

swordsmanship, but to bring genuine pearls into the light of day.

I wrote a dialogue of about 24 pages: "Cleanthes, or the Starting Point and Necessary Continuation of Philosophy." Here art and science, which had become completely divorced from each other, were to some extent united, and like a vigorous traveller I set about the task itself, a philosophical-dialectical account of divinity, as it manifests itself as the idea-in-itself, as religion, as nature, and as history. My last proposition was the beginning of the Hegelian system. \* \* \*

For some days my vexation made me quite incapable of thinking; I ran about madly in the garden by the dirty water of the Spree, which "washes souls and dilutes the tea."<sup>1</sup> I even joined my landlord in a hunting excursion, rushed off to Berlin and wanted to embrace every street-corner loafer.

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Owing to being upset over Jenny's illness and my vain, fruitless intellectual labours, and as the result of nagging annoyance at having had to make an idol of a view that I hated, I became ill, as I have already written to you, dear Father. When I got better I burnt all the poems and outlines of stories, etc., imagining that I could give them up completely, of which so far at any rate I have not given any proofs to the contrary.

While I was ill I got to know Hegel from beginning to end, together with most of his disciples. Through a number of meetings with friends in Stralow I came across a Doctors' Club,<sup>2</sup> which includes some university lecturers and my most intimate Berlin friend, Dr. Rutenberg. In controversy here, many conflicting views were expressed, and I became ever more firmly bound to the modern world philosophy from which I had thought to escape. \* \* \*

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Your ever loving son,  
*Karl*

Please, dear father, excuse my illegible handwriting and bad style; it is almost 4 o'clock, the candle has burnt itself out, and my eyes are dim; a real unrest has taken possession of me, I shall not be able to calm the turbulent spectres until I am with you who are dear to me.

Please give greetings from me to my sweet, wonderful Jenny. I have read her letter twelve times already, and always discover new delights in it. It is in every respect, including that of style, the most beautiful letter I can imagine being written by a woman.

1. Heine.

2. The Doctors' Club was founded by representatives of the radical wing of the Hegelian school in Berlin in 1837. Among its members were lecturer on theology of Berlin University Bruno Bauer, gymnasium history teacher

Karl Friedrich Köppen, and geography teacher Adolf Rutenberg. The usual meeting place was the small Hippel café. The Club, of which Marx was also an active member, played an important part in the Young Hegelian movement.

## To Make the World Philosophical

KARL MARX

Marx's doctoral dissertation, "Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature," written between 1839 and 1841, is chiefly of interest for the following excerpts arguing that after a great world philosophy—Aristotle's in antiquity and Hegel's now—the system's disciples feel an imperious urge to make the world "philosophical." What this would mean Marx hinted in the dissertation's foreword, where he saluted Prometheus' revolt against the gods as a proclamation of "human self-consciousness as the highest divinity." To transform the world in the image of Hegelian philosophy would mean to make of man in existential reality the divinity that, as Marx saw it, Hegel had already made him in thought.\*

The last two paragraphs of the selection are taken from Marx's preparatory material for the dissertation, "Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy."

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Also in relation to Hegel it is mere ignorance on the part of his pupils, when they explain one or the other determination of his system by his desire for accommodation and the like, hence, in one word, explain it in terms of *morality*. They forget that only a short time ago they were enthusiastic about all his idiosyncrasies [*Einseitigkeiten*], as can be clearly demonstrated from their writings.

If they were really so affected by the ready-made science they acquired that they gave themselves up to it in naive uncritical trust, then how unscrupulous is their attempt to reproach the Master for a hidden intention behind his insight! The Master, to whom the science was not something received, but something in the process of becoming, to whose uttermost periphery his own intellectual heart's blood was pulsating! On the contrary, they rendered themselves suspect of not having been serious before. And now they oppose their own former condition, and ascribe it to Hegel, forgetting however that his relation to his system was immediate, substantial, while theirs is only a reflected one.

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It is a psychological law that the theoretical mind, once liberated in itself, turns into practical energy, and, leaving the shadowy empire of Amenthes as *will*, turns itself against the reality of the world existing without it. (From a philosophical point of view, however, it is important to specify these aspects better, since from the

\* For a fuller statement of this interpretation, see Robert C. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, pp. 75–80.

specific manner of this turn we can reason back towards the immanent determination and the universal historic character of a philosophy. We see here, as it were, its *curriculum vitae*<sup>1</sup> narrowed down to its subjective point.) But the *practice* of philosophy is itself *theoretical*. It's the *critique* that measures the individual existence by the essence, the particular reality by the Idea. But this *immediate realisation* of philosophy is in its deepest essence afflicted with contradictions, and this its essence takes form in the appearance and imprints its seal upon it.

When philosophy turns itself as will against the world of appearance, then the system is lowered to an abstract totality, that is, it has become one aspect of the world which opposes another one. Its relationship to the world is that of reflection. Inspired by the urge to realise itself, it enters into tension against the other. The inner self-contentment and completeness has been broken. What was inner light has become consuming flame turning outwards. The result is that as the world becomes philosophical, philosophy also becomes worldly, that its realisation is also its loss, that what it struggles against on the outside is its own inner deficiency, that in the very struggle it falls precisely into those defects which it fights as defects in the opposite camp, and that it can only overcome these defects by falling into them. That which opposes it and that which it fights is always the same as itself, only with factors inverted.

This is the one side, when we consider this matter *purely objectively* as immediate realisation of philosophy. However, it has also a *subjective* aspect, which is merely another form of it. This is *the relationship of the philosophical system* which is realised *to its intellectual carriers*, to the individual self-consciousnesses in which its progress appears. This relationship results in what confronts the world in the realisation of philosophy itself, namely, in the fact that these individual self-consciousnesses always carry a *double-edged demand*, one edge turned against the world, the other against philosophy itself. Indeed, what in the thing itself appears as a relationship inverted in itself, appears in these self-consciousnesses as a double one, a demand and an action contradicting each other. Their liberation of the world from un-philosophy is at the same time their own liberation from the philosophy that held them in fetters as a particular system. \* \* \*

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As in the history of philosophy there are nodal points which raise philosophy in itself to concretion, apprehend abstract principles in a totality, and thus break off the rectilinear process, so also there are moments when philosophy turns its eyes to the external world, and

1. Course of life.

no longer apprehends it, but, as a practical person, weaves, as it were, intrigues with the world, emerges from the transparent kingdom of Amnethes and throws itself on the breast of the worldly Siren. That is the carnival of philosophy, whether it disguises itself as a dog like the Cynic, in priestly vestments like the Alexandrian, or in fragrant spring array like the Epicurean. It is essential that philosophy should then wear character masks. As Deucalion, according to the legend, cast stones behind him in creating human beings, so philosophy casts its regard behind it (the bones of its mother are luminous eyes) when its heart is set on creating a world; but as Prometheus, having stolen fire from heaven, begins to build houses and to settle upon the earth, so philosophy, expanded to be the whole world, turns against the world of appearance. The same now with the philosophy of Hegel.

While philosophy has sealed itself off to form a consummate, total world, the determination of this totality is conditioned by the general development of philosophy, just as that development is the condition of the form in which philosophy turns into a practical relationship towards reality; thus the totality of the world in general is divided within itself, and this division is carried to the extreme, for spiritual existence has been freed, has been enriched to universality, the heart-beat has become in itself the differentiation in the concrete form which is the whole organism. The division of the world is total only when its aspects are totalities. The world confronting a philosophy total in itself is therefore a world torn apart. This philosophy's activity therefore also appears torn apart and contradictory; its objective universality is turned back into the subjective forms of individual consciousness in which it has life. But one must not let oneself be misled by this storm which follows a great philosophy, a world philosophy. Ordinary harps play under any fingers, Aeolian harps only when struck by the storm.

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# For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing

KARL MARX

The watchword of the young Karl Marx, as of his Young Hegelian associates generally, was *Kritik*—criticism. In this early article, printed in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* in 1844 in the form of a letter to Arnold Ruge, Marx elaborated the idea of criticism into a program of this journal, of which he and Ruge were editors. His future strictures on utopian socialist plans, in the *Communist Manifesto* and other later writings, were prefigured in the dismissal here of the communist utopias of writers like Étienne Cabet as a “dogmatic abstraction.” The *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (*German-French Annals*) came out in Paris in February, 1844, in the German language. Only one double issue of the journal was published.

The translation was made by Dr. Ronald Rogowski for this edition.

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M. to R.  
Kreuznach  
September, 1843

I am delighted that you are resolved and turn your thoughts from backward glances at the past toward a new undertaking. In Paris, then, the old university of philosophy (*absit omen!*) and the new capital of the new world. What is necessary will arrange itself. I do not doubt, therefore, that all obstacles—whose importance I do not fail to recognize—will be removed.

The undertaking may succeed, however, or not; in any case I will be in Paris at the end of this month, since the air here makes one servile and I see no room at all in Germany for free activity.

In Germany, everything is being forcibly repressed, a true anarchy of the spirit has burst out, stupidity itself reigns supreme, and Zürich obeys commands from Berlin; hence it becomes ever clearer that a new gathering point must be sought for the really thinking and independent minds. I am convinced that our plan would meet

a real need, and real needs must surely also be able to find real fulfillment. I therefore have no doubts about the enterprise if only we undertake it seriously.

The inner difficulties seem to be almost greater than the external obstacles. For even if there is no doubt about the “whence,” all the more confusion reigns about the “whither.” Apart from the general anarchy which has erupted among the reformers, each is compelled to confess to himself that he has no clear conception of what the future should be. That, however, is just the advantage of the new trend: that we do not attempt dogmatically to prefigure the future, but want to find the new world only through criticism of the old. Up to now the philosophers had the solution of all riddles lying in their lectern, and the stupid uninitiated world had only to open its jaws to let the roast partridges of absolute science fly into its mouth. Now philosophy has become worldly, and the most incontrovertible evidence of this is that the philosophical consciousness has been drawn, not only externally but also internally, into the stress of battle. But if the designing of the future and the proclamation of ready-made solutions for all time is not our affair, then we realize all the more clearly what we have to accomplish in the present—I am speaking of a *ruthless criticism of everything existing*, ruthless in two senses: The criticism must not be afraid of its own conclusions, nor of conflict with the powers that be.

I am therefore not in favor of setting up any dogmatic flag. On the contrary, we must try to help the *dogmatics* to clarify to themselves the meaning of their own positions. Thus *communism*, to be specific, is a dogmatic abstraction. I do not have in mind here some imaginary, possible communism, but actually existing communism in the form preached by Cabet, Dezamy,<sup>1</sup> Weitling,<sup>2</sup> etc. This communism is only a special manifestation of the humanistic principle which is still infected by its opposite—private being. Elimination of private property is therefore by no means identical with this communism, and it is not accidental but quite inevitable that communism has seen other socialist teachings arise in opposition to it, such as the teachings of Fourier, Proudhon, etc., because it is itself only a special, one-sided realization of the socialist principle.

And the socialist principle itself represents, on the whole, only one side, affecting the *reality* of the true human essence. We have to concern ourselves just as much with the other side, the theoretical existence of man, in other words to make religion, science, etc., the objects of our criticism. Moreover, we want to have an effect on our contemporaries, and specifically on our German contemporaries. The question is, how is this to be approached? Two circum-

1. Theodore Dezamy, author of *Code de la nature* (1842). [R. T.]  
2. Wilhelm Weitling, a German jour-  
neyman tailor whose *Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom* (1842) advocated communism. [R. T.]

stances cannot be denied. First, religion, and second, politics, arouse predominant interest in contemporary Germany. We must take these two subjects, however they are, for a starting-point, and not set up against them some ready-made system such as the *Voyage en Icarie*.<sup>3</sup>

Reason has always existed, only not always in reasonable form. The critic can therefore start out by taking any form of theoretical and practical consciousness and develop from the *unique* forms of existing reality the true reality as its norm and final goal. Now so far as real life is concerned, precisely the *political state* in all its *modern* forms contains, even where it is not yet consciously imbued with socialist demands, the demands of reason. Nor does the state stop at that. The state everywhere presupposes that reason has been realized. But in just this way it everywhere comes into contradiction between its ideal mission and its real preconditions.

Out of this conflict of the political state with itself, therefore, one can develop social truth. Just as *religion* is the catalogue of the theoretical struggles of mankind, so the *political state* is the catalogue of its practical struggles. The political state thus expresses, within the confines of its form *sub specie rei publicae*,<sup>4</sup> all social struggles, needs, truths. Thus it is not at all beneath the *hauteur des principes* to make the most specific political question—e.g., the difference between the corporative<sup>5</sup> and the representative system—the object of criticism. For this question only expresses in a *political* way the difference between the rule of man and the rule of private property. The critic therefore not only can but must go into these political questions (which the crass kind of socialists consider beneath anyone's dignity). By showing the superiority of the representative system over the corporative system, the critic affects the *practical interests* of a large party. By elevating the representative system from its political form to its general form and by bringing out the true significance underlying this system, the critic at the same time forces this party to go beyond its own confines, since its victory is at the same time its loss.

Nothing prevents us, then, from tying our criticism to the criticism of politics and to a definite party position in politics, and hence from identifying our criticism with real struggles. Then we shall confront the world not as doctrinaires with a new principle: "Here is the truth, bow down before it!" We develop new principles to the world out of its own principles. We do not say to the world: "Stop fighting; your struggle is of no account. We want to

3. This is the title of Cabet's utopian novel published in Paris in 1840. At that time Cabet's followers were called "communists." [R. T.]

4. From the political point of view.

[R. T.]

5. The system of representation by estates (classes) as opposed to the system of representation by individuals.

[R. T.]

shout the true slogan of the struggle at you." We only show the world what it is fighting for, and consciousness is something that the world *must* acquire, like it or not.

The reform of consciousness consists *only* in enabling the world to clarify its consciousness, in waking it from its dream about itself, in *explaining* to it the meaning of its own actions. Our whole task can consist only in putting religious and political questions into self-conscious human form—as is also the case in Feuerbach's criticism of religion.

Our motto must therefore be: Reform of consciousness not through dogmas, but through analyzing the mystical consciousness, the consciousness which is unclear to itself, whether it appears in religious or political form. Then it will transpire that the world has long been dreaming of something that it can acquire if only it becomes conscious of it. It will transpire that it is not a matter of drawing a great dividing line between past and future, but of carrying out the thoughts of the past. And finally, it will transpire that mankind begins no *new* work, but consciously accomplishes its old work.

So, we can express the trend of our journal in one word: the work of our time to clarify to itself (critical philosophy) the meaning of its own struggle and its own desires. This is work for the world and for us. It can only be the work of joint forces. It is a matter of *confession*, no more. To have its sins forgiven mankind has only to declare them to be what they really are.