most of all. To restore order a "good sword," as Siéyès expressed it, was needed. At first it was thought that General Jourdan would serve in this virtuous role, but when he was killed at Novi, the names of Moreau, MacDonald and Bernadotte were mentioned.\* Bonaparte was only mentioned later; and had he been killed, like Jourdan, he would not have been mentioned at all, and some other "sword" would have been put forward.

It goes without saying that the man whom events had elevated to the position of dictator tirelessly must have been aspiring to power himself, energetically pushing aside and crushing ruthlessly all who stood in his way. Bonaparte was a man of iron energy and was remorseless in the pursuit of his goal. But in those days there were not a few energetic, talented and ambitious egoists besides him. The place Bonaparte succeeded in occupying probably would not have remained vacant. Let us assume that the other general who had secured this place would have been more peaceful than Napoleon, that he would not have roused the whole of Europe against himself, and therefore, would have died in the Tuileries and not on the island of St. Helena. In that case, the Bourbons would not have returned to France at all; for them, such a result would certainly have been

\**La vie en France sous le premier Empire*, de Broc, Paris, 1895, 35-36.

the "opposite" of what it was. In its relation to the internal life of France as a whole, however, this result would have differed little from the actual result. After the "good sword" had restored order and had consolidated the power of the bourgeoisie, the latter would have soon tired of its barrack-room habits and despotism. A liberal movement would have arisen, similar to the one that arose after the Restoration; the fight would have gradually flared up, and as "good swords" are not distinguished for their yielding nature, the virtuous Louis-Philippe perhaps would have ascended the throne of his dearly beloved kinsmen, not in 1830, but in 1820, or in 1825.

All such changes in the course of events to some extent might have influenced the subsequent political, and through it, the economic life of Europe. Nevertheless, under no circumstances would the final outcome of the revolutionary movement have been the "opposite" of what it was. Owing to the specific qualities of their minds and characters, influential individuals can change the *individual features of events and some of their particular consequences*, but they cannot change their general trend, which is determined by other forces.

## VII

Furthermore, we must also note the following. In discussing the role great men play in history, we nearly always fall victim to a sort of optical illusion, to which it will be useful to draw the reader's attention.

In assuming the role of the "good sword" to save public order, Napoleon prevented all the other generals from playing this role, and some of them might have performed it in the same way, or almost the same way, as he did. Once the public need for an energetic military ruler was satisfied, the social organization barred the road to the position of military ruler for all other talented soldiers. The power of this position became a power that was unfavorable to the appearance of other talents of a similar kind.

This is the cause of the optical illusion which we have mentioned. Napoleon's personal power presents itself to us in an

extremely magnified form, for we attribute to him the social power which had brought him to the front and supported him. Napoleon's power appears quite exceptional because the other powers similar to it did not pass from the potential to the real. And when we are asked, "What would have happened if there had been no Napoleon?" our imagination becomes confused and it seems to us that without him the social movement upon which his power and influence were based could not have taken place.

In the history of the development of human intellect, the success of some individual hinders the success of another *individual* much more rarely. But even here we are not free from the above-mentioned optical illusion. When a given state of society sets certain problems before its intellectual representatives, the attention of prominent minds is concentrated upon them until these problems are solved. As soon as they have succeeded in solving them, their attention is transferred to another object. By solving a problem a given talent A diverts the attention of talent B from the problem already solved to another problem. And when we are asked: What would have happened if A had died before he had solved problem X?—we imagine that the thread of development of the human intellect would have been broken. We forget that had A died B, or C, or D might have tackled the problem, and the thread of intellectual development would have remained intact in spite of A's premature demise.

In order that a man who possesses a particular kind of talent may, by means of it, greatly influence the course of events, two conditions are needed: First, this talent must make him more conformable to the social needs of the given epoch than anyone else. If Napoleon had possessed the musical gifts of Beethoven instead of his own military genius he would, of course, not have become an emperor. Second, the existing social order must not bar the road to the person possessing the talent which is needed and useful precisely at the given time. This very Napoleon would have died as the barely known General, or Colonel, Bonaparte had the older order in France existed

another seventy-five years.\* In 1789, Davout, Désaix, Marmont and MacDonald were subalterns; Bernadotte was a sergeant-major; Hoche, Marceau, Lefebvre, Pichegru, Ney, Masséna, Murat and Soult were non-commissioned officers; Augereau was a fencing master; Lannes was a dyer; Gouvion Saint-Cyr was an actor; Jourdan was a peddler; Bessières was a barber; Brune was a compositor; Joubert and Junot were law students; Kléber was an architect; Martier did not see any military service until the Revolution. †

Had the old order continued to exist until our day it would never have occurred to any of us that in France, at the end of the last [the 18th] century, certain actors, composers, barbers, dyers, lawyers, peddlers and fencing masters had been potential military geniuses. ‡

Stendhal observed that a man who was born at the same time as Titian, in 1477, could have lived forty years with Raphael, who died in 1520, and with Leonardo da Vinci, who died in 1519; that he could have spent many years with Corregio, who died in 1534, and with Michelangelo, who lived until 1563; that he would have been no more than thirty-four years of age when Giorgione died; that he could have been acquainted with Tintoretto, Bassano, Veronese, Julian Romano and Andrea del Sarto; that, in short, he would have been the contemporary of all the great painters, with the exception of those who belonged to the Bologna School, which arose a full century later.\*\* Similarly, it may be said that a man who was born in the same year as Wouwermann could have been acquainted per-

\*Probably Napoleon would have gone to Russia, *where he had intended to go just a few years before the Revolution*. Here, no doubt, he would have distinguished himself in action against the Turks or the Caucasian highlanders, but nobody here would have thought that this poor, but capable, officer could have become the ruler of the world under favorable circumstances.

†See *Histoire de France*, V. Durey, Paris, 1893, II, 524-25.

‡In the reign of Louis XV, only one representative of the third estate, Chevert, could rise to the rank of lieutenant-general. In the reign of Louis XVI it was even more difficult for members of this estate to make a military career. See Rambeaud, *Histoire de la civilisation française*, 6th edition, II, 226.

\*\**Historie de la Peinture en Italie*, Paris, 1889, 23-25.

sonally with nearly all the great Dutch painters;\* and a man of the same age as Shakespeare would have been the contemporary of a number of remarkable playwrights. †

It long has been observed that great talents appear whenever the social conditions favorable to their development exist. This means that every man of talent who *actually appears*, every man of talent who becomes a *social force*, is the product of *social relations*. Since this is the case, it is clear why talented people, as we have said, can change only individual features of events, but not their general trend; *they are themselves the product of this trend*; were it not for that trend they never would have crossed the threshold that divides the potential from the real.

It goes without saying that there is talent and talent. "When a fresh step in the development of civilization calls into being a new form of art," rightly says Taine, "scores of talents which only half express social thought appear around one or two geniuses who express it perfectly." ‡ If, owing to certain mechanical or physiological causes unconnected with the general course of the social-political and intellectual development of Italy, Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci had died in their infancy, Italian art would have been less perfect, but the general trend of its development in the period of the Renaissance would have remained the same. Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo did not create this trend; they were merely its best representatives. True, usually a whole school springs up around a man of genius, and his pupils try to copy his methods

\*Terburg, Brower and Rembrandt were born in 1608; Adrain Van-Ostade and Ferdinand Bol were born in 1610; Van der Holst and Gerard Dow were born in 1615; Wouwermann was born in 1620; Werniks, Everdingen and Painaker were born in 1621; Bergham was born in 1624 and Paul Potter in 1629; Jan Steen was born in 1626; Ruisdal and Metsu were born in 1630; Van der Haiden was born in 1637; Hobbema was born in 1638 and Adrian Van der Velde was born in 1639.

†"Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Jonson, Webster, Massinger, Ford, Middleton and Heywood, who appeared at the same time, or following each other, represented the new generation which, owing to its favorable position, flourished on the soil which had been prepared by the efforts of the preceding generation." Taine, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, Paris, 1863, I, 468.

‡*Ibid.*, I, 5.

to the minutest details; that is why the gap that would have been left in Italian art in the period of the Renaissance by the early death of Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci would have influenced strongly many of the secondary features of its subsequent history. But in essence there would have been no change in this history, provided there were no important change in the general course of the intellectual development of Italy due to general causes.

It is well known, however, that quantitative differences ultimately pass into qualitative differences. This is true everywhere, and is therefore true in history. A given trend in art may remain without any remarkable expression if an unfavorable combination of circumstances carries away, one after the other, several talented people who might have given it expression. But the premature death of such talented people can prevent the artistic expression of this trend only if it is too shallow to produce new talent. However, the depth of any given trend in literature and art is determined by its importance for the class or stratum whose tastes it expresses, and by the social role played by that class or stratum; here too, in the last analysis, everything depends upon the course of social development and on the relation of social forces.

### VIII

Thus, the personal qualities of leading people determine the individual features of historical events; and the accidental element, in the sense that we have indicated, always plays some role in the course of these events, the trend of which is determined, in the last analysis, by so-called general causes, i.e., actually by the development of productive forces and the mutual relations between men in the social-economic process of production. Casual phenomena and the personal qualities of celebrated people are ever so much more noticeable than deeplying general causes. The 18th century pondered but little over these general causes, and claimed that history was explained by the conscious actions and "passions" of historical personages. The philosophers of that century asserted that his-

tory might have taken an entirely different course as a result of the most insignificant causes; for example, if some "atom" had started playing pranks in some ruler's head (an idea expressed more than once in *Système de la Nature*).<sup>3</sup>

The adherents of the new trend in the science of history began to argue that history could not have taken any other course than the one it has taken, notwithstanding all "atoms." Striving to emphasize the effect of general causes as much as possible, they ignored the personal qualities of historical personages. According to their argument, historical events would not have been affected in the least by the substitution of some persons for others, more or less capable.\* But if we make such an assumption, we must admit that the *personal element is of no significance whatever in history*, and that everything can be reduced to the operation of general causes, to the general laws of historical progress. This would be going to an extreme which leaves no room for the particle of truth contained in the opposite opinion. It is precisely for this reason that the opposite opinion retained some right to existence. The collision between these two views assumed the form of an antinomy, the first part of which was general laws, and the second part the activities of individuals. From the point of view of the second part the antinomy, history was simply a chain of accidents; from the point of view of the first part it seemed that even the individual features of historical events were determined by the operation of general causes. But if the individual features of events are determined by the influence of general causes and do not depend upon the personal qualities of historical personages, it follows that these features are *determined by general causes* and cannot be changed, no matter how much these personages may change. Thus, the theory assumes a *fatalistic* character.

This did not escape the attention of its opponents. Sainte-Beuve compared Mignet's conception of history with that of

\*According to their argument, i.e., when they began to discuss the tendency of historical events to conform to laws. When, however some of them simply described these phenomena, they sometimes ascribed even exaggerated significance to the personal element. What interests us now, however, are not their descriptions, but their arguments.

Bossuet. Bossuet thought that the force which causes historical events to take place comes from above, that events serve to express the divine will. Mignet sought for this force in the human passions, which are displayed in historical events as inexorably and immutably as the forces of nature. But both regarded history as a chain of phenomena which could not have been different, no matter what the circumstances; both were fatalists; in this respect, the philosopher was not far removed from the priest (*le philosophe se rapproche du prêtre*).

This reproach was justified as long as the doctrine that social phenomena conformed to certain laws reduced the influence of the personal qualities of prominent historical individuals to a cipher. And the impression made by this reproach was all the more strong for the reason that the historians of the new school, like the historians and philosophers of the 18th century, regarded *human nature* as a higher instance, from which all the *general causes* of historical movement sprang, and to which they were subordinated. As the French Revolution had shown that historical events are not determined by the *conscious* actions of men alone, Mignet and Guizot, and the other historians of the same trend, put in the forefront the effect of *passions*, which often rebelled against all control by the mind.

But if passions are the final and most general cause of historical events, then why is Sainte-Beuve wrong in asserting that the outcome of the French Revolution might have been the opposite of what we know it was if there had been individuals capable of imbuing the French people with passions opposite to those which had excited them? Mignet would have said: because other passions could not have excited the French people at that time owing to the very qualities of human nature. In a certain sense this would have been true. But this truth would have had a strongly fatalistic tinge, for it would have been on a par with the thesis that the history of mankind, in all its details, is predetermined by the *general* qualities of human nature. Fatalism would have appeared here as the result of the disappearance of the *individual in the general*. Incidentally, it is always the result of such a disappearance. It is said: "If all social phenomena are inevitable, then our activities cannot have any

significance." This is a correct idea wrongly formulated. We ought to say: If everything occurs as a result of the *general*, then the *individual*, including my efforts, is of no significance. *This* deduction is correct; but it is incorrectly employed. It is meaningless when applied to the modern materialist conception of history, in which there is room also for the *individual*. But it was justified when applied to the views of the French historians in the period of the Restoration.

At the present time, human nature can no longer be regarded as the final and most general cause of historical progress: if it is constant, it cannot explain the extremely changeable course of history; if it is changeable, obviously its changes are themselves determined by historical progress. At the present time we must regard the development of productive forces as the final and most general cause of the historical progress of mankind, and it is these productive forces that determine the consecutive changes in the social relations of men. Parallel with this *general* cause there are *particular* causes, i.e., *the historical situation* in which the development of the productive forces of a given nation proceeds and which, in the last analysis, is itself created by the development of these forces among other nations, i.e., the same general cause.

Finally, the influence of the *particular* causes is supplemented by the operation of *individual* causes, i.e., the personal qualities of public men and other "accidents," thanks to which events finally assume their *individual features*. Individual causes cannot bring about fundamental changes in the operation of *general and particular* causes which, moreover, determine the trend and limits of the influence of individual causes. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that history would have had different features had the individual causes which had influenced it been replaced by other causes of the same order.

Monod and Lamprecht still adhere to the human nature point of view. Lamprecht categorically, and more than once, has declared that in his opinion social mentality is the fundamental cause of historical phenomena. This is a great mistake, and as a result of this mistake the desire, very laudable in itself, to take into account the sum total of social life may lead only



to vapid eclecticism or, among the most consistent, to Kahlitz's arguments concerning the relative significance of the mind and the senses.

But let us return to our subject. A great man is great not because his personal qualities give individual features to great historical events, but because he possesses qualities which make him most capable of serving the great social needs of his time, needs which arose as a result of general and particular causes. In his well-known book on heroes and hero-worship, Carlyle, calls great men *beginners*. This is a very apt description. A great man is a beginner precisely because he sees *further* than others and desires things *more strongly* than others. He solves the scientific problems brought up by the preceding process of intellectual development of society; he points to the new social needs created by the preceding development of social relationships; he takes the initiative in satisfying these needs. He is a hero. But he is a hero not in the sense that he can stop or change the natural course of things, but in the sense that his activities are the conscious and free expression of this inevitable and unconscious course. Herein lies all his significance; herein lies his whole power. But this significance is colossal, and the power is terrible.

Bismarck said that we cannot make history and must wait while it is being made. But who makes history? It is made by the *social man*, who is its *sole "factor."* The social man creates his own, social, relationships. But if in a given period he creates given relationships and not others, there must be some cause for it, of course; it is determined by the state of his productive forces. No great man can foist on society relations which *no longer* conform to the state of these forces, or which *do not yet* conform to them. In this sense, indeed, he cannot make history, and in this sense he would advance the hands of his clock in vain; he would not hasten the passage of time, nor turn it back. Here Lamprecht is quite right: even at the height of his power Bismarck could not cause Germany to revert to natural economy.

Social relationships have their inherent logic; as long as people live in given mutual relationships they will feel, think and act in a given way, and no other. Attempts on the part of

public men to combat this logic also would be fruitless; the natural course of things (this logic of social relationships) would reduce all his effort to nought. But if I know in what direction social relations are changing owing to given changes in the social-economic process of production, I also know in what direction social mentality is changing; consequently, I am able to influence it. Influencing social mentality means influencing historical events. Hence, in a certain sense, I *can make history*, and there is no need for me to wait while "it is being made."

Monod believes that really important events and individuals in history are important only as signs and symbols of the development of institutions and economic conditions. This is a correct although very inexactly expressed idea; but precisely because this idea is correct it is wrong to oppose the activities of great men to "the *slow progress*" of the conditions and institutions mentioned. The more or less slow changes in "economic conditions" periodically confront society with the necessity of more or less rapidly changing its institutions. This change never takes place "by itself"; it always needs the intervention of *men*, who thus are confronted with great social problems. And it is those men who do more than others to facilitate the solution of these problems who are called great men. But solving a problem does not mean being only a "symbol" and a "sign" of the fact that it has been solved.

We think Monod opposed the one to the other mainly because he was carried away by the pleasant catchword "*slow*." Many modern evolutionists are very fond of this catchword. *Psychologically*, this passion is comprehensible: *inevitably* it arises in the respectable milieu of moderation and punctiliousness. . . . But *logically* it does not bear examination, as Hegel proved.

And it is not only for "beginners," not only for "great" men that a broad field of activity is open. It is open for all those who have eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to love their neighbors. The concept *great* is a relative concept. In the ethical sense every man is great who, to use the Biblical phrase, "lays down his life for his friend."

## EDITOR'S NOTES

### *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*

1. The reference is to the school of philosophy that arose in Asia Minor in the sixth century B.C. and adhered to a naive materialism and dialectic. Philosophers of this school held that various kinds of matter formed the foundation of the universe. Thus, Thales considered water to be that foundation, Anaximenes—air, and Heraclitus—fire, etc. The various phenomena of Nature were the result of changes or modifications of that underlying substance.

2. *Hylozoism*—the philosophical doctrine that attributes to matter a species of life or sensation, and draws no distinction between living and non-living matter.

3. The copy of this book preserved in Plekhanov's library has the following marginal remark, in Plekhanov's hand, standing against the quotation from Adler: "Adler has forgotten this." This memorial volume contained Engels' earliest economic work, "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy," which was first published in 1844. An English translation is to be found in the Appendix to Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Dirk J. Struik, ed., New York, 1964.

4. *Modernism*—a trend in Roman Catholic theology at the close of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. It comprised a system of views aimed at reconciling Catholic tenets and contemporary science. In September 1907 this trend was condemned in an encyclical issued by Pope Pius X.

Plekhanov's words regarding the probability of attempts to "supplement Marx" by Thomas Aquinas have proved prophetic. The Neo-Thomists have often made such attempts. For example, Marcel Reding, in his book *St. Thomas Aquinas and Karl Marx*, published in 1953, attempted to show that both Karl Marx and Thomas Aquinas had one and the same teacher, Aristotle, and that there is much in common in their philosophical views. He sees this common feature in "the struggle for the rehabilitation . . . of the material world," in the emphasis laid on the subordination of the particular to the general, and so on.

5. The English editions of the works referred to are: Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, New York, 1939; *Ludwig Feuerbach*, New York, 1941, also in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* (in one volume), New York, 1968; for Plekhanov's preface and notes to the latter work, see his *Selected Philosophical Works* (English edition), Moscow, I, 484-538; Engels, *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, New York, 1935, also in Marx-Engels *Selected Works*; Marx, *Capital*, New York, 1967; Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, New York, 1963.

6. The full title of the first three volumes of this publication is: *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, Hrsg. von Franz Mehring, Stuttgart, 1902, Bd. I, II, III. *Gesammelte Schriften von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels von März 1841 bis Oktober 1850*.

7. Marx's doctor's dissertation can be found in English translation in Norman D. Livergood, *Activity in Marx's Philosophy*, The Hague, 1967, Appendix.

8. *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* were published in Paris, with Karl Marx and Arnold Ruge as editors. Only the first issue, a double number, appeared in 1844, with the following articles by Marx: "On the Jewish Question" (*Selected Essays*, New York, 1926, 40-97); "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Introduction" (Marx and Engels, *On Religion*, Moscow, 1957, 41-58); and the following writings by Engels: "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy" (see Note 3) and "The State of England," a review of *Past and Present* by Thomas Carlyle (Marx and Engels, *Werke*, 1, Berlin, 1958, 525-49).

9. *Pantheism*—a philosophical doctrine that identifies God and Nature, considering the latter as the material manifestation of God. In the 16th and the 17th centuries pantheism was sometimes the vehicle of materialist and atheist ideas, as for instance with Giordano Bruno and Benedict Spinoza.

10. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Holy Family*, Moscow, 1956.

11. Plekhanov had no knowledge of the other works of Marx and Engels dealing with problems of philosophy, such as their *German Ideology*, Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, and Engels's *Dialectics of Nature*, since they were discovered only later.

12. Plekhanov is referring to a book by the Neo-Kantian F. Lange, *A History of Materialism and a Critique of Its Significance Today*.

13. Here, as further, Plekhanov quotes Feuerbach from *Sämliche Werke*, Leipzig, O. Wigand. Bd. I-X, 1846-1866.

14. *Spiritualism*—a religious doctrine in philosophy that considers the spirit as the essence and foundation of the world. In the present context, it is synonymous with idealism.

15. *Substance*—the foundation and essence of all things and phenomena. To the idealist that substance is the spirit, the idea, while to the materialist it is matter. Dialectical materialism denies the existence of unmodifiable substance, and considers matter as being in a state of constant development and change.

16. The quotation is from Feuerbach, *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, *Werke*, IV, 380.

17. *Speculative philosophy*—the general term used to signify idealist philosophical systems based on contemplative reasoning that is divorced from practice and experience.

18. *Epistemology*—the theory of knowledge, that department of philosophy that studies the sources, means and conditions of cognition.

19. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, 82.

20. The quotation is inaccurate: *Sein* (being) has been used instead of *Leiden* (suffering), and the sentence order has been changed. Feuerbach's wording is: *Ehe du die Qualität denkst, fühlst du die Qualität. Dem Denken geht das Leiden voran.* "Before one thinks quality, one feels it. Thought precedes suffering."

21. N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Selected Philosophical Essays* (English edition) Moscow, 1953, 166-84.

22. In referring to the Russian philosophers, including—in this particular instance—Chernyshevsky, Plekhanov laid undue stress on the influence exerted on them by West European representatives of pre-Marxist materialism. This influence was exaggerated. In identifying the materialism of Chernyshevsky and Feuerbach, he overlooked the independent and creative character of Chernyshevsky's views and the significance of his philosophical materialism.

23. *Animism*—the belief, which arose as far back as primitive society, that the forces and phenomena of Nature are endowed with a soul.

24. In the pages referred to by Plekhanov, Gomperz speaks of the fact that the necessity of finding an explanation for the existence of a multitude of closely related objects, particularly of species of animals and plants, leads man to a belief in primordial creatures that dwell in the land of spirits and are the prototypes of things. This tendency of the human mind, Gomperz writes, is the foundation of Plato's doctrine.

25. An expression used by Engels in the preface to *Ludwig Feuerbach*. Engels is characterizing the German philosophy taught at German universities at the close of the 19th century.

26. The full title is: *Festschrift I. Rosenthal zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres gewidmet*, Leipzig, 1906.

27. The reference is to what is known as the philosophy of identity. Its principal representatives were Schelling and Hegel.

28. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, 83.

29. See Marx, "Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy," Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* (New York, 1968), 182. Examination of the manuscript of the first version of the article shows that after writing the words, "In his *Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right* he showed that the mutual relations in society . . ." Plekhanov intended to continue his thought, but then crossed out the words he had put down, and in their stead gave the quotation beginning with the words "legal relations" and inserted the words "he wrote there." The erroneous impression is created that the quotation refers to the *Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right*.

30. Plekhanov is quoting from Engels, "The State of England," *Past and Present* by Thomas Carlyle.

31. Marx, *Capital*, 1, 19.

32. The reference to Hegel's philosophy as "a genuine algebra of revolution" was made by Herzen in Chapter 25, Part 4, of *My Life and Thoughts*. (A. Herzen, U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences Publishing House, 1956, IX, 23).

33. Marx, *Capital*, I, 20.

34. *Wage-Labor and Capital*, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* (1968), 31.

35. The full title of Rousset's hook is: *Les maîtres de la guerre: Frédéric II, Napoléon, Moltke. Essai critique d'après les travaux inédits de M. le général Bonnal*, Paris, 1899.

36. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* (1968), 118.

37. *The Herreros*—the name of a tribe in Southwest Africa. In 1884 they came under the rule of the German imperialists, who instituted a regime of brutal terror with the aim of enslaving the Herreros. They razed villages to the ground, put men, women and children to the sword, and drove the survivors into the desert areas of the country. It took the Germans over 20 years to overcome the heroic resistance offered by this tribe. The struggle reached its climax in the uprising that started in January 1904. In August of that year the Herrero forces were defeated and the pursuit of the insurgents was begun, ending in their savage annihilation in 1907 in the waterless desert of Omaheke.

38. This assertion is typical of Plekhanov's Menshevik conception of the character and the motive forces of the Russian revolution. Since he thought

that in Russia the revolution would follow the pattern of bourgeois revolutions in the West, Plekhanov, like most leaders of the Second International, held the mistaken view that an entire period of history must always separate the bourgeois revolution and the proletarian revolution. Lacking an understanding of the conditions of the new epoch—that of imperialism—Plekhanov thought that in Russia, a predominantly peasant country whose industrial development came later than elsewhere, the time was not yet ripe for a clash between the productive forces and the capitalist production relations. He therefore alleged that there were no objective condition for the socialist revolution.

39. Preface to *Critique of Political Economy*, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* (1968), 182-83.

40. *Ibid.*, 183. On this, and on Plekhanov's discussion which follows, see Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, New York, 1965.

41. Plekhanov evidently is referring to Engels' note to the third (1883) edition of *Capital*, which reads: "Subsequent very searching study of the primitive condition of man, led the author [Marx] to the conclusion that it was not the family that originally developed into the tribe, but that, on the contrary, the tribe was the primitive and spontaneously developed form of human association, on the basis of blood relationship, and that out of the first incipient loosening of the tribal bonds, the many and various form of the family were afterwards developed." See Marx, *Capital*, I, 351n; also Engels' preface to the first edition (1884) of his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, New York, 1942, 5-6.

42. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* (1968), 37.

43. *Ibid.*, 51.

44. Plekhanov is referring to the pamphlet by Bernstein, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*, which came out in March 1889. In particular, Bernstein asserted that "at first Marx and Engels ascribed a far smaller share of influence to non-economic factors . . . than in their later works."

45. Quoted from Engels' letter to J. Bloch, dated September 21-22, 1890, Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, New York, 1942, 476.

46. Quoted from Engels' letter to H. Starkenburg, dated January 25, 1894, Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 517.

47. *Ibid.*, 517-18.

48. *Ibid.*, 518.

49. The concluding words are opposed to the title of Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That May Arise in the Capacity of a Science*.

50. *Fabliau*—short metrical tales of the medieval French poets, usually rough and humorous. They were written in lines of eight syllables, usually rhyming in pairs.

*Chanson de geste*—French: literally a song about exploits, a type of old French epic poem.

51. Plekhanov developed this thought in greater detail in an article entitled, "French Dramatic Literature and French Painting of the 18th Century from the Sociological Standpoint," in which he discussed the social causes giving rise to the school of David. (Plekhanov, *Art and Social Life*, London, 1953, 140-165.)

52. Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 518.

53. The full title of Franz Feuerherd's book is: *Die Entstehung der Stile aus*

*der politischen Ökonomie. Eine Kunstgeschichte, Erster Teil. Der bildende Kunst der Griechen und Römer.* Braunschweig und Leipzig, Verlag von R. Sattler, 1902.

54. The full title of the book by Ernest Chesneau is: *La peinture française au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Les chefs d'école: L. David, Gros, Céricault, Decamps, Ingres, E. Delacroix.* 3<sup>e</sup> édition, Paris, 1883.

55. *Sensationalism*—The philosophical doctrine that all ideas are derived from sensations, and are essentially related to them; denies abstract ideas.

56. *Sankt Max*—a fragment from *The German Ideology* which was published in the journal *Documents of Socialism*. The manuscript of the book was not discovered until much later and was first published in 1932. See Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, Parts I and III, New York, 1939. The complete English translation was published in Moscow, 1964.

57. In 1907, Maximilian Harden, the well-known publicist (Harden was the pen-name of Witkowski) published a number of sensational articles on the corruption and vice among the entourage of Kaiser William II (Lieutenant-General Moltke, F. Eilenburg, etc.). This resulted in a *cause célèbre* which did much to expose the Kaiser's clique.

58. Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* (1968), 432.

59. The agrarian program of the Constitutional-Democratic Party (Cadets) was adopted at its constituent congress in October 1905. In an attempt to win the support of the peasantry, the Cadets introduced into their program a clause on the possibility of extending peasant land ownership at the expense of state, monastic and private lands redeemed at a "just" price. The program even spoke of "forcible alienation" of landowners' land, with this end in view. However, the Cadets were the principal party of the liberal bourgeoisie, and their agrarian policy was directed toward preserving landed proprietorship and developing capitalist relations in agriculture.

60. Preface to *Critique of Political Economy*, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* (1968), 182.

61. G. Plekhanov, *In Defense of Materialism: The Development of the Monist View of History*, London, 1947.

62. The reference is to various currents in Neo-Kantian philosophy, particularly in its Baden school. Rickert, Windelband and other of its representatives tried to prove that there are no objective laws of social development, so that the very science of society cannot exist. Unlike natural science, which, as they claimed, operates only with general concepts and ignores the particular, representatives of this philosophy asserted that the social sciences deal only with individual, non-repetitive events, and consequently are doomed to give merely external descriptions of the phenomena of social life. The Neo-Kantians came out under the slogan of "criticism" (the term used by Kant to characterize his philosophy), and developed the reactionary and idealist aspects of Kant's doctrine. These ideas in Neo-Kantianism were widely used by enemies of Marxism in the struggle against historical materialism.

63. *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, 417.

64. Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family*, 110.

65. These words are to be found in Chernyshevsky's *Critique of Philosophical Prejudices Against Communal Ownership*.

### *The Materialist Conception of History*

1. This essay was first published in September 1897 in *Novoye Slovo* (New Word) on the occasion of the appearance of the French edition of Antonio Labriola's *La concezione materialistica della storia*. Labriola was a pioneer of Marxist thought in Italy. Born in 1843, he lived until 1904, in which year an English translation of this work was published in Chicago under the title, *Essays on the Materialistic Conception of History*. His *Socialism and Philosophy* was also published in English (Chicago, 1906). Labriola's correspondence with Engels was published in Italian.

The polemical edge of this essay by Plekhanov, like many of his writings of the 1880s and 1890s, is turned mainly against the Narodnik theorists like N. K. Mikhailovsky who waged a constant war against Marxism.

2. *Narodnik, Narodism*—From the word *narod*, people; a petty-bourgeois trend in the Russian revolutionary movement that arose in the 1860s and 1870s. The Narodniks called for the abolition of tsardom and the transfer of the landed estates to the peasantry, which they considered to be the main revolutionary force since they saw no prospect for the development of capitalism in Russia and therefore discounted the proletarian role. Seeing the village commune as the germ of socialism, they "went among the people" in the village to arouse them against the tsar. Toward the end of the century, they adopted a conciliatory policy to tsarism and waged a persistent struggle against Marxism.

3. This is the subtitle of the work by Marx and Engels, *Die Heilige Familie*, 1845 (*The Holy Family*).

4. Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, New York, 1969.

5. Antonio Labriola, *Essays on the Materialistic Conception of History*, Chicago, 1904, 151.

6. *Ibid.*, 150.

7. *Ibid.*, 114.

8. *Ibid.*, 118-19.

9. *Ibid.*, 153-54.

10. The reference is to George Henry Lewes. His major philosophical works were *Biographical History of Philosophy*, *Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences* and *Problems of Life and Mind*.

### *The Role of the Individual in History*

1. This essay was first published in 1898 in *Nauchnoye Obozrenie* (Scientific Review) under the pen name of A. Kirsanov.

2. Thermidor was one of the months of the French Revolutionary Calendar, as were Floreal, Prairial, Messidor, Fructidor, Vendémiaire and Brumaire. What Plekhanov is saying, therefore, is simply that the fall of Robespierre's party might have occurred a few months earlier or later than it did.

3. The reference is to *System of Nature*, probably the classic exposition of mechanistic or metaphysical materialism, written by Baron d'Holbach, one of the Encyclopedists, and first published in 1770.

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