Marxisms: Ideologies and Revolution

by Mustapha Khayati

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Mustapha Khayati, then member of the Situationist International, wrote the booklet *Les Marxismes : Idéologies et revolution* for the *Encyclopédie du monde actuel* published in January 1970. It is my belief that Khayati's concise presentation of Marx's revolutionary criticism and the various mutant brands of Marxism is an excellent companion to Debord's 'The Proletariat as Subject and as Representation' in his book, *The Society of the Spectacle*. It is certainly an antidote to the various 'orthodox' readings of Marx.

According to another ex-Situationist, Donald Nicholson-Smith,

> The participation of the "situationist group" in the *Encyclopédie du monde actuel* [EDMA] wasn't official. There were a few small-paying jobs to which some members of the SI devoted themselves. The work consisted in drafting "EDMA cards" and, eventually, monthly booklets. (Each perforated card included a 500- word-long text; each booklet contained around 30 illustrated pages.) At the start, in 1966, it was my wife, Cathy Pozzo di Borgo, and I who began to produce, on a *freelance* basis, this type of card under the direction of André Fougerousse – Cathy's stepfather – for publication by Editions Rencontre in Lausanne. Along with Charles-Henri Favrod, Fougerousse had been (in 1962) one of the founders of this editorial project. […] [M]any of the booklets were written by situationists or ex-situs – even after the dissolution of the movement in 1972. Guy Debord drafted *Le Surréalisme* in September 1968. *La Poésie française de 1945 à nos jours* is attributed to Raoul Vaneigem.[1]

There were other articles written by situs for the *Encyclopédie du monde actuel*, including '*La Peinture moderne*, published in November 1968; *Les Marxismes*, published in January 1970; *L'Affiche*, in September 1974; [and] *Le Golfe Persique*, in October 1974' (the latter being by Khayati as well).[2]

As far as I know Khayati's *Les Marxismes* has not been translated into English before. In my translation I have adjusted many of the quotes from Marx and other Marxists to coincide with currently available English translations (for instance those available in the *Marx Engels Collected Works* and the *Penguin Marx* collection). All of the footnotes are mine.

Note that in the original text there are two important letters of Marx's facing Khayati's text. The first letter faces a section in the first part, 'Labour, "essence" of man'. It is Marx's letter to Vera Zasulich, 8 March 1881 (two years before he died) in which Marx clearly states that his account of the 'genesis of capitalist production' is not a general theory of 'historical inevitability' (as many orthodox Marxists would have it) but rather a 'process [that] is expressly limited to the countries of Western Europe.' Thus Marx continued on to say that the Russian peasant commune, the mir, and its form of communal property was in fact the 'fulcrum' of the development of a communist revolution in Russia, rather

[1] Donald Nicholson-Smith, 'On the *Encyclopédie du monde actuel*. Remarks collected by Gérard Berréby', translated by NOT BORED!, 2014
[2] Ibid.

than an impediment. In writing this Marx put himself against every current of Marxism that developed in the following 40 years.

The second letter appears between the end of the section on Marx and the second section on the ‘Ideologies of the Second International’. Indeed it is a sort of warning to the future from Marx. The letter is to Maurice Lachatre, 18 March 1872 (one year after the Paris Commune). In the letter Marx applauds the idea of dividing *Capital* into 'periodic instalments [...] more accessible to the working class'. However Marx also notes that his 'method of analysis' (the infamous dialectical, 'materialist conception of history') 'makes for somewhat arduous reading in the early chapters'. He continues,

> it is to be feared that the French public, ever impatient to arrive at conclusions and eager to know how the general principles relate to the immediate questions that excite them, may become discouraged because they will not have been able to carry straight on. That is a disadvantage about which I can do nothing other than constantly caution and forewarn those readers concerned with the truth. There is no royal road to learning and the only people with any chance of scaling its sunlit peaks are those who have no fear of weariness when ascending the precipitous paths that lead up to them.

Khayati's Les Marxismes should not be read as either an alternative to reading Marx or a substitute for the development of a radical criticism today. Rather it is a contribution to the criticism of Marx, in particular his continued relevance (and thus need to be read and used), and the troubling development of the Marxisms that have done so much to both advance and obscure the revolutionary project of surpassing capitalism.

All of the footnotes are mine.

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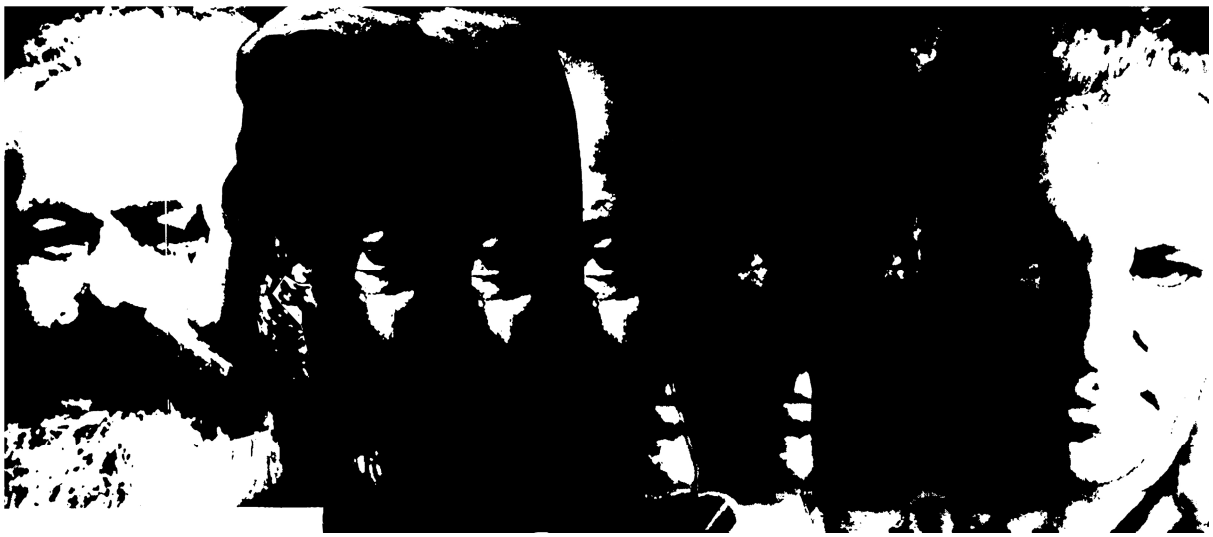
Anthony Hayes
Canberra, April 2015



The Freudo Marxian distortion (a new dance move)

Marxisms: Ideologies and Revolution

by Mustapha Khayati

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For more than a century after the publication of Capital *Karl Marx has taken his place among the great classical authors. Marxism has acquired a rightful place in all the areas of thought, and rare are its adversaries who do not admit to agreeing with some of it. Is this success due to its ambiguities? Can Marxism triumph as the revolution fails? What are the relations established in recent history between Marxism and Karl Marx? And how do we organise the various Marxisms in relation to each other?*

I. The founders and their theory

History of the concept

1. Karl Marx once assured us that "I am not a Marxist."[3] To continue with the paradox of this epigraph, some maintain that "Marxism" and the thought of Karl Marx are far from coinciding. Employed by the political enemies of Marx in the International Workingmen's Association [IWA, aka The First International], the epithet "Marxist" designated the partisans of "authoritarian" methods at the heart of the worker's movement, in opposition to the "anti-authoritarian" anarchist adepts of Bakunin. The term first appeared in book form in 1882 when Paul Brousse[4] published his pamphlet entitled *Le Marxisme dans l'Internationale* [Marxism in the International].[5]

2. Brousse, like the majority of his Bakuninist companions, did not question Marx's thought, but rather denounced him as the "party leader" at the head of a coterie of "agents" and "tacticians" in the IWA: "Marxism does not consist in being a partisan of the ideas of Marx. For instance many of his current opponents, and especially the author of these lines, would in this regard be Marxists... Marxism consists above all in a system which tends not to spread Marxist doctrine, but to impose it in all of its details."

3. The friend and theoretician closest to Marx, Friedrich Engels, tried to make this pejorative reference into a weapon and a prestigious appellation — reluctantly, it is true. But for him as for all the disciples of Karl Marx at this time an unshakeable conviction was established. The anarchists

[3] The reference is to a comment of Karl Marx reported by his closest friend and co-worker, Friedrich Engels, in a letter to Eduard Bernstein (coincidentally the future doyen of reformism), 2-3 November 1882 (*Marx Engels Collected Works vol. 46*, pp. 353-58): "Now what is known as 'Marxism' in France is, indeed, an altogether peculiar product — so much so that Marx once said to [Paul] Lafargue: '*Ce qu'il y a de certain c'est que moi, je ne suis pas Marxiste.*' " (p. 356). The letter dates from the same year as Paul Brousse's work (see below and footnote 2).

[4] "Paul Brousse (French: January 23, 1844 – April 1, 1912) was a French socialist, leader of the possibilistes group. He was active in the Jura Federation, a section of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA), from the northwestern part of Switzerland and the Alsace. He helped edit the Bulletin de la Fédération Jurassienne, along with anarchist Peter Kropotkin. He was in contact with Gustave Brocher between 1877 and 1880, who became anarchist under Brousse's influence. Paul Brousse edited two newspapers, one in French and another in German. He helped James Guillaume publish its bulletin." From wikipedia entry on Paul Brousse.

[5] Khayati is referring to the first use of 'Marxist' in French. It is possible that the German communist and future biographer of Marx, Franz Mehring, used the term 'Marxism' as early as 1879. Cf. Ingo Elbe. 'Between Marx, Marxism, and Marxisms – Ways of Reading Marx's Theory'.

"will bite their fingers for giving us this name," declared Engels. From that moment Marxism was born.

The thought of Marx

1. Beyond the apparent diversity — which continues to feed the multitude of discoveries by different specialists — the profound unity of the theory developed by Karl Marx consists in its critical and revolutionary spirit. The radical critique of all that exists, the total critique "which has no fear of its own results", is the constant and fundamental core of the work of Marx.[6] All attempts at subdividing this work into separate domains thus appear doomed in advance to failure ("Marx the philosopher", "Marx the sociologist", "Marx the economist" or "Political Marx", etc.) because it is contrary to the very spirit of its author.

2. For Marx the "criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism".[7] The suppression of religion became an essential requirement in order to attain the real world. It is man who makes religion and not the contrary. Man "is the world of man", which is to say society and the State produce religion, "the inverted consciousness of the world" because they are themselves "an inverted world".[8] Once the "opium of the people" [is] denounced and revealed in its true dimensions, "the criticism of Heaven turns into the criticism of Earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of law, and the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics"[9]

3. In order to realise the real criticism of religion, we must act practically to abolish the social conditions in which man is "a debased, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being".[10] Once achieved the theoretical critique of religious alienation, i.e. the philosophy which has only interpreted the world (outlined by Hegel and formulated by Feuerbach) must from now on be "transcended" and "realised" at one and the same time, in the conscious transformation of all that exists — in short becoming the conscious "praxis" of its goal. The conscious agent responsible for this task is the oppressed class, those in which are concentrated all the alienations of this world, and whose abolition will set in train those of all the other classes.

4. In accomplishing the "critique of philosophy", the critique of religion discovered that all spheres of human activity, material and spiritual, are in truth the diseased background [*l'arrière-fond malade*] of these morbid representations from the religious sphere. In this regard *On the Jewish Question* revealed a profound analogy between religious alienation and political alienation in bourgeois society and its formal democratic regime.[11] The citizen is a "profane form", an estranged being, "different from the real man".[12] The real truth of man is not "the mind" [or "spirit"] of the philosophers (those "abstract

[6] Letter of Marx to Ruge, Kreuznach, September 1843.
[7] Marx, Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (1843).
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Cf. Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (1843).
[11] Karl Marx. On The Jewish Question (1844).
[12] Ibid. Marx makes a case for the new universal "political" world of the "rights of man and the citizen" ushered in by the victorious bourgeois revolutions, as being a type of "secularisation". Thus the "profane" man, the political ideal of the bourgeois state, is similarly "inverted" as the religious "spiritual" essence of man — bourgeois "man" is thus the secularised "religious" man. Here Marx extended Feuerbach's critique of Hegel that the truth of the holy family can be found in the profane family, etc.

form of estranged man"), more so not even his religious essence, but fundamentally and above all labour and production.[13]

Labour, "essence" of man

1. "Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence," said Marx in *The German Ideology*.[14] Labour is not a partial and separated economic activity, but literally the essence of man. All authentically human activity "hitherto has been labour — that is, industry" (*The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*).[15] Thus all the history of man is nothing other than the process of his activity, conceived as an incessant struggle against nature, and repeated attempts to dominate his own nature. "We see how the history of *industry* and the established *objective* existence of industry are the *open* book of *man's essential powers*, the perceptibly existing human *psychology*." (ibid.) [16]

2. Is this what is sometimes called "economism", or on the contrary a new conception of man and history — of man and nature?[17] Marx, in any case, defined a "new materialism" which was beyond the philosophical "old materialism" whose last representative was Feuerbach. Materialism can only be "historical", by considering the sensible world as the product of "the total living sensuous *activity* of the individuals composing it."[18]

3. From this moment is cast the theoretical bases of a real critique of the existing world, and the critique of the "ideological heaven" is transformed into the critique of the capitalist "earth" — i.e. of religion, philosophy, law, the political State, etc. If labour is the essence of man then private property, the foundation of bourgeois capitalism, condemns the producer to an existence contrary to his essence, since the worker is obliged to "make his life activity, his *essential being*, a mere means to his *existence*."[19] All of capitalist "alienation" is found summarised in this formula. The critique of wage-labour, which is to say proletarian existence, is made therefore in the light of the revolutionary project of the realisation of the "total man" — alienation and its end [*désaliénation*] follow one and the same path.

4. This end of alienation [*désaliénation*] is nothing other than the object of the "communist project". Communism, according to Marx, is the end of human prehistory and the beginning of man's control

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[13] Karl Marx, 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy in General' in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.
[14] Marx & Engels, *The German Ideology* (*Marx Engels Collected Works v. 5*, p. 31)
[15] Cf. 'Private Property and Communism' in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.
[16] Ibid. Cf. 'Private Property and Communism' in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.
[17] This almost certainly refers to then current debates regarding Marx's "economic reduction" and so-called "productivist" ideology. Cornelius Castoriadis was the champion of the former, Jean Baudrillard the latter. Castoriadis accused Marx of reducing all human activity to "economic motivations" (*Marxism and Revolutionary Theory*, 1964/5, aka *The Imaginary Institution of Society* – Part 1). Jean Baudrillard would later call this "productivism" (*The Mirror of Production*, 1973). Both confusingly collapsed Marx and the 'Marxist orthodoxy' established by the Second and Third Internationals. In related attacks Baudrillard and Castoriadis accused Marx and the SI of making labour the "essence" of the human. However both ignored how Marx differentiated between the abstract conception of "labour" and "production in general" and the specific forms such "purposeful" activity, which entailed the material reproduction of the conditions of existence, took under different forms of social organisation.
[18] Marx, *The German Ideology*, Part 1, section B, 'The Illusion of the Epoch' (*Marx Engels Collected Works v. 5*, p. 41)
[19] Trans. amended. Cf. the section 'Estranged Labour' in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (*Marx Engels Collected Works v. 3*, p. 276)

of history. It brings to an end the conflict between man and nature, between man and man. It is "the positive transcendence of all estrangement — that is to say, the return of man from religion, family, state, etc., to his *human*, i.e., *social*, existence."[20] Thus understood communism is the true solution of all antagonisms: "is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution."[21]

Necessity of revolution

1. The masterwork of Marx, *Capital*, is not so much an economic treatise but "a critique of political economy", as is indicated by the very subtitle of the work.[22] Despite references to scientific rigour, Marx did not seek to fashion an economic work, nor more so even to enrich economic science. The theory expounded in *Capital* aimed above all to dismantle the foundations of political economy, the bourgeois "science" par excellence. The critique of the commodity, of the commodity-form of production, is its core. And "fetishism" is the concept which summarises this critique.

2. Proletarian revolution becomes a necessity inherent in the very being of the proletariat. Thus it "is revolutionary or it is nothing."[23] Its internationalism is not an "ideological" option but results from the very force of circumstance. The bourgeoisie and its commodity system have unified the world, and so the struggle against these can only be carried out globally. The last class revolution, the socialist revolution has for its aim the definitive abolition of classes and the establishment of a society in which nothing can anymore exist "independently of individuals."[24] The abolition of the State is an indispensable condition of this. Henceforth the "self-emancipation of the workers", the liberation of the class can only be carried out collectively, without any representation (i.e. the bourgeois principle).[25] This "dictatorship of the proletariat" will abolish simultaneously private property, the hierarchical principle, classes and the State, the commodity and wage-labour.[26]

3. Such was the fundamental nub of Marx's theory when it appeared. For more than a century it has rarely been accepted, in its totality, by all its disciples. Already when he was alive, against the

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[20] Note the use of 'transcendence' in the English and 'suppression' in the French: "it is the positive *suppression* of all alienation, the departure of man from religion, family, the State, etc., and his return to human existence — that is to say social." (my emphasis). Cf. 'Private Property and Communism' in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

[21] Ibid.

[22] *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, by Karl Marx.

[23] Letter of Marx to Schweitzer, 13 February 1865. Among the subjects of this letter Marx wrote to Schweitzer about how working class 'combinations' and trade unions would help in freeing the working class from the 'state tutelage' of Prussia (in particular). Marx contrasted this with the support the German Lassallean's gave to the legalisation of worker's cooperatives. Marx argued that state guaranteed cooperatives were 'worthless as an economic measure and serv[ed], furthermore, to extend the system of state tutelage, to bribe a section of the working class and to emasculate the movement.' Perhaps ironically, since Marx's time the trade union movement has become precisely what he criticised the cooperative movement for (and sometimes even blended with the modern day banking-cooperative 'movement'). Just as he pointed out to Schweitzer then, the 'working class is revolutionary or it is nothing', which is to say, there is no revolutionary working class apart from its own self-organisation against capital. As the Situationists full well knew in the 1960s the modern trade union movement is the working class organised *for capital*, as disposable, albeit 'regulated', wage-labour for sale.

[24] Marx, *The German Ideology*, Part 1, section D. 'Proletarians and Communism', subsection 'Forms of Discourse' (*Marx Engels Collected Works v. 5*, p. 81),

[25] The quote paraphrases the infamous opening salvo of the IWA's General Rules written by Marx**:** "Considering, that the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves […]". Khayati, by calling 'representation' the 'bourgeois principle' draws parallels, after Marx, between the alienation of essential powers and the representational alienation of 'political powers' invested in politicians vis-à-vis the supposed 'non-political' bourgeois civil society. Cf. *On The Jewish Question* and below.

[26] 'Between capitalist and communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.' Cf. Karl Marx. Critique of the Gotha Program, part 4.

deformation of his thought, Marx wrote in protest, “I am not a Marxist.” On one hand Marxism would become not only an ideology (in Marx’s sense of the term) but a justification for the politics of the reformist and Stalinist workers parties. On the other hand it never ceased to inspire, outside of political machines and workers struggles, a “critical and revolutionary” reflection faithful to its origins if not its aims.

4. The process of the “ideologisation” of the thought of Marx had commenced with Engels, his most faithful companion, toward the end of his life. The accord established between him and the leaders of the most powerful workers’ party of the time, German Social Democracy, helped to school and became the justification of numerous political compromises. By admitting parliamentarism as a possible means of reaching socialism, Engels — in what is known as his testament — seemed to approve the reformist politics of the leaders of the workers’ movement.[27] Though formerly he had insisted on the “scientific” character of socialism, he had opened the way for all the ideologues of the Second International (essentially Kautskyism) — in a word to Marxist ideology.

[27] Khayati is not referring to Engels Will of 1893 or its Codicil of 1895 (neither of which make any mention of parliamentarism) but rather to Engels’ ‘Introduction to Karl Marx’s *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*’ — his last substantial work before his death in 1895. In this text Engels referred approvingly to the ‘[s]low propaganda work and parliamentary activity’ necessary to ‘win over the great mass of people’. Indeed he painted a rosy picture, particularly in Germany, of the growing electoral power of the German Social Democratic Party and the need ‘to keep this growth going’ and ‘not fritter […] away this daily increasing shock force in vanguard skirmishes, but to keep it intact until the decisive day’. However from the foregoing we can see that Engels is ambivalent, both supporting electorialism and still envisaging a ‘decisive day’ requiring a ‘shock force’. However this very sentence was omitted from the first published version of this piece, in the German Social Democratic publication *Die Neue Zeit*. According to the editors of the Marx Engels Collected Works the Executive of the Social Democratic Party requested that Engels tone down his references to revolutionary overthrow, something that Engels apparently complained about but submitted to nonetheless. Cf. *Marx Engels Collected Works v. 27*, pp. 521-22, and fn. 449, pp. 632-33.

II. The ideologies of the Second International

Kautskyism — or, "orthodoxy"

1. In 1883, the very year of the death of Marx, Karl Kautsky (born 1855), founded a theoretical journal *Die Neu Ziet* [The New World] which, over the years, would be the international tribune of Marxist socialism. Becoming institutionalised, Marxism from now on is known as a "science". Its "revolutionary spirit" declines to the profit of "rigour" and "objectivity". It is no longer the "theory of the real movement", the critical analysis of "all that unfolds before our eyes", but the "science" that the workers' movement must rigorously understand and apply to achieve its goal. The socialism baptised scientific is one thing and the workers' movement is another; their coincidence will be the work of specialists of Social Democracy.

2. For Kautsky Marxism is less a revolutionary theory expressing the development of the proletarian struggle than a scientific method applied to all the domains of human activity. From which two directions of research or rather application: practically in the political world, [with] the workers' party in the heart of bourgeois society; theoretically by filling in all the lacunae that the works of Marx and Engels were unable to tackle.

3. From 1891 the German Social Democratic Party adopted a Marxist program at the Erfurt Congress, essentially due to Kautsky.[28] But to the extent that it officially became Marxist the workers' movement appeared to move away more and more from the revolutionary path to adopt a reformism at once syndicalist and parliamentary. The fidelity proclaimed to Marx did not exclude a practice often opposed to the thought of Marx. Kautskyism is the ideology of the management of the German workers' party, the first ideology of the "workers' bureaucracy".

4. In the countries where this bureaucracy had yet to form and where the workers' movement was still organically weak, "orthodoxy" remained much more faithful to the revolutionary intention of Marx. In Russia, Plekhanov (nicknamed the father of Russian Marxism) led the struggle against populism and taught a whole generation of young revolutionaries in his country. He founded the first Russian Social Democratic Party. In Italy it was above all Antonio Labriola who would introduce a Marxism cleared of all ideological traces (economism and scientism).

Bernstein — or, "revisionism"

1. Student of Engels (and also the beneficiary of his will), Edouard Bernstein was at the same time the teacher of Kautsky. Co-author of the socialist program of Erfurt, he had also written numerous historical works (notably on the origin of Christianity and the English Revolution). But the work which would be his most celebrated — either cursed or heaped with praises — was a collection of articles written between 1896 and 1899, and collected under the title *Theoretical Socialism and Practical Social Democracy* [aka *Evolutionary Socialism*], a work which would make him the leader of the "revisionist" school.

2. Bernstein had the ambition — the first — of drawing out the ultimate consequences of the practical and theoretical lessons of the experience of German Social Democracy. Basing his analysis on the English example and on the real situation of the German party, he set out to make a broad "revision" of Marxist thought in the light of the latest developments of capitalism. Denouncing the flagrant contradictions between the revolutionary ideology of his party and its resolutely reformist practice,

[28] Cf. Karl Kautsky. The Class Struggle (Erfurt Program).

Bernstein called on his comrades to have the courage "to emancipate itself from a phraseology which is actually outworn and if it would make up its mind to appear what it is in reality to-day: a democratic, socialistic party of reform."[29]

3. Claiming the "testament" of Engels, Bernstein and later his German and Russian disciples, called into question the Marxist theory of value, the concentration of capital, surplus-value and pauperisation. On the political level they contested the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and found that it was marred by "Blanquism."

4. Despite the outcry against "Bernsteinian revisionism" throughout all of the Social-Democratic International, the workers' parties did not however cease their reformist practice; on the contrary it became more and more likely. The "revolutionary orthodoxy" was reduced there to a mechanical repetition of formulas without content.

Sorel — or, revolutionary syndicalism

1. Many historians feel that the true introduction of Marxism into France was not made by either Paul Lafargue or Jules Guesde, founders of the first Marxist workers' party (the POF in 1879[30]) and authors of some books of socialist propaganda and the vulgarisation of "historical materialism", nor even by Gabriel Deville, author of a very clear and faithful summary of the first volume of *Capital* (so said Engels). The thought of Marx was known and utilised in France across two revues of short duration: *L'Ere nouvelle* [The New Era] (1893-94) and *Le Devenir social* ([The Future Society] (1895-98). A young philosopher was one of the principle animaters of these journals — Georges Sorel.

2. On the basis of a total rejection of the reformist politics of the social-democratic parties Sorel proposed to restore the fundamental idea of Marxism: the class struggle. Locked into parliamentarism and the illusion of one day conquering the State, he felt that the socialists had given up on the proletarian revolutionary path. Consequently parliamentarism was not only "utopian" but downright counter-revolutionary. [Thus] The heir of the Marxist politics of the class struggle can only be "revolutionary syndicalism".

3. According to Georges Sorel the proletariat can in no way emancipate itself by constituting itself "on the model of the old social classes, by putting themselves in the school of the bourgeoisie." If, as Marx had put it, the proletarians can only seize the productive forces by abolishing "the current mode of appropriation", "how can we accept that they can preserve the quintessence of the bourgeois mode of appropriation, which is to say the forms of traditional governance?" The sole organised and developed forces, capable of preventing "the return of the past" are the unions. These purely working class organisations — that must "remain exclusively working class" — must wrest from the municipality and the State, one for one, all their attributes, in order to enrich the proletarian organisations in the process of formation." The unions are already the kernel of the future socialist society in the heart of capitalist society.

4. "To summarise my thought in a formula, I say that the entire future of socialism resides in the autonomous development of the workers' unions. " Such is the leitmotif that we find throughout the work of Georges Sorel, from the *Avenir socialiste des Syndicats* [Socialist Future of the Unions],

[29] Eduard Bernstein. Evolutionary Socialism, from Chapter III: The Tasks and Possibilities of Social Democracy, Section (d) The Most Pressing Problems of Social Democracy.
[30] The Parti Ouvrier Français (POF, or French Workers' Party) was founded in 1880 by Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue. The party originated with in a split from Federation of the Socialist Workers of France, founded 1879.

through to the *Décomposition du Marxisme* [Decomposition of Marxism] and *Réflexions sur la Violence* [Reflections on Violence].

German Revolutionary Marxism

1. Already, toward the end of the 19th century, a left current was developing within social-democracy. However its first theoretical statement was made in response to Bernstein. In 1899 Rosa Luxembourg published *Reform or Revolution* in which she advocated the violent fall of the capitalist system and refuted the "theory of the adaptation of capitalism". For her it was solely the class struggle, together with the development of the internal contradictions of the system, which could lead to the "general crisis" and facilitate thus the "passage to socialism" by means of a revolution. Summarising her theory she took up Bernstein's famous phrase and reversed it: "The movement is nothing, the end everything."[31]

2. It is the "Luxembourgist" current which, on the day after the night of the 4th of August 1914 and after the adhesion of German Social Democracy to the war program of the Second Reich, raised the flag of "proletarian internationalism" and fought to rouse the working class. Rosa Luxembourg, Clara Zetkin, Karl Liebknecht and Franz Mehring created with some other German revolutionary groups the Spartakusbund [the Spartacus League] and called for the establishment of the power of the workers' and soldiers' councils, by proclaiming that proletarian revolution can only result from "the action of the great massive millions of the people, destined to fulfil a historic mission and to transform historical necessity into reality."[32]

3. Faithful to her idea of the self-emancipation of workers, Rosa Luxembourg after having strongly criticised the "ultra-centralist" conception of the Leninist organisation saluted the Russian Revolution of 1917, but by submitting it to criticism (*The Russian Revolution*, 1918).[33] Some months later she would fall with Liebknecht , victim of the social democratic repression lead by Noske against the Spartakus insurgents in Berlin in January 1919. Despite this these tendencies in the heart of the German proletariat were not eliminated, and "German Revolutionary Marxism" would reappear in the 1920s.

Russian Revolutionary Marxism

1. In 1902 with his *What is to be Done?* Lenin opened an important debate in the heart of social-democracy, a debate which would conclude in the split of the RSDLP [Russian Social Democratic Labour Party] into two factions: the Bolsheviks (the majority) lead by Lenin, and the Mensheviks (the minority) lead by Plekhanov and Martov. Although this split had taken place over the "question of organisation", the two tendencies would diverge more and more over the very meaning of the revolution in Russia and the interpretation of Marxism. Their separation was definitive from the outbreak of the war of 1914.

2. Parallel to the left current in Germany a current develop in Russia hostile to reformism and compromise with the liberal bourgeoisie. Despite the hesitations of Lenin, Trotsky defended the theses of "permanent revolution". For him, the workers alone could accomplish the revolutionary uprising in Russia. It would fall upon the proletariat to lead the movement against tsarist autocracy because the Russian bourgeoisie was too weak. "To imagine that the dictatorship of the proletariat is

[31] Bernstein had famously written in Evolutionary Socialism that "The Final goal, no matter what it is, is nothing; the movement is everything." Cf. Luxembourg. Reform or Revolution. Introduction.
[32] Rosa Luxemburg. What Does the Spartacus League Want?
[33] Rosa Luxemburg. The Russian Revolution.

in some way automatically dependent on the technical development and resources of a country is a prejudice of 'economic' materialism simplified to absurdity. This point of view has nothing in common with Marxism" (Trotsky, *Results and Prospects*).[34]

3. Lenin only responded to these theses when, in April 1917 he proclaimed "All power to the Soviets."[35] After calling for Marxist analyses on the key question of the State against what he called the opportunists deformation of the leaders of the Second International, the author of the *State and Revolution* abandoned his theory of the party and committed to the struggle for the conquest of power by the workers and peasants councils. But, from 1918, he returned to the primacy of the party over the class, and it fell to the opposition to defend the principle of workers' autonomy (which would be at the centre of all the new currents of non-orthodox Marxism while Marxism-Leninism would blossom as the official ideology of Internationale Communism, now led by Stalin).

[34] Leon Trotsky. Results and Prospects. Chapter IV. Revolution and the Proletariat.
[35] Even though 'All Power to the Soviets!' is a slogan which Lenin used as the title of an agitational article in July 1917, and is an effective summary of the general thrust of his April Theses, the slogan itself does not appear in the latter.

III. Marxism-Leninism

Before Stalinism

1. As the first proletarian revolution to triumph, the Russian Revolution produced an exceptional effect on the international workers' movement. Saluted with enthusiasm by revolutionaries of the entire world, it became the example to follow for the entire proletariat, for which it constituted the "avant-garde". From 1918 the Bolsheviks lived in anticipation of the revolution in the West; the signs of capitalist decomposition, entering into its final phase of "imperialist putrefaction", were everywhere.

2. The Hungarian Soviet Revolution, led by Bela Kun (1918), found its best theoretician in the person of the young philosopher Georg Lukács (born 1885). Via a series of articles published between 1919 and 1923 Lukács became one of the principle representatives of revolutionary Marxism in the Third International. When in 1924 he published his work *History and Class Consciousness*, it had the effect of a bomb. Condemned by the new communist orthodoxy as revisionist, the author inaugurated his career as a "Marxist-Leninist" thinker — characterised by a series of auto-critiques — and disavowed his earlier work. The fundamental idea of this earlier work challenged on every point the mechanical materialism of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Crticism* (1908).

3. At the same time in North Italy the workers' movement of occupations of the factories of Turin had as its principle theoretician Antonio Gramsci, founder of the Italian Communist Party. Passionate reader of Machiavelli, Gramsci discovered in the revolutionary party the "Prince" of modern times and in the workers' councils the form adequate for realising proletarian power. The party is that by which the class accedes to the consciousness of its tasks, and Marxism rather than being a neutral science (to explain the economy and society) is rather the "philosophy of praxis" that must be realised. The revolutionary party can only speak the truth of the class, but this truth can only be practically affirmed in the councils, "where all become masters and disciples".

4. For Gramsci, to prepare the working class to reach its historic goal effectively signified "organising the proletariat as the dominant class".[36] The discovery of workers' councils by the proletariat in revolution is the principle fact of revolutions of the 20th century. Worker councils are "the most suited organ […] which the proletariat has managed to develop from the living and fertile experience of the community of labour."[37] It is the foundation of the "New Order".[38]

Stalinism

1. The metamorphosis of the Russian Revolution and the development of the bureaucracy into a new ruling class transformed the revolutionary theory of Marx into an ideology which served to justify the political system installed in Russia. Orthodox and dogmatic Marxism-Leninism would have its priests and its faithful. [Andrei] Zhdanov, in the name of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, legislated for the entire international Communist movement in matters of doctrine — in art and in science and philosophy. "Diamat" (Dialectical materialism) and "social realism" constituted the "fabulous science" which reduced to nothing the "cosmopolitan and objectively bourgeois" discoveries (such as psychoanalysis, Einstein's theory of relativity, impressionist painting, etc.).

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[36] Antonio Gramsci. The development of the revolution.
[37] Antonio Gramsci. Unions and councils.
[38] *L'Ordine Nuovo* (The New Order) was the name of a communist-syndicalist paper broadly sympathetic with the Russian Revolution of October 1917 that Gramsci helped set up in May 1919.

2. Two French examples can illustrate this model of Marxist orthodoxy: Roger Garaudy and Louis Althusser. The first followed a political and ideological itinerary more or less faithful to the evolution of the PCF [*Parti communiste français*] while he had been one of the leading members between 1945 and 1969. The first philosophical work by which he distinguished himself was his doctoral thesis presented at the Sorbonne in 1953. The *Théorie matérialiste de la connaissance* [*The Materialist theory of consciousness*] was inscribed within a Zhdanovvist orthodoxy which defined Marxism as a "scientific" philosophy. Upholding an ideological dogmatism against the critical tendencies which developed after the death of Stalin, Garaudy only converted to liberalism several years later.[39] Author of *Humanisme et Marxisme, Qu'est-ce que la morale marxiste?* and *Dieu est mort* (an important work on Hegel),[40] he became the director of the "Centre for the Study and Research of Marxism" and the organiser of the "Weeks of Marxist Thought".[41] In *D'un réalisme sans ravage* [For a realism without shores] he opened up to "bourgeois" art and defended Kafka, Saint John-Perse and Picasso. At the same time he engaged in a grand dialogue with Christians and participated in many debates with Catholic and protestant theologians searching for a convergence and entente. Champion of an "open and humanist socialism" Garuady rallied to the cause of the Dubcek experiment in Czechoslovakia and strongly condemned the Russian intervention which earned him the reprimand of his party.

3. Louis Althusser, without acceding to the party hierarchy, developed in relative independence a new interpretation of the work of Marx. Teacher at the Ecole normale supérieure where he gathered numerous disciples, he aligned himself with the great philosophical tradition of "scientific socialism": "Marx – Engels – Lenin – Stalin – Mao Zedong".[42] While remaining a member of the party Althusser was not afraid of proclaiming that "Stalin is one of the great philosophers of our time." In his two works *For Marx* and *Reading Capital* (2 volumes), he proposed to found a "Marxist philosophy", to complete the scientific theory of history discovered by the founders. In this project he borrowed from modern, generally structuralist philosophers (such as Claude Levi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan and even Gaston Bachelard) new concepts to the end of illustrating a new reading of Marx.

4. According to Althusser, all the work of the young Marx is not yet "Marxist", and remains influenced by Hegel and Feuerbach — thus also the fundamental concept of "alienation". The scientific and thus specifically "Marxist" work of Marx begins with *Capital*, which is to say after 1867. Denying all humanist aspects in the thought of Marx and insisting on its scientific character, Althusser undertook a return to an old orthodoxy, thoroughly loyal to Stalinism. His influence in the

[39] After Khrushchev revealed details of the 'Stalin cult' at the 20th congress of the Communist Part of the Soviet Union in 1956 many members of the International Communist Parties turned away from Stalinism (for example the philosopher Henri Lefebvre and the founders of the *Arguments* journal in France). Garaudy initially stuck by Stalinism, though expressed a criticism of sorts via a turn to what was then a new, radical 'humanistic' interpretation of Marxism-Leninism based on reading the 'young' Marx. Garaudy's fidelity to Stalinism was similar to another party philosopher, Louis Althusser. However unlike Althusser he finally criticised the party over the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968. Garaudy was expelled from the party in 1970 — presumably after the writing of this document. His future intellectual direction led him to embrace the Islamic religion some years after the publication of this document. I would say that this is not too dissimilar to either the Stalinism he previously shared with Althusser, or Althusser's deistic conception of Marxism —complete with a social universe at the command of mysterious 'structural' forces.

[40] Respectively 'Humanism and Marxism', 'What is a Marxist morality?', and 'God is dead'.

[41] The *Centre d'Études et de Recherches Marxistes* and *Les semaines de la pensée marxiste* were organised by the French Communist Party. The former was intended to organise 'intellectual labour' within the party, as well as publish Marxist-Leninist theoretical journals. The latter was the name given to public meetings, particularly debates with prominent non-party intellectuals (for e.g. J.-P. Sartre) through which the Communist Party would demonstrate its purported intellectual weight and power. The "Weeks of Marxist Thought" were under the direction of Roger Garaudy in the early 1960s.

[42] That is to say the "Maoist" schema of Marxism-Leninism (and thus Stalinism). Maoism is probably more accurately described as "Maoist-Stalinism".

heart of the young student and left intellectual milieus, apparently earned him a certain tolerance from a section of the leadership of the PCF who fear the reinforcement of pro-Chinese currents within and without the party.[43]

Post-Stalinist revisionism

1. First the death of Stalin and then the "Khrushchev report" of the 20th Congress of Communist Party of the Soviet Union triggered an immense campaign of criticism across the entire international Communist movement. But it was above all the insurrection of Budapest which marked the era of the "thaw". The intellectuals of the Eastern countries provide the best introduction to the fundamental themes of Marxist thought to traverse the vast critique which the "revisionists" of these countries authored during the course of the years 1956 and '57. Through their critique of totalitarian Stalinism they prepared the weapons which armed the insurgents of Poland and Hungary against the bureaucratic dictatorship. According to this critique all the alienations analysed by Marx are detected in socialist society and denounced as such. The struggle for the total "dis-alienation" of humanity signifies the entry into a new historic phase.

2. The crushing of the Hungarian insurrection provoked a profound crisis of consciousness among European communist intellectuals. Many quit the party and discovered the "fresh air of criticism". In France all of the participants in the *Arguments* journal had lived through the experience of Stalinism and the drama of de-Stalinisation. *Arguments* wanted to be the tribune of a "New Marxism", open, humanist and anti-dogmatic. Putting everything into question, it specialised itself in "questioning". Its principle editors: Kostas Axelos, Edgar Morin, Jean Duvignaud, [Pierre] Fougeyrollas, F[rançois] Châtelet, L[ucien] Goldmann, G[eorges] Lapassade and Henri Lefebvre, all contributed to the elaboration of this new Marxism, "de-dogmatised" and "revised".

3. Henri Lefebvre, former member of the PCF, passes for what many specialists consider the most brilliant of this school. Operating a type of return to the sources from *Problemes actuels du Marxisme* (1958), he wrote a critical autobiography, *La Somme et le Reste*, in which he updated the themes sketched in his first works (*La Conscience mystifiée*, 1936, and *Critique de la Vie quotidienne*, 1947). Insisting on the importance of the concept of alienation in the thought of Marx and the critique of the modern world, Henri Lefebvre declared war on dogmatism and analysed the Stalinist phenomenon. All of this work made him worthy of being considered by the "orthodox" the "leader of international revisionism". Though focused on the critique of modern society and the reestablishment of Marxist theory in its original truth, some of Lefebvre's students reckon that his work suffers from concessions to fashionable thinkers, notably in the sociological and linguistic domains.[44]

[43] "pro-Chinese currents" is what we would today name "pro-Maoist".
[44] Khayati had been a student of Lefebvre's at the University of Strasbourg in the first half of the 1960s.

IV. “German Marxism”

The “German Left”

1. The revolutionary wave which unfolded in Europe after the First World War began to ebb from 1921. This Western counter-revolution had repercussions upon the Russian Revolution, transformed in turn by the “restoration of capitalism” in a bureaucratic form. There were German revolutionaries, direct heirs of Rosa Luxembourg and Liebknecht who were the first to bitterly remark upon this new course of history. The split in the German Communist Party, some months after its creation into two factions, allowed the “left” to organise in a new party: the KAPD (Communist Workers’ Party of Germany). Its theoreticians and foreign partisans attempted to renovate revolutionary Marxism by reviving its “critical and revolutionary” core.

2. Starting from the slogan “all power to the workers’ councils” the left took Bolshevik Leninism for its essential target, considered as the heir of social-democratic orthodoxy and its reformism. It is this current that Lenin stigmatised in his *Left Wing Communism: an infantile disorder*, under the label “ultra-left”. The “council communists” thought that by subordinating the international Communist movement to the national requirements of Russia — that is to say the State — the Third International repeated the history of the Second. It sacrificed “proletarian internationalism to national imperialism”.

3. The theoretician who most marked the German school was Karl Korsch (1886-1961). When in 1923 he published his essay *Marxism and Philosophy* he collided head-on with Kautsky and his disciples as much as triumphant Bolshevism. The common disapproval raised against Korsch and his book was that it could lead one to believe that the Leninist movement was still an integral part of Kautsky’s orthodoxy. Denounced as a “revisionist” heresy, *Marxism and Philosophy* had the ambition of re-establishing the dialectical relation which exists between the revolutionary movement actually happening, and its theoretical expression beyond science and bourgeois philosophy. Elevating “dialectical materialism” into an invariable law of historical and cosmic processes — as in fact Engels and Lenin had done — is, according to Korsch, contrary to the thought of Marx. It is at the root of the transformation of the theory of proletarian revolution into a “worldview” [“*Weltanschauung*”], without a link to the class struggle.

Freudo-Marxism

1. Parallel to the development of the counter-revolution, a prodigious intellectual movement flourished in the Weimar Republic. From the confrontation of Marxism and psychoanalysis would be born a whole new thought known under the name of the Frankfurt School, whose progenitor was Wilhelm Reich.

2. Heretical psychoanalyst and non-orthodox member of the Communist Party, Reich saw his works burnt simultaneously in the USSR, Hitler’s Germany and in the United States. His work is considered by Herbert Marcuse as “[t]he most serious attempt to develop the critical social theory implicit in Freud”.[45] Reich was active for years in both the psychoanalytic circle of Vienna and among the young Communists in Berlin. He finished by being excluded from both. For the author of *The Sexual Revolution* only a radical transformation of society can end neuroses: the future of psychoanalysis is not in the clinic but in social revolution. Marxism and psychoanalysis have one and the same end,

[45] Herbert Marcuse. *Eros and Civilisation: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966 [1955], p. 239.

such is the conclusion of the writings of Reich between 1930 and 1933, notably in *The Sexual Struggle of Youth*.

3. It is these ideas that are taken up and developed in the light of German philosophy (principally Hegelian) and the burgeoning social sciences, by those promoting the social research at Frankfurt: Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Fromm. *Authority and the Family* furnished the themes of their first investigations, which would be continued in America through *Studies on the Personality and Family*. In 1947 Adorno and Horkheimer published *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, in essence dedicated to Hegel, philosopher of the bourgeois revolution. Denouncing the "philosophical mystification" of Heidegger, "heir of national-socialist decadence", Adorno attacked all the forms of totalitarianism, among which he placed Stalinist Marxism.

4. Herbert Marcuse inaugurated his work with a reflection on Hegel. Publishing *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity* in 1932, he contributed with Adorno and Horkheimer to a deepening of the relation between Marx and Freud. In 1941 he published *Reason and Revolution*, a Marxist interpretation of Hegel. He settled accounts with official Marxism in *Soviet Marxism*, defined as the "ideological superstructure" of a repressive society dominated by the Stalinist bureaucracy. "If there is a fundamental difference between the Western and the Soviet societies, there is also a strong current toward assimilation" wrote Marcuse. But the work which made him most celebrated throughout the world is *Eros and Civilisation*, in which he criticised the pessimism of Freud on the future of culture and violently attacked the culturalism of Eric Fromm, accusing him of preaching adaptation to oppression. In *One Dimensional Man* he described in a desperate fashion the totalitarian structures in modern society, without opposition nor revolutionary perspective.

V. The Situationists

1. Created in 1957 by an international group of revolutionary artists, the Situationist International became from the beginning of the 1960s, after various exclusions, "an international group of theoreticians", rooted in Dada and Surrealism, but above all the historical thought of Hegel and Marx. Taking up some fundamental themes from Marx, they developed a unitary critique of the contemporary world, at once geographic — by denouncing all of the powers which exist in the modern world as oppressive — and historic — by criticising all of the "alienations" developed by modern capitalism, whether in the bourgeois West or the bureaucratic East.

2. The central theme developed in Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* is the objective critique of the current capitalist world conceived as "spectacle". The theory of the spectacle takes up the analysis of the commodity made in the first chapter of *Capital*. In the spectacle all is inverted, the real becomes ideology, and the latter is "materialised" becoming a type of reality to the extent that it invades all the domains of social and individual life. The absence of real life is the dominant mode of existence in modern society. The spectacle is only in reality a moment of the development of commodity production, in which "the true is a moment of the false". Like religion the spectacle separates man from his being, and makes him move in the unreal world of the image.

3. After having made the critique of urbanism, culture and ideology, Debord evoked the perspective of liberation in the revolutionary movement of the proletariat returning to the assault on capitalist society. A proletarian revolution alone, conscious of its goals, can put an end to the alienations which dominate the life of all. Such a revolution must have for its program the realisation of the absolute power of the workers' councils and the abolition of all separations: the State, classes, family, religion and ideology, etc.

4. Published at the end of 1967 Raoul Vaneigem's book *The Revolution of Everyday Life* [Fr: *Traité de Savoir-Vivre à l'Usage des Jeunes Générations*] became one of the references of the rebellious youth of May 1968. Setting out from a total critique of the old world, Raoul Vaneigem attempted to draw out from the tradition of refusal and contemporary contestation the new lines of revolutionary force. Whereas Debord started from the dispassionate critique [*la critique froide*] of the spectacle, Vaneigem, from the perspective of "radical subjectivity", denounced the survival which is opposed to true life, and is the lot of everyone in the world of oppression. But both converge in the radical refusal of all that exists independently of men, and in the deepening of the project of "total man". "Generalised self-management" is the goal and the means for realising such a project, the proletariat (that is to say all those "who have no power over their lives and who know it") will be the subject.

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APPENDICES

[reproduced on page 4 of the original *Les Marxismes*, facing the section in the first part above, 'Labour, "essence" of man']

MARX TO VERA ZASULICH[*]

IN GENEVA

London, 8 March 1881

41 Maitland Park Road, N.W.

Dear Citizen,

A nervous complaint which has assailed me periodically over the last ten years has prevented me from replying any sooner to your letter of 16 February. I am sorry that I cannot provide you with a concise exposé, intended for publication, of the question you have done me the honour of putting to me. Months ago I promised the St Petersburg Committee to let them have a piece on the same subject.[**] I hope, however, that a few lines will suffice to dispel any doubts you may harbour as to the misunderstanding in regard to my so-called theory.

In analysing the genesis of capitalist production I say:

'At the core of the capitalist system, therefore, lies the complete separation of the producer from the means of production ... the basis of this whole development is the *expropriation of the agricultural producer*. To date this has not been accomplished in a radical fashion anywhere except in England... But *all the other countries of Western Europe* are undergoing the same process' *(Capital*, French ed., p. 315).

Hence the 'historical inevitability' of this process is *expressly* limited to the *countries of Western Europe*. The cause of that limitation is indicated in the following passage from Chapter XXXII:

'Private property, based on personal labour ... will be supplanted by *capitalist private property*, based on the exploitation of the labour of others, on wage labour' (I.e., p. 341).

In this Western movement, therefore, what is taking place is the *transformation of one form of private property into another form of private property.* In the case of the Russian peasants, *their communal property* would, on the contrary, have to be *transformed into private property.*

Hence the analysis provided in *Capital* does not adduce reasons either for or against the viability of the rural commune, but the special study I have made of it, and the material for which I drew from original sources, has convinced me that this commune is the fulcrum of social regeneration in Russia, but in order that it may function as such, it would first be necessary to eliminate the deleterious influences which are assailing it from all sides, and then ensure for it the normal conditions of spontaneous development.

I have the honour to be, dear Citizen,

Yours very faithfully,

Karl Marx

First published, in Russian, in *Marx-Engels*

Printed according to the original *Archives*, Book I, Moscow, 1924, translated from the French

* Marx's letter to Zasulich, which became known to many Russian revolutionary Marxists, including Georgi Plekhanov, was preceded by several drafts, which are included in Volume 24 of the present edition. The letter was published in English for the first time in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1955

** Marx is probably referring to the request that he write a book on the Russian village commune made by the revolutionary Narodnik Nikolai Morozov in December 1880 on behalf of the Executive Committee of Narodnaya Volya. The Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) group, was a revolutionary Narodnik (Populist) organisation formed in August 1879, when the secret revolutionary society Zemlya i Volya (Land and Freedom) split into Narodnaya Volya and Chorny Peredel (the Black or General Redistribution). The founders of the Narodnaya Volya were professional revolutionaries, advocates of a political campaign against the autocracy.

[reproduced on page 9 of the original *Les Marxismes*, between the end of the section on Marx and the second section on the ‘Ideologies of the Second International’ above.]

MARX TO MAURICE LACHATRE[*]

IN SAN SEBASTIAN

London, 18 March 1872

To Citizen Maurice La Châtre

Dear Citizen,

I applaud your idea of publishing the translation of *Das Kapital* in periodic instalments. In this form the work will be more accessible to the working class and for me that consideration outweighs any other.

That is the bright side of your medal, but here is the reverse. The method of analysis I have used, a method not previously applied to economic subjects, makes for somewhat arduous reading in the early chapters, and it is to be feared that the French public, ever impatient to arrive at conclusions and eager to know how the general principles relate to the immediate questions that excite them, may become discouraged because they will not have been able to carry straight on. That is a disadvantage about which I can do nothing other than constantly caution and forewarn those readers concerned with the truth. There is no royal road to learning and the only people with any chance of scaling its sunlit peaks are those who have no fear of weariness when ascending the precipitous paths that lead up to them.

I remain, dear Citizen,

Yours very sincerely,

Karl Marx

First published in: K. Marx, *Le Capital*, Printed according to the original Vol. I, Paris, 1872
Translated from the French

[*] The facsimile of this letter was published as the preface to the French edition of *Capital* (see Note 436). In English it appeared for the first time in: Karl Marx, *Capital,* Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954.

The French authorised edition of Volume I of *Capital* was published between 17 September 1872 and November 1875. The translation was done by Joseph Roy, who began in February 1872 and completed work in late 1873. The quality of the translation largely failed to satisfy Marx; besides, he was convinced that the original needed to be revised to adapt it to French readers.