



April 2016
Reading material for Part 1 of the course:
The Evolution of Property

Note by RP:

Two young German intellectuals, Karl Marx (then 26 years old) and Frederick Engels (then 23) first met in Paris in August 1844. Both were active in radical democratic journalism and politics. They found that their views on philosophy, history, economy and society were very similar and they became lifelong friends and collaborators. In Brussels, from 1845, they worked together on a book, titled *The German Ideology*, intended to set out their ‘materialist conception of history’ in contrast with ideas which had come to the fore in German philosophy under the influence of the great idealist philosopher Georg Hegel, who had died in 1831.

The manuscript was never completed, being abandoned after two years to ‘the gnawing criticism of the mice’ (as Marx later remarked). Much of it is still rough; several pages are missing; and I have changed the order of some passages in the extracts that follow. It was first published as a whole in 1932. It appears in English in the *Collected Works* of Marx and Engels, volume 5.

These extracts from *The German Ideology* have been selected because of the clarity with which the authors explain their basic understanding of the historical development in Europe of different forms of society in conjunction with different forms of property and ways of producing. (When Marx and Engels talk about ‘men’ they are using the conventional language of the time to refer to human beings generally.)

You are asked to read these extracts in preparation for critical discussions on these topics during the first part of the course. Also included here are passages looking to the future, some of which at least may strike you as unrealistic. Those will be examined more fully during Part 3 of the course, when we consider how social inequality can in fact be overcome.

If, at any stage, you wish to suggest any additional reading material—whether it supplements or contrasts with the material selected—please feel free to do so.

Extracts from *The German Ideology*

by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

1. ... The Young Hegelians are in agreement with the Old Hegelians in their belief in the rule of religion, of concepts, of a universal principle in the existing world. Only, the one party attacks this dominion as usurpation, while the other extols it as legitimate.

2. Since the Young Hegelians consider conceptions, thoughts, ideas, in fact all the products of consciousness, to which they attribute an independent existence, as the real chains of men (just as the Old Hegelians declared them the true bonds of human society) it is evident that the Young Hegelians have to fight only against these illusions of consciousness. Since, according to their fantasy, the relationships of men, all their doings, their chains and their limitations are products of their consciousness, the Young Hegelians logically put to men the moral postulate of exchanging their present consciousness for human, critical or egoistic consciousness, and thus of removing their limitations.

3. This demand to change consciousness amounts to a demand to interpret reality in another way, i.e. to recognise it by means of another interpretation. The Young-Hegelian ideologists, in spite of their allegedly "world-shattering" statements, are the staunchest conservatives. The most recent of them have found the correct expression for their activity when they declare they are only fighting against "phrases." They forget, however, that to these phrases they themselves are only opposing other phrases, and that they are in no way combating the real existing world when they are merely combating the phrases of this world. ...

4. It has not occurred to any one of these philosophers to inquire into the

connection of German philosophy with German reality, the relation of their criticism to their own material surroundings.

5. The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be verified in a purely empirical way.

6. The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organisation of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature. ... The writing of history must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of men.

7. 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, a step which is conditioned by their physical organisation. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life.

8. The way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means of subsistence they find in existence and have to reproduce.

9. This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the production of the

physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite *mode of life* on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce. Hence what individuals are depends on the material conditions of their production. ...

10. The relations of different nations among themselves depend upon the extent to which each has developed its productive forces, the division of labour and internal intercourse [i.e., commerce or trade]. This statement is generally recognised. But not only the relation of one nation to others, but also the whole internal structure of the nation itself depends on the stage of development reached by its production and its internal and external intercourse. How far the productive forces of a nation are developed is shown most manifestly by the degree to which the division of labour has been carried. Each new productive force, insofar as it is not merely a quantitative extension of productive forces already known (for instance the bringing into cultivation of fresh land), causes a further development of the division of labour.

11. The division of labour inside a nation leads at first to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labour, and hence to the separation of town and country and to the conflict of their interests. Its further development leads to the separation of commercial from industrial labour.

12. At the same time through the division of labour inside these various branches there develop various divisions among the individuals co-operating in definite kinds of labour. The relative position of these individual groups is determined by the methods employed in agriculture, industry and commerce (patriarchalism, slavery, estates, classes). These same conditions are to be seen (given a more developed intercourse) in the relations of different nations to one another.

13. The various stages of development in the division of labour are just so many different forms of property, i.e. the existing stage in the division of labour determines also the relations of individuals to one another with reference to the material, instrument, and product of labour.

14. The first form of property is tribal property [*Stammeigentum*]. It corresponds to the undeveloped stage of production, at which a people lives by hunting and fishing, by the rearing of beasts or, at most, by agriculture. In the latter case it presupposes a great mass of uncultivated stretches of land.

15. The division of labour is at this stage still very elementary and is confined to a further extension of the natural division of labour existing in the family. The social structure is, therefore, limited to an extension of the family; patriarchal chieftains, below them the members of the tribe, finally slaves. The slavery latent in the family only develops gradually with the increase of population, the growth of wants, and with the extension of external relations, both of war and of barter.

16. The second form is the ancient communal and state property which proceeds especially from the union of several tribes into a *city* by agreement or by conquest, and which is still accompanied by slavery. Beside communal property we already find movable, and later also immovable, private property developing, but as an abnormal form subordinate to communal property.

17. The citizens hold power over their labouring slaves only in their community, and on this account alone they are bound to the form of communal property. It constitutes the communal private property of the active citizens who, in relation to their slaves, are compelled to remain in this spontaneously derived form of association.

18. For this reason the whole structure of society based on this communal property, and with it the power of the people, decays in the same measure in which immovable private property evolves.

19. The division of labour is already more developed. We already find the opposition

of town and country; later the opposition between those states which represent town interests and those which represent country interests, and inside the towns themselves the opposition between industry and maritime commerce. The class relation between citizens and slaves is now completely developed.

20. With the development of private property, we find here for the first time the same conditions which we shall find again, only on a more extensive scale, with modern private property. On the one hand, the concentration of private property, which began very early in Rome (as the Licinian agrarian law proves¹) and proceeded very rapidly from the time of the civil wars and especially under the emperors; on the other hand, coupled with this, the transformation of the plebeian small peasantry into a proletariat, which, however, owing to its intermediate position between propertied citizens and slaves, never achieved an independent development.

21. The third form is feudal or estate property. If antiquity started out from the *town* and its small territory, the Middle Ages started out from the *country*. This different starting-point was determined by the sparseness of the population at that time, which was scattered over a large area and which received no large increases from the conquerors.

22. In contrast to Greece and Rome, feudal development at the outset, therefore, begins over a much wider territory, prepared by the Roman conquests and the spread of agriculture at first associated with them. The last centuries of the declining Roman Empire and its conquest by the barbarians destroyed a number of productive forces; agriculture had declined, industry had

decayed for want of a market, trade had died out or been violently interrupted, the rural and urban population had decreased. These conditions and the mode of organisation of the conquest determined by them, together with the influence of the Germanic military constitution, led to the development of feudal property.

23. Like tribal and communal property, it [feudal property] is also based on a community; but the directly producing class standing over against it is not, as in the case of the ancient community, the slaves, but the enserfed small peasantry.

24. As soon as feudalism is fully developed, there also arises antagonism to the towns. The hierarchical structure of land ownership, and the armed bodies of retainers associated with it, gave the nobility power over the serfs. This feudal organisation was, just as much as the ancient communal property, an association against a subjugated producing class; but the form of association and the relation to the direct producers were different because of the different conditions of production.

25. This feudal system of land ownership had its counterpart in the towns in the shape of corporative property, the feudal organisation of trades. Here property consisted chiefly in the labour of each individual. The necessity for associating against the association of the robber nobility, the need for communal covered markets in an age when the industrialist was at the same time a merchant, the growing competition of the escaped serfs swarming into the rising towns, the feudal structure of the whole country: these combined to bring about the *guilds*. The gradually accumulated small capital of individual craftsmen and their stable numbers, as against the growing population, evolved the relation of journeyman and apprentice, which brought into being in the towns a hierarchy similar to that in the country.

26. Thus property during the feudal epoch primarily consisted on the one hand of landed property with serf labour chained to it, and on the other of the personal labour of the individual who with his small capital commands the

¹ *Note by RP:* The Roman popular tribunes Licinius and Sextus proposed a law which was passed in 367 B.C., limiting to 500 *iugera* (about 125 hectares) the amount of common land (*ager publicus*) that could be privately held. This occurred in the context of struggles between the plebeians (ordinary working citizens) and the patrician land-owning aristocracy. Ultimately, it was not effective in preventing the acquisition of vast private estates (*latifundia*) by the patricians.

labour of journeymen. The organisation of both was determined by the restricted conditions of production—the small-scale and primitive cultivation of the land, and the craft type of industry.

27. There was little division of labour in the heyday of feudalism. Each country bore in itself the antithesis of town and country; the division into estates was certainly strongly marked; but apart from the differentiation of princes, nobility, clergy and peasants in the country, and masters, journeymen, apprentices and soon also the rabble of casual labourers in the towns, no division of importance took place. In agriculture it was rendered difficult by the strip-system, beside which the cottage industry of the peasants themselves emerged. In industry there was no division of labour in the individual trades and very little between them. The separation of industry and commerce was found already in existence in older towns; in the newer it only developed later, when the towns entered into mutual relations.

28. The grouping of larger territories into feudal kingdoms was a necessity for the landed nobility as for the towns. The organisation of the ruling class, the nobility, had, therefore, everywhere a monarch at its head.

29. The contradiction between town and country begins with the transition from barbarism to civilisation, from tribe to state, from locality to nation, and runs through the whole history of civilisation to the present day

30. In the towns which, in the Middle Ages, did not derive ready-made from an earlier period but were formed anew by the serfs who had become free, the particular labour of each man was his only property apart from the small capital he brought with him, consisting almost solely of the most necessary tools of his craft.

31. The competition of serfs constantly escaping into the town, the constant war of the country against the towns and thus the necessity of an organised municipal military force, the bond of

common ownership in a particular kind of labour, the necessity of common buildings for the sale of their wares at a time when craftsmen were also traders, and the consequent exclusion of the unauthorised from these buildings, the conflict among the interests of the various crafts, the necessity of protecting their laboriously acquired skill, and the feudal organisation of the whole of the country: these were the causes of the union of the workers of each craft in guilds. ...

32. The flight of the serfs into the towns went on without interruption right through the Middle Ages. These serfs, persecuted by their lords in the country, came separately into the towns, where they found an organised community, against which they were powerless and in which they had to subject themselves to the station assigned to them by the demand for their labour and the interest of their organised urban competitors.

33. These workers, entering separately, were never able to attain to any power, since, if their labour was of the guild type which had to be learned, the guild-masters bent them to their will and organised them according to their interest; or if their labour was not such as had to be learned, and therefore not of the guild type, they were day-labourers, never managed to organise, but remained an unorganised rabble. The need for day-labourers in the towns created the rabble.

34. These towns were true “unions”, called forth by the direct need of providing for the protection of property, and of multiplying the means of production and defence of the separate members. The rabble of these towns was devoid of any power, composed as it was of individuals strange to one another who had entered separately, and who stood unorganised over against an organised power, armed for war, and jealously watching over them.

35. The journeymen and apprentices were organised in each craft as it best suited the interest of the masters. The patriarchal relations existing between them and their masters gave the latter a double power—on the one hand because of the direct influence they exerted on the whole

life of the journeymen, and on the other because, for the journeymen who worked with the same master, it was a real bond which held them together against the journeymen of other masters and separated them from these. And finally, the journeymen were bound to the existing order even by their interest in becoming masters themselves.

36. While, therefore, the rabble at least carried out revolts against the whole municipal order, revolts which remained completely ineffective because of its powerlessness, the journeymen never got further than small acts of insubordination within separate guilds, such as belong to the very nature of the guild-system. The great risings of the Middle Ages all radiated from the country, but equally remained totally ineffective because of the isolation and consequent crudity of the peasants.

37. Capital in these towns was a naturally evolved capital, consisting of a house, the tools of the craft, and the natural, hereditary customers; and not being realisable, on account of the backwardness of intercourse and the lack of circulation, it had to be handed down from father to son. Unlike modern capital, which can be assessed in money and which may be indifferently invested in this thing or that, this capital was directly connected with the particular work of the owner, inseparable from it and to this extent estate capital.

38. In the towns, the division of labour between the individual guilds was as yet very little developed and, in the guilds themselves, it did not exist at all between the individual workers. Every workman had to be versed in a whole round of tasks, had to be able to make everything that was to be made with his tools. The limited intercourse and the weak ties between the individual towns, the lack of population and the narrow needs did not allow of a more advanced division of labour, and therefore every man who wished to become a master had to be proficient in the whole of his craft. Medieval craftsmen therefore had an interest in their special work and in proficiency in it, which was capable of rising to a limited artistic sense. For this very reason, however, every medieval craftsman was completely absorbed in his work, to which he had a complacent servile

relationship, and in which he was involved to a far greater extent than the modern worker, whose work is a matter of indifference to him.

39. The next extension of the division of labour was the separation of production and intercourse [commerce], the formation of a special class of merchants; a separation which, in the towns bequeathed by a former period, had been handed down (among other things with the Jews) and which very soon appeared in the newly formed ones. With this there was given the possibility of commercial communications transcending the immediate neighbourhood, a possibility the realisation of which depended on the existing means of communication, the state of public safety in the countryside, which was determined by political conditions (during the whole of the Middle Ages, as is well known, the merchants travelled in armed caravans), and on the cruder or more advanced needs (determined by the stage of culture attained) of the region accessible to intercourse.

40. With intercourse vested in a particular class, with the extension of trade through the merchants beyond the immediate surroundings of the town, there immediately appears a reciprocal action between production and intercourse. The towns enter into relations with one another, new tools are brought from one town into the other, and the separation between production and intercourse soon calls forth a new division of production between the individual towns, each of which is soon exploiting a predominant branch of industry. The local restrictions of earlier times begin gradually to be broken down.

41. It depends purely on the extension of intercourse whether the productive forces evolved in a locality, especially inventions, are lost for later development or not. As long as there exists no intercourse transcending the immediate neighbourhood, every invention must be made separately in each locality, and mere chances such as irruptions of barbaric peoples, even ordinary wars, are sufficient to cause a country with advanced productive forces and needs to have to start right over again from the beginning. In

primitive history every invention had to be made daily anew and in each locality independently.

42. That even with a relatively very extensive commerce, highly developed productive forces are not safe from complete destruction, is proved by the Phoenicians, whose inventions were for the most part lost for a long time to come through the ousting of this nation from commerce, its conquest by Alexander and its consequent decline. Likewise, for instance, glass staining in the Middle Ages. Only when intercourse has become world intercourse and has as its basis large-scale industry, when all nations are drawn into the competitive struggle, is the permanence of the acquired productive forces assured.

43. The immediate consequence of the division of labour between the various towns was the rise of manufactures, branches of production which had outgrown the guild-system.

44. Intercourse with foreign nations was the historical premise for the first flourishing of manufactures, in Italy and later in Flanders. In other countries, England and France for example, manufactures were at first confined to the home market. Besides the premises already mentioned manufactures presuppose an already advanced concentration of population, particularly in the countryside, and of capital, which began to accumulate in the hands of individuals, partly in the guilds in spite of the guild regulations, partly among the merchants.

45. The kind of labour which from the first presupposed machines, even of the crudest sort, soon showed itself the most capable of development. Weaving, earlier carried on in the country by the peasants as a secondary occupation to procure their clothing, was the first labour to receive an impetus and a further development through the extension of intercourse. Weaving was the first and remained the principal manufacture. The rising demand for clothing materials consequent on the growth of population, the growing accumulation and mobilisation of natural capital through accelerated circulation, and the demand for luxuries called forth by this

and favoured generally by the gradual extension of intercourse, gave weaving a quantitative and qualitative stimulus, which wrenched it out of the form of production hitherto existing.

46. Alongside the peasants weaving for their own use, who continued and still continue, with this sort of work, there emerged a new class of weavers in the towns, whose fabrics were destined for the whole home market and usually for foreign markets too.

47. Weaving, an occupation demanding in most cases little skill and soon splitting up into countless branches, by its whole nature resisted the trammels of the guild. Weaving was, therefore, carried on mostly in villages and market centres, without guild organisation, which gradually became towns, and indeed the most flourishing towns in each land.

48. With guild-free manufacture, property relations also quickly changed. The first advance beyond naturally derived estate capital was provided by the rise of merchants, whose capital was from the beginning movable, capital in the modern sense as far as one can speak of it, given the circumstances of those times. The second advance came with manufacture, which again mobilised a mass of natural capital, and altogether increased the mass of movable capital as against that of natural capital.

49. At the same time, manufacture became a refuge of the peasants from the guilds which excluded them or paid them badly just as earlier the guild-towns had served the peasants as a refuge from the landlords.

50. Simultaneously with the beginning of manufactures there was a period of vagabondage caused by the abolition of the feudal bodies of retainers, the disbanding of the armies consisting of a motley crowd that served the kings against their vassals, the improvement of agriculture, and the transformation of large strips of tillage into pasture land. From this alone it is clear that this vagabondage is strictly connected with the disintegration of the feudal system. As early as the thirteenth century we find isolated epochs of

this kind, but only at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth does this vagabondage make a general and permanent appearance.

51. These vagabonds, who were so numerous that, for instance, Henry VIII of England² had 72,000 of them hanged, were only prevailed upon to work with the greatest difficulty and through the most extreme necessity, and then only after long resistance. The rapid rise of manufactures, particularly in England, absorbed them gradually.

52. With the advent of manufacture the various nations entered into competitive relations, a commercial struggle, which was fought out in wars, protective duties and prohibitions, whereas earlier the nations, insofar as they were connected at all, had carried on an inoffensive exchange with each other. Trade had from now on a political significance.

53. With the advent of manufacture the relations between worker and employer changed. In the guilds the patriarchal relations between journeyman and master continued to exist; in manufacture their place was taken by the monetary relations between worker and capitalist—relations which in the countryside and in small towns retained a patriarchal tinge, but in the larger, the real manufacturing towns, quite early lost almost all patriarchal complexion.

54. Manufacture and the movement of production in general received an enormous impetus through the extension of intercourse which came with the discovery of America and the sea-route to the East Indies. The new products imported thence, particularly the masses of gold and silver which came into circulation, had totally changed the position of the classes towards one another, dealing a hard blow to feudal landed

property and to the workers; the expeditions of adventurers, colonisation, and above all the extension of markets into a world market, which had now become possible and was daily becoming more and more a fact, called forth a new phase of historical development, into which in general we need not here enter further.

55. Through the colonisation of the newly discovered countries the commercial struggle of the nations against one another was given new fuel and accordingly greater extension and animosity.

56. The expansion of commerce and manufacture accelerated the accumulation of movable capital, while in the guilds, which were not stimulated to extend their production, natural capital remained stationary or even declined.

57. Commerce and manufacture created the big bourgeoisie; in the guilds was concentrated the petty bourgeoisie, which no longer was dominant in the towns as formerly, but had to bow to the might of the great merchants and manufacturers. Hence the decline of the guilds, as soon as they came into contact with manufacture.

58. The relations between nations in their intercourse took on two different forms in the epoch of which we have been speaking. At first the small quantity of gold and silver in circulation occasioned the ban on the export of these metals; and industry, made necessary by the need for employing the growing urban population and for the most part imported from abroad, could not do without privileges which could be granted not only, of course, against home competition, but chiefly against foreign. The local guild privilege was in these original prohibitions extended over the whole nation. Customs duties originated from the tributes which the feudal lords extracted from merchants passing through their territories as protection money against robbery, tributes later imposed likewise by the towns, and which, with the rise of the modern states, were the Treasury's most obvious means of raising money.

59. The appearance of American gold and silver on the European markets, the gradual

² Note by RP: Henry VIII reigned from 1509 until his death in 1547. Thomas More's book *Utopia* (1516) advanced a communist answer to the increase in vagabondage resulting from the enclosure of common land by the rising class of capitalist farmers. More was Henry's Lord Chancellor from 1529-1532, but was beheaded in 1535 for refusing to recognise the King (in place of the Pope) as head of the English Church.

development of industry, the rapid expansion of trade and the consequent rise of the non-guild bourgeoisie and the increasing importance of money, gave these measures another significance. The state, which was daily less and less able to do without money, now retained the ban on the export of gold and silver out of fiscal considerations; the bourgeois, for whom these quantities of money which were hurled on to the market became the chief object of speculative buying, were thoroughly content with this; privileges established earlier became a source of income for the government and were sold for money; in the customs legislation there appeared export duties which, since they only hampered industry, had a purely fiscal aim.

60. The second period began in the middle of the seventeenth century and lasted almost to the end of the eighteenth. Commerce and navigation had expanded more rapidly than manufacture, which played a secondary role; the colonies were becoming considerable consumers; and after long struggles the various nations shared out the opening world market among themselves. This period begins with the Navigation Laws and colonial monopolies. The competition of the nations among themselves was excluded as far as possible by tariffs, prohibitions and treaties; and in the last resort the competitive struggle was carried on and decided by wars (especially naval wars). The mightiest maritime nation, the English, retained preponderance in commerce and manufacture. Here, already, we find concentration in one country.

61. Manufacture was all the time sheltered by protective duties in the home market, by monopolies in the colonial market, and abroad as much as possible by differential duties. The working-up of home-produced material was encouraged (wool and linen in England, silk in France), the export of home-produced raw material forbidden (wool in England), and the [working-up] of imported raw material neglected or suppressed (cotton in England).

62. The nation dominant in maritime trade and colonial power naturally secured for itself

also the greatest quantitative and qualitative expansion of manufacture. Manufacture could not be carried on without protection, since, if the slightest change takes place in other countries, it can lose its market and be ruined; under reasonably favourable conditions it may easily be introduced into a country, but for this very reason can easily be destroyed. At the same time through the mode in which it is carried on, particularly in the eighteenth century in the countryside, it is to such an extent interwoven with the conditions of life of a great mass of individuals, that no country dare jeopardise their existence by permitting free competition. Consequently, insofar as manufacture manages to export, it depends entirely on the extension or restriction of commerce, and exercises a relatively very small reaction [on the latter]. Hence its secondary [role] and the influence of [the merchants] in the eighteenth century. It was the merchants and especially the ship-owners who more than anybody else pressed for state protection and monopolies; the manufacturers also demanded and indeed received protection, but all the time were inferior in political importance to the merchants.

63. The commercial towns, particularly the maritime towns, became to some extent civilised and acquired the outlook of the big bourgeoisie, but in the factory towns an extreme petty-bourgeois outlook persisted ... The eighteenth century was the century of trade. ...

64. The movement of capital, although considerably accelerated, still remained, however, relatively slow. The splitting-up of the world market into separate parts, each of which was exploited by a particular nation, the prevention of competition between the different nations, the clumsiness of production and the fact that finance was only evolving from its early stages, greatly impeded circulation. The consequence of this was a haggling, mean and niggardly spirit which still clung to all merchants and to the whole mode of carrying on trade. Compared with the manufacturers, and above all with the craftsmen, they were certainly big bourgeois; compared with the merchants and industrialists of the next period

they remain petty bourgeois. Cf. Adam Smith³.

65. This period is also characterised by the cessation of the bans on the export of gold and silver and the beginning of money trade, banks, national debts, paper money, speculation in stocks and shares, stock-jobbing in all articles and the development of finance in general. Again capital lost a great part of the natural character which had still clung to it.

66. The concentration of trade and manufacture in one country, England, developing irresistibly in the seventeenth century, gradually created for this country a relative world market, and thus a demand for the manufactured products of this country which could no longer be met by the industrial productive forces hitherto existing.

67. This demand, outgrowing the productive forces, was the motive power which, by producing large-scale industry—the application of elemental forces to industrial ends, machinery and the most extensive division of labour—called into existence the third period of private property since the Middle Ages.

68. There already existed in England the other preconditions of this new phase: freedom of competition inside the nation, the development of theoretical mechanics, etc. (indeed, mechanics, perfected by Newton, was altogether the most popular science in France and England in the eighteenth century). (Free competition inside the nation itself had everywhere to be won by a revolution—1640 and 1688 in England, 1789 in France.)

69. Competition soon compelled every country that wished to retain its historical role to protect its manufactures by renewed customs regulations (the old duties were no longer any good against large-scale industry) and soon after to introduce large-scale industry under protective duties. In spite of these protective measures large-scale industry universalised competition (it is practical

free trade; the protective duty is only a palliative, a measure of defence within free trade), established means of communication and the modern world market, subordinated trade to itself, transformed all capital into industrial capital, and thus produced the rapid circulation (development of the financial system) and the centralisation of capital.

70. By universal competition it forced all individuals to strain their energy to the utmost. It destroyed as far as possible ideology, religion, morality, etc., and, where it could not do this, made them into a palpable lie. It produced world history for the first time, insofar as it made all civilised nations and every individual member of them dependent for the satisfaction of their wants on the whole world, thus destroying the former natural exclusiveness of separate nations. It made natural science subservient to capital and took from the division of labour the last semblance of its natural character. It altogether destroyed the natural character, as far as this is possible with regard to labour, and resolved all natural relations into money relations.

71. In the place of naturally grown towns it created the modern, large industrial cities which have sprung up overnight. It destroyed the crafts and all earlier stages of industry wherever it gained mastery. It completed the victory of the town over the country. Its [basis] is the automatic system. It produced a mass of productive forces, for which private property became just as much a fetter as the guild had been for manufacture and the small, rural workshop for the developing handicrafts.

72. These productive forces receive under the system of private property a one-sided development only, and for the majority they become destructive forces; moreover, a great many of these forces can find no application at all within the system of private property.

73. Generally speaking, large-scale industry created everywhere the same relations between the classes of society, and thus destroyed the peculiar features of the various nationalities. And finally, while the bourgeoisie of each nation still retained separate national interests, large-scale industry

³ Adam Smith (1723-1790), *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (published in 1776).

created a class which in all nations has the same interest and for which nationality is already dead; a class which is really rid of all the old world and at the same time stands pitted against it. ...

74. ... The countries in which large-scale industry is developed act in a similar manner upon the more or less non-industrial countries, insofar as the latter are swept by world intercourse into the universal competitive struggle.

75. In large-scale industry and competition the whole mass of conditions of existence, limitations, biases of individuals, are fused together into the two simplest forms: private property and labour. With money every form of intercourse, and intercourse itself, becomes fortuitous for the individuals. Thus money implies that all intercourse up till now was only intercourse of individuals under particular conditions, not of individuals as individuals. These conditions are reduced to two: accumulated labour or private property, and actual labour. ...

76. ... [T]he productive forces appear as a world for themselves, quite independent of and divorced from the individuals, alongside the individuals; the reason for this is that the individuals, whose forces they are, exist split up and in opposition to one another, whilst, on the other hand, these forces are only real forces in the intercourse and association of these individuals.

77. Thus, on the one hand, we have a totality of productive forces, which have, as it were, taken on a material form and are for the individuals themselves no longer the forces of the individuals but of private property, and hence of the individuals only insofar as they are owners of private property. Never, in any earlier period, have the productive forces taken on a form so indifferent to the intercourse of individuals as individuals, because their intercourse itself was still a restricted one. On the other hand, standing against these productive forces, we have the majority of the individuals from whom these forces have been wrested away, and who, robbed

thus of all real life-content, have become abstract individuals, who are, however, by this very fact put into a position to enter into relation with one another *as individuals*.

78. Whilst in ordinary life every shopkeeper is very well able to distinguish between what somebody professes to be and what he really is, our historiography has not yet won this trivial insight. It takes every epoch at its word and believes that everything it says and imagines about itself is true.

79. ... Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out ... without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production. The social structure and the state are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really are; i.e. as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will.

80. The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc., of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.—real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness [*das Bewusstsein*] can never be anything else than conscious being [*das bewusste Sein*], and the being of men is their actual life-process.

81. In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do

not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. ... Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.

82. ... As soon as this active life-process is described, history ceases to be a collection of dead facts as it is with the empiricists (themselves still abstract), or an imagined activity of imagined subjects, as with the idealists.

83. ... [W]e must begin by stating the first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history, the premise, namely, that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to “make history.” But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. And indeed this is an historical act, a fundamental condition of all history, which today, as thousands of years ago, must daily and hourly be fulfilled merely in order to sustain human life. ... Therefore in any interpretation of history one has first of all to observe this fundamental fact in all its significance and all its implications and to accord it its due importance. ...

84. The production of life, both of one’s own in labour and of fresh life in procreation, ... appears as a double relationship: on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a social relationship. By social we understand the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end. It follows from this that a certain mode of production, or industrial stage, is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a “productive force.” Further, that the multitude of productive forces accessible to men determines the nature of society, hence, that the “history of humanity”

must always be studied and treated in relation to the history of industry and exchange. ...

85. The division of labour, ... which ... is based on the natural division of labour in the family and the separation of society into individual families opposed to one another, simultaneously implies the *distribution*, and indeed the *unequal* distribution, both quantitative and qualitative, of labour and its products, hence property: the nucleus, the first form, of which lies in the family, where wife and children are the slaves of the husband. This latent slavery in the family, though still very crude, is the first form of property, but even at this stage it corresponds perfectly to the definition of modern economists who call it the power of disposing of the labour-power of others.

86. Division of labour and private property are, after all, identical expressions: in the one the same thing is affirmed with reference to activity as is affirmed in the other with reference to the product of the activity.

87. Further, the division of labour implies the contradiction between the interest of the separate individual or the individual family and the common interest of all individuals who have intercourse with one another. And indeed, this common interest does not exist merely in the imagination, as the “general interest,” but first of all in reality, as the mutual interdependence of the individuals among whom the labour is divided.

88. Out of this very contradiction between the particular and the common interests, the common interest assumes an independent form as the *state*, which is divorced from the real individual and collective interests, and at the same time as an illusory community, always based, however, on the real ties existing in every family conglomeration and tribal conglomeration—such as flesh and blood, language, division of labour on a larger scale, and other interests—and especially, as we shall show later, on the classes, already implied by the division of labour, which in every such mass of men separate out, and one of which dominates all the others. ...

89. And finally, the division of labour offers us the first example of how, as long as man remains in natural society, that is, as long as a cleavage exists between the particular and the common interest, as long, therefore, as activity is not voluntarily, but naturally, divided, man's own deed becomes an alien power opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him. For as soon as the distribution of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a herdsman, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic.

90. This fixation of social activity, this consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up till now. The social power, i.e., the multiplied productive force, which arises through the co-operation of different individuals as it is determined by the division of labour, appears to these individuals, since their co-operation is not voluntary but has come about naturally, not as their own united power, but as an alien force existing outside them, of the origin and goal of which they are ignorant, which they thus cannot control, which on the contrary passes through a peculiar series of phases and stages independent of the will and the action of man, nay even being the prime governor of these.

91. How otherwise could for instance property have had a history at all, have taken on different forms, and landed property, for example, according to the different premises given, have proceeded in France from parcellation to centralisation in the

hands of a few, in England from centralisation in the hands of a few to parcellation, as is actually the case today? Or how does it happen that trade, which after all is nothing more than the exchange of products of various individuals and countries, rules the whole world through the relation of supply and demand—a relation which, as an English economist says, hovers over the earth like the fate of the ancients, and with invisible hand allots fortune and misfortune to men, sets up empires and overthrows empires, causes nations to rise and to disappear—whereas with the abolition of the basis, private property, with the communistic regulation of production (and, implicit in this, the destruction of the alien relation [*Fremdheit*] between men and their own product), the power of the relation of supply and demand is dissolved into nothing, and men once more gain control of exchange, production and the way they behave to one another?

92. This “estrangement” [*Entfremdung*] (to use a term which will be comprehensible to the philosophers) can, of course, only be abolished given two practical premises. In order to become an “unendurable” power, i.e., a power against which men make a revolution, it must necessarily have rendered the great mass of humanity “propertyless”, and moreover in contradiction to an existing world of wealth and culture; both these premises presuppose a great increase in productive power, a high degree of its development.

93. And, on the other hand, this development of productive forces (which at the same time implies the actual empirical existence of men in their *world-historical*, instead of local, being) is an absolutely necessary practical premise, because without it privation, want is merely made general, and with *want* the struggle for necessities would begin again, and all the old filthy business would necessarily be restored; and furthermore, because only with this *universal* development of productive forces is a universal intercourse between men established, which on the one side produces in all nations simultaneously the phenomenon of the “propertyless” mass (universal *competition*), making each nation dependent on the revolutions of the others,

and finally puts *world-historical*, empirically universal individuals in place of local ones.

94. Without this, 1) communism could only exist as a local phenomenon; 2) the forces of intercourse themselves could not have developed as universal, hence unendurable powers: they would have remained home-bred “conditions” surrounded by superstition; and 3) each extension of intercourse would abolish local communism. Empirically, communism is only possible as the act of the dominant peoples “all at once” and simultaneously, which presupposes the universal development of productive forces and the world intercourse bound up with them. ...

95. Communism is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the now existing premise.

96. Nothing is more common than the notion that in history up till now it has only been a question of *taking*. The barbarians *take* the Roman Empire, and this fact of taking is made to explain the transition from the old world to the feudal system.

97. In this taking by barbarians, however, the question is whether the nation which is conquered has evolved industrial productive forces, as is the case with modern peoples, or whether its productive forces are based for the most part merely on their concentration and on the community. Taking is further determined by the object taken. A banker’s fortune, consisting of paper, cannot be taken at all without the taker’s submitting to the conditions of production and intercourse of the country taken. Similarly the total industrial capital of a modern industrial country.

98. And finally, everywhere there is very soon an end to taking, and when there is nothing more to take, you have to set about producing. From this necessity of producing, which very soon asserts itself, it follows that the form of

community adopted by the settling conquerors must correspond to the stage of development of the productive forces they find in existence; or, if this is not the case from the start, it must change according to the productive forces.

99. This, too, explains the fact, which people profess to have noticed everywhere in the period following the migration of the peoples, namely that the servant was master, and that the conquerors very soon took over language, culture and manners from the conquered.

100.... Only within the community has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; hence personal freedom becomes possible only within the community. In the previous substitutes for the community, in the state, etc., personal freedom has existed only for the individuals who developed under the conditions of the ruling class, and only insofar as they were individuals of this class.

101. The illusory community in which individuals have up till now combined always took on an independent existence in relation to them, and since it was the combination of one class over against another, it was at the same time for the oppressed class not only a completely illusory community, but a new fetter as well. In the real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association.

102. Individuals have always proceeded from themselves, but of course from themselves within their given historical conditions and relations, not from the “pure” individual in the sense of the ideologists. But in the course of historical development, and precisely through the fact that within the division of labour social relations inevitably take on an independent existence, there appears a cleavage in the life of each individual, insofar as it is personal and insofar as it is determined by some branch of labour and the conditions pertaining to it. ...

103. ... The form of intercourse determined by

the existing productive forces at all previous historical stages, and in its turn determining these, is civil society. ... [T]his *civil society* is the true focus and theatre of all history, and how absurd is the conception of history held hitherto, which neglects the real relations and confines itself to spectacular historical events. ...

104. History is nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which uses the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations, and thus, on the one hand, continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and, on the other, modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity.

105. This can be speculatively distorted so that later history is made the goal of earlier history ... [W]hat is designated [by the idealist philosophers] with the words “destiny”, “goal”, “germ” or “idea” of earlier history is nothing more than an abstraction from later history, from the active influence which earlier history exercises on later history.

106. The further the separate spheres, which act on one another, extend in the course of this development and the more the original isolation of the separate nationalities is destroyed by the advanced mode of production, by intercourse and by the natural division of labour between various nations arising as a result, the more history becomes world history.

107. Thus, for instance, if in England a machine is invented which deprives countless workers of bread in India and China, and overturns the whole form of existence of these empires, this invention becomes a world-historical fact. Or again, take the case of sugar and coffee, which have proved their world-historical importance in the nineteenth century by the fact that the lack of these products, occasioned by the Napoleonic Continental System, caused the Germans to rise against Napoleon, and thus became the real basis of the glorious Wars of Liberation of 1813.

108. From this it follows that this transformation of history into world history is by no means

a mere abstract act on the part of “self-consciousness”, the world spirit, or of any other metaphysical spectre, but a quite material, empirically verifiable act, an act the proof of which every individual furnishes as he comes and goes, eats, drinks and clothes himself.

109. In history up to the present it is certainly likewise an empirical fact that separate individuals have, with the broadening of their activity into world-historical activity, become more and more enslaved under a power alien to them, ... a power which has become more and more enormous and, in the last instance, turns out to be the world market.

110. But it is just as empirically established that, by the overthrow of the existing state of society by the communist revolution (of which more below) and the abolition of private property which is identical with it, this power ... will be dissolved; and that then the liberation of each single individual will be accomplished in the measure in which history becomes wholly transformed into world history. ...

111. Only this will liberate the separate individuals from the various national and local barriers, bring them into practical connection with the production (including intellectual production) of the whole world and make it possible for them to acquire the capacity to enjoy this all-sided production of the whole earth ...
