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The Logic of Marx's Theory of History

Reforming Formations

The article offers a logical reconstruction of Marx's theory of history. On the basis of an analysis of the concept of labor, the author presents and discusses the four main socioeconomic formations of human history. The author challenges the Marxian project of the elimination of both division of labor and private property pointing to its theoretical and practical shortcomings.

I shall approach human actions and appetites in the way I would approach questions about lines, planes, and bodies.

—Spinoza, *Ethics*

1

As he gets down to work, the historian has before his eyes an immense mass of documents and archeological data, clearly aware that all these are merely pitiful crumbs of historical reality. He can add—without limit—to the stock of historical facts, or he can put those he already has into order, or he can turn away from them and forget them all for a while, as Marx did in *Capital*. In the first chapter, “history” in the usual sense of the word—mentions of past events, references to documents, dates, and so on—is practically absent. The

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list of characters here consists solely of abstractions: commodity, labor, value, and so on. It is hard to call the abstract examples with wheat, iron, and wax historical; cloth and frock-coat are no better. Only once, simply for illustration, do we catch the flash of a “Brazilian diamond”—without the slightest influence on the deductive course of Marx’s thinking.

This neglect of history seems doubly strange, for the first chapters trace the *process of development*, the *evolution* of commodity exchange. Why does Marx here avoid the living history of his subject matter? Where, in which historical sources has he been lucky enough to track down mention of the expanded and general forms of value? In a note to the second edition of *Capital* Marx cites testimony of the blind poet: “In Homer, for instance, the value of an article is expressed in a series of different things”;¹ clearly, however, he did not discover the expanded form of value in the *Odyssey*. He derived it by means of *pure logic*, and only afterward did he search for historical evidence of its real existence—evidence, moreover, of a rather dubious sort.

Deduction of the forms of value begins with the concept of labor. Marx defines labor as “the substance of value” (*Wertsubstanz*), and commodities as “crystals of this social substance, common to them all.”²* *Substance is subjected to analysis first*, before turning to empirical, historical data.

Political economy became theoretical knowledge, a scientific theory only when it stumbled on the substance of value—human labor (William Petty, Benjamin Franklin, and others). Marx extends the “substantial” concept of labor to human history as a whole: “*The entire so-called history of the world is nothing but the creation of man through human labor.*”³** Marx, as is well known, came to this discovery from Hegel, and only then (and for that reason) did his interests shift to the field of political economy. It is not Smith and Ricardo but the philosopher Hegel who first “grasps the essence of *labor* and conceives of objective man, true actual man, as the result of *his own labor.*”⁴***

The theory of history must start by extracting the marrow of history—the simple concept of labor. For practical materialists,⁵ historical reality is none other than objectified labor, and all conditions of labor given by nature, including the organic bodies of people, are merely preconditions and “disappearing moments” of the labor process.

The analysis of the history of commodity exchange, insofar as it is a special case or “mode” of world history, also begins with the simple concept of labor.

*From K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Ch. 1.—Ed.

**From K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Private Property and Communism.—Ed.

***From K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy in General.—Ed.

As his first task, Marx distinguishes the general aspects of substance—concrete and abstract labor, use and exchange value—and then proceeds to analyze the value forms of its expression. In the process of commodity exchange, the simple *identity* or “equivalence” of commodities is consistently transformed into *difference* (the expanded form of value) and *contradiction* (the general form of value), which is then sublated in a *foundation* that takes the form of the universal commodity-equivalent—money. Here Hegel’s *Wesenheiten* seem to come to life and acquire economic flesh before our eyes.⁶

Marx made no secret of the fact that his method of “ascent from the abstract”—the simple concept of substance—to the concrete diversity of historical forms is Hegel’s method reinterpreted in a materialist spirit. But while for Hegel Spirit was substance, for Marx Labor was substance.

What does this method give the historian? It enables him to discern the “genome” of the subject matter—its “substantial forms,” concealed within the dense mass of empirical data. These forms are purely logical and at the same time historical. They demonstrate the pure logic of historical development, free from the influence of chance factors, and do not depend in the least on the authenticity of historical documents.

Embedded in the simple concept of labor is the “genetic code” of world history—how and in what sequence mankind passes through the essential stages of its evolution. Marx was able to decode a fragment of this code, pertaining to the history of commodity exchange, and he took a number of important steps toward defining economic formations. However, Marx certainly did not succeed in creating a theory of formations comparable in terms of coherence, rigor, and completeness with his deduction of the forms of value.

Unlike “form of value,” “formation” remains in Marx’s work an empirical abstraction. Such abstractions are undoubtedly useful for imposing order on historical data, but do not incorporate the slightest understanding of the *logic* of social development. For a good century, Marxists have “played solitaire” with formations—some seeking them out in empirical history, others in Marx’s texts. Logically these experiments are nothing but inductive generalizations—in this regard configurations of “formations” do not differ from configurations of “civilizations.” The defects of induction are well known: conclusions are neither complete nor strictly necessary, and arbitrariness is involved in the selection of experimental data.

Deduction also has a defect: its conclusions are necessary but they are not new. Formal deduction is confined to analysis of what is given in the premises. However, this is no small thing when the initial concept—the “major premise” of the theory—is substantive, concrete-in-itself. If labor really is the substance and subject of world history, then this simple concept must encompass *the*

whole of history: the meaning and code of the historical process, so to say, *historia sine factis* (history without facts).

Deduction makes it possible to understand the *logic of history* in its pure form, free of random interference and innumerable natural factors. Marx's deduction of the form of value is just such a dialectical view of the temporal "under the form of eternity." There can be as many inductive periodizations of the history of commodity exchange as you like, but there is one and only one deduction of forms of value from the concept of labor. The problem of the number of forms of value is then solved automatically. Nobody intends to look for a fifth form of value or cast doubt on the third. The four derived in *Capital* exhaust all possible forms of value. The problem of the number of formations, on which theorists of historical materialism have already spilled so much ink, must also be solved precisely thus, in a uniquely possible and exhaustive manner.

The truth of the deductive history of exchange does not depend on the presence or absence of historical facts that confirm it, so it cannot be refuted or at least improved by discovering any new facts that were unknown to Marx. In this sense, the first chapter of *Capital* lays claim to discovery of the *absolute truth* of the history of commodity relations. The same thing can and must be achieved in the theory of formations.

2

Let us start with the simplest question: what is labor? As Spinoza taught, a good concrete definition must express the reason for a thing. Let us follow this golden rule. And so why does man labor? The answer is as clear as daylight: in order to satisfy his needs—initially of a purely physiological kind. Hegel calls them lusts, defining labor as "restrained lust"; the laborer (in Hegel—*Knecht*, that is, servant or slave) does not simply destroy an external thing, like an animal, but creates or "forms."⁷ What does he form? First, a special object that satisfies a need—*use value*. Second, *man himself*.⁸ From here it is just half a step to the sacred formulation: "Labor created man."

In short, *labor is the objectification of need*. Thanks to labor, the subjective form of need acquires the form of an object—it is objectified. Labor imprints the ideal image of human need on the physical body of the object. To take a term from *Capital*, the product of labor is the *equivalent* of human need.

The act of labor—viewed from the vantage point of its cause, need—"appears as *productive consumption*, i.e. as consumption which terminates neither in a *void*, nor in the mere subjectification of the objective, but which is, rather, again posited as an *object*."^{9*}

*From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook III.—Ed.

Before the start of labor, organic need exists in a dual manner: in reality, as a physically felt state of the human body (for instance, hunger) and in the intentional form of the object of need (the goal). These conditions of labor differ in no way from the natural conditions of existence of all living beings. What is special about labor is that it objectifies organic need instead of acting directly to satisfy it.

Let us take a closer look at the process of labor. In what forms does it take place? There is no point in reinventing the bicycle—Marx thoroughly investigated the structure of labor in *The Grundrisse*.

1. When it first emerges in the world, labor appears as a capacity of the living body—the *labor power* that man receives from nature. “This objectivity [of labor] can only be an objectivity not separated from the person: only an objectivity coinciding with his immediate bodily existence.”^{10*}

Labor power differs from the capacities of animals in its universality: the absence of labor procedures inborn in the human organism allows man freely to give his vital energy any form dictated by a need. Tilling the soil, building, fishing, handicrafts—the range of possible uses of labor power is not restricted; it has innumerable degrees of freedom. Labor power is “*labor pure and simple*, abstract labor; absolutely indifferent to its particular *specificity* [*Bestimmtheit*], but capable of all specificities.”^{11**}

2. The next form of the existence of labor is *living activity*. “Labor not as an object but as activity; not as itself *value*, but as the *living source* of value.”^{12†}

From a simple possibility labor turns into a real act, into the process of swallowing up the present existence of all objects that it touches—including the human body, in which it has found itself in the form of labor power. The latter is depleted in the course of labor, consumed by labor in the same way as any external thing. “Labor is the living, form-giving fire; it is the transitoriness of things, their temporality, as their formation by living time.”^{13††}

Living labor contains within itself not a single quantum of materiality: it is a purely ideal form of the existence of labor. It exists only at the very instant of the impact of hand and tool on an object and only at the point where they touch, establishing a relation of equality between them. Of the human hand “it is possible to say that it *is* what the person *does*.”¹⁴

*Ibid.—Ed.

**Ibid.—Ed.

†Ibid.—Ed.

††Ibid.—Ed.

3. At the end of the process, labor “converted from the form of activity into the form of the object; materialized; as a modification of the object, it modifies its own form and changes from activity to being.”^{15*}

Objectified labor stamped in an object—this is the third universal aspect of substance. In the crystals of the congealed lava stream of labor, as in a mirror, man sees the physiognomy of his own need.

4. The last step, obviously, is the return of labor to its foundation, to its subject, as the *knowledge and skill*—the augmented “labor capacity” (*Arbeitsvermögen*)—acquired by him in the process of labor. The circle of the forms of labor closes. The alpha and the omega of labor is its subject, man. Labor nourishes him physically and intellectually, thereby preserving and increasing his labor power.

In each subsequent act of labor there lives and acts the *spirit* of all preceding labor cycles. If reified labor—capital—is “self-expanding value,”¹⁶ then labor in general is *self-expanding activity*. By engaging in labor, man not only creates something but also learns to labor and multiplies his productive power—the art of mastering tools (including his own body) and knowledge of the object.

Finally, in the process of consumption of the product the “dead” labor objectified in it is reborn to new life, providing the subject with the powers and ideas necessary for new acts of labor. Man’s consumption of the products of labor takes place in a form created by labor itself; this ideal form is not extinguished together with the natural form of the object in the process of consumption, but settles in the human soul as what we call culture or formation of the personality (*Bildung* in the Hegelian sense).

The “delta of labor”—that is, the experience of labor activity accumulated by mankind—is expressed in the category of *the ideal*. While the delta of value, or surplus value, is a purely quantitative (calculated in units of labor time) increment of value, the category of the ideal describes purely qualitative improvement in the labor process. The entire past history of labor is *represented in an ideal manner* in each new act of labor: the World Spirit (*Weltgeist*) works on the side even of the worst architect.

And so let us again enumerate the substantial forms of labor: labor power—living activity—the thing—knowledge.

3

A spectral analysis of labor has broken its substance down into four abstract-universal elements. Our next task is to determine, in light of this “genome” of human history, the number, sequence, and general contours of its macro-

*Ibid.—Ed.

forms—economic formations. In this way, of course, we can indicate only genetic, substance-generated features of history, while geography, climate, and biochemical and other natural processes have imprinted numerous extraneous traces upon its external appearance; we can make only approximate judgments regarding these traces, drawing on the information in historical chronicles.

The course of history in terms of formations bears as little resemblance to its external, event-filled appearance as the genetic code of a living being bears to its phenotype. Empirical historiography describes and classifies the phenotypical features of history; it has not the slightest ability to distinguish between what is rooted in the specific nature of a society and what reflects the influence of diverse external factors on that society.

Empirical abstractions such as primitive society and antiquity, the Middle Ages and feudalism, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment help us to order facts but do not yield an understanding of their logical interconnection. Marx's socioeconomic formations suffer from the same shortcomings. He does not derive each formation as a logically necessary sequel to its predecessor, but merely establishes his formations as empirical givens.

Experience shows us the temporal sequence of historical phenomena and events, and in this sequence the mind seeks similarities (empirical abstractions) or tendencies and limits (Weberian "ideal types"). The deduction of economic formations rests upon direct analysis of the concept of labor, abstracting completely from historical phenomena. These formations are neither empirical abstractions nor ideal types, but *substantial forms* of historical phenomena. They reveal the purely logical, extratemporal structure of the history of society. Marx discovered a logic of this kind in the history of commodity relations. We must do for world history as a whole what he did for one of its segments.

Discovery of the formational code of history, of course, does not replace or render superfluous the investigation of historical data and empirical facts. On the contrary, it provides the set of logical techniques necessary for the concrete investigation of any historical events. The most difficult task facing the historian is that of separating the wheat from the chaff—that is, picking out important, historically significant data from the immense diversity of information about the past of human communities and societies.

The "fathers of history" took notice mainly of the most striking facts: political events and all sorts of exotica. Their histories are based on the view of a more or less discerning and broad-minded philistine. The *science* of history, like every science in the true sense of this word, starts with reflections concerning axiomatics, principles of historical investigation. My "history without facts" is also an axiomatic of this kind. It provides the historian with a method for understanding the logical interconnection among historical phenomena.

At the basis of this method lies Marx's idea of the world history as

“creation¹⁷ of man through human labor”^{*} that passes through the division of labor and its complete self-alienation to its emancipation, return to its subject, and transformation into creative self-activity of the personality. Certain nations and civilizations may, of course, lose their way, go round in a circle, or straighten the path somewhere, but mankind as a whole follows the logic of Labor with the same iron necessity that makes the earth rotate in its solar orbit. This is how Marx envisioned the matter, describing the history of society as “the natural-historical process.”

With the aid of *The Grundrisse* we have identified analytically four universal aspects of the labor process. Now we must see how they emerge—one after the other, in strict sequence—onto the surface of history, acquiring the living flesh of “phenomena” and turning into “practically true abstractions.”¹⁸ In each historical era one of the abstract aspects of substance becomes its plenipotentiary representative, subordinating to itself the three other aspects.

Marx called this kind of deduction of historical forms *the method of ascent from the abstract to the concrete*. According to the plan set out in *The Grundrisse* for an investigation of the capitalist economy, the first section was to begin with “the general, abstract determinants which obtain in more or less all forms of society”: commodities (exchange values), money, prices. “The definition of a form is simple. . . . However, they are *not posited* in this definition.” Marx portrays the historical development of capitalism as the living embodiment or “positing” of these general abstractions. Commodity relations must be “posited as *relations of production*”—and in the concluding section (about the world market) “production, and also each of its aspects, is posited as a whole in its totality.”¹⁹

Marx borrowed his method of logical “dissecting of subject matter”—and, indeed, the very term “posit” (*Setzen*)—from Hegel’s *Phenomenology of the Spirit*.²⁰ I in turn use the same method in a materialist rewording of Marx.

Economic formations are none other than the abstract aspects of labor, *posited* in turn by labor as dominant relations of production.

Deduction of economic formations, however, cannot be reduced to exercises in speculative logic. It is necessary to show, at least in outline, insofar as the limits of a journal article permit, how and why one formation turns into another, higher formation. Here our investigation shifts from the plane of pure logic to that of concrete history. Logical analysis is obliged to show the historian the direction and final goal of his explorations, but does not have the right to substitute itself for concrete historical researches. Without logic history is blind, but without history logic is empty.

^{*}The famous statements from K. Marx’s *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Section on Private Property and Communism.—Ed.

1. In the simple concept of labor we have found the relation of man to object and his relation to himself. The external object of labor, its material, and its “natural laboratory” is *the land* with all its contents. Labor is man’s active appropriation of the land and of the “inorganic body” of nature as a whole.²¹ And man inherits his organic body (not only its morphology but also behavior and way of life) from other people, his forebears, who form a *historical community* within which every individual is a living particle.

The method of appropriating the conditions of labor (at first natural conditions, then also artificial conditions created by labor itself) by means of a relation to other people or to society is called by Marx “a form of property.” As such, property is a social relation of the individual to the objective conditions of labor.

The *mutual relations of labor and property* is the first criterion for distinguishing among the economic formations of society.

Labor is the substance and subject of property relations, or their “subjective essence” (*subjektive Wesen*), as Marx put it. Thus, in the emergence of private property Marx saw the external expression and consequence of the division of labor. The character of property relations, as of any social relations, is conditioned by the level of the division of labor, by the quantity and quality of its “forces of production.”

2. Another criterion for distinguishing among economic formations is *the character of the tools of labor*. More than once Marx approvingly quoted the definition of man given by one of the fathers of the labor theory of value, Benjamin Franklin, in conversation with friends: man is a tool-making animal. Citing this definition, Marx adds on his own account: “Relics of bygone instruments of labor possess the same importance for the investigation of extinct economic forms of society, as do fossil bones for the determination of extinct species of animals. It is not the articles made, but how they are made, and by what instruments, that enables us to distinguish different economic epochs.”^{22*} Knowing what kinds of tools predominated in various societies, we can demarcate the formations of human history.

As early as the first century B.C.E., Titus Lucretius Carus and Marcus Terentius Varro gave a periodization of human history based on the material used in tools of labor (the stone, bronze, and iron ages) and the predominant type of labor (the eras of hunting, herding, and farming). Marx did not propose his own tool-based periodization of history, confining himself to the investiga-

*From K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Part III, Ch. 7.—Ed.

tion of the “machinery,” in which he saw “the most adequate form of *fixed capital*.”^{23*} I shall try to fill this gap in the theory of economic formations.

3. Each formation places its own special “stress” within the general structure of labor, emphasizing one of the four simple aspects of the labor process. Subjectively this emphasis appears as *the economic goal of labor*. Successes in the pursuit of this goal lead to the transformation of the given formation into a higher formation—an economic revolution that fundamentally changes the character of the relationship between labor and property.

Now we have the instruments we need to set about the demarcation of the economic formations of world history.

The archaic formation

The “primeval (primitive, archaic) formation” (la formation archaïque ou primaire), as Marx called it in a draft of his letter to Vera Zasulich, encompasses an enormous period of time—many hundreds of thousands of years, from the emergence of the human race up to the appearance of the agrarian commune, which became “the last word of the *archaic social formation*.”²⁴

It would seem strange to include within a single formation the primitive band and the great oriental civilizations. Empirically the latter have much more in common with contemporary Western civilization than do small groups of half-savage wanderers in the savannah. Marx saw this, of course. He deliberately ignored phenotypical similarity in order to establish genetic unity.

1. *Collective property in the conditions of labor*—such is the economic basis of the primary formation throughout its existence. All the forms of property of this formation without exception presuppose the presence of the *commune*, which—like the land itself—is bequeathed to labor by nature. This is a form of intercourse that emerges naturally, alters ceaselessly, but is not created by labor: the connection among individuals is given here as an attribute of their *organic bodies*—biological kinship, blood ties. The archaic commune acts as a *single collective body* with its specialized organs, and this specialization is itself conditioned predominantly by *bodily attributes* such as age and sex, physical strength, and state of health.

The economic unity of the commune consists in the fact that each individual is both a worker and an owner of the conditions and products of his labor. Labor and property are directly identical.

*From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*.—Ed.

In *The Grundrisse*, Marx does all he can to emphasize the bodily character of archaic property. Property, he says, is given to the individual by nature in the same way as his skin or sensory organs—“nature-given inorganic body of his subjectivity.”^{25*} The objective conditions of labor and property “‘form, so to speak, his extended body. He actually does not relate to his conditions of production, but rather has a double existence, both subjectively as he himself, and objectively in these natural nonorganic conditions of his existence.’”^{26**} Archaic property is the *other-being of the human body*, just as labor is initially only a capacity of this body.

2. Archaic tools share the “bodily” character of labor and property. They are a *direct continuation of man’s body*—they are set in motion by the energy of his muscles and their productive power is determined by the habitual motion of his bodily organs. The spear, knife, and bow of the hunter, the plow and hoe of the tiller, the nomad’s horse and the fisherman’s boat, the craftsman’s hammer and the potter’s wheel—all these are appendages to the human body, adapted to its capabilities, and in turn requiring from the body a special dexterity, the art of handling them.

The human body is the central axis around which archaic labor processes are constructed, while the hand is truly “the tool of tools,” *organum organorum*.²⁷ All other tools of labor form the *periphery of the body*: they serve as conductors of its energy, strengthen its capabilities, and expand their range.

3. The economic goal of archaic labor is again the *reproduction of the human body*: the production of use values in a quantity sufficient to sustain the physical existence of the workers.²⁸ “The land feeds man, but does not make him rich” (A. Halban Blumenstok).

Limited to utilitarian considerations as this goal of labor may be, Marx nonetheless finds it “more elevated” than the goal of production in the bourgeois world, which is no longer man himself but “wealth” in its material, commodity-money form.

Description of the substantial features of the archaic formation is the first step toward explaining the diversity of its empirical forms. It is impossible to derive this diversity from the simple concept of labor because it is conditioned not only by labor but also by external nature. In the archaic formation the diversity of social forms is especially great, for labor is performed in its “natural laboratory,” as Marx liked to call the land. This “laboratory” encompasses the most diverse “ecological niches,” to which man is forced to adapt all his life activity, including his labor.

*From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook IV.—Ed.

***Ibid.*, Notebook V.—Ed.

The original forms of intercourse are also not created by labor. In part they were inherited by people from their anthropoid forebears; in part they were adopted from other animal communities—above all, the predators of the savannah.²⁹

In becoming a condition for appropriation of the land, a form of intercourse turns into a form of property. Archaic property relations initially boil down to simple *ownership* of the natural conditions of labor. For the individual this ownership (of land, labor power, and life itself) is mediated by the form of intercourse, that is, by his relation to other members of the community. “Each individual conducts himself only as a link, as a member of this community as *proprietor* or *possessor*.”^{30*} Relations of blood kinship are the dominant social connection. Labor modifies and transforms these relations, as it does any natural material, but it is clearly not labor that creates them.

The productivity of labor and property relations in the archaic formation attain their highest development in the *agrarian commune*. In Marx’s opinion, “in the historical development of Western Europe, ancient and modern, the period of the “agricultural commune” appears as a period of transition from communal property to private property, as a period of transition from the primary form to the secondary one.”^{31**} In itself, however, the appearance of private property does not mean that the transition to the secondary formation has already occurred, just as the rise of capital—trading or loan capital, for example—is not yet “capitalism” as an economic formation. The embryo of the secondary formation is formed only when private property relations are extended to the *living labor* of the worker (the second aspect of the substance of labor).

From the bosom of the agrarian commune there arose in river valleys the most ancient civilizations of Sumeria, Egypt, India, and China—very similar, if not kindred, in terms of material culture. In all of them there reigned *directly communal property* in the conditions of labor, which Marx called sometimes the “Oriental” and sometimes the “Asiatic” form of property. The collective foundation of archaic property finds expression here in the institution of the state, which coordinates the efforts of the numerous communes in order to accomplish labor-intensive economic tasks such as irrigation of the fields,³² navigation, and the waging of war. “The communal conditions of real appropriation through labor . . . then appear as the work of the higher unity—of the despotic regime hovering over the little communes.”^{33***}

From the outside it looks as though the state, as represented by its rulers,

*From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook IV.—Ed.

**From K. Marx, *Letter to Vera Zasulich*, First Draft.—Ed.

***From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook IV.—Ed.

is the owner of the land and even of labor power (which the pharaohs and kings often commanded at will; this could also be embodied in legal form). Phenotypically the oriental form of property does indeed very much resemble feudalism.³⁴ However, if we see in world history not the deeds of the powers that be or the political-legal manifestation of “the idea of freedom” (Hegel) but the self-development of labor, then the oriental state institutions constitute no more than a *superstructure* erected on the basis of directly communal property and “the first great force of production”—the commune (Marx). The archaic oriental ruler is neither a private property owner nor a feudal lord but a *personification of the collective*, “the personified single foundation of the commune.”

The greater the extent to which property requires the joint labor of masses of people for its practical use, the stronger and more substantial the expression of the collective foundation of the commune. Conversely, where natural conditions make joint labor by large numbers of people inexpedient the commune does not have an external, suprapersonal existence (in the form of powerful state institutions) in relation to individuals. Its unity is then preserved in purely ideal things, such as a common language and shared memory, customs, and religion. This provides in the most general terms an economic explanation for the correlation that Montesquieu observed between natural-climatic zones and forms of state structure.

A no less significant influence on the form of property is exerted by ecology. When it moves beyond the boundaries of river valleys, the agrarian commune loses its compactness and remarkable stability. Little by little, as the labor process acquires increasingly individual forms, the directly communal form of property breaks up: there develops parceled property, then all higher levels of intercourse and thinking disintegrate (giving rise to the democracy of the city state (*polis*), private law, and philosophy—the first wholly personal form of existence of the human spirit).

In *The Grundrisse*, Marx finds and describes two relatively pure forms of the dissolution of “Asiatic,” directly communal property—the ancient and the Germanic forms; he also mentions in passing the Slavic form of property. He assigns all these forms to “Historical Condition No. 1” (*historischer Zustand No. 1*), or to the first “historical stage” (*historische Stufe*) of the development of property.³⁵

Marx’s treatment of this problem is overlooked by such Marxist historians as M. Godelier, E. Welskopf, and F. Tökei, who use empirical differences in forms of property as the basis of their own versions of the theory of economic formations, resulting in a hopeless chaos of typologies and discrediting the very concept of formation.

The historian can avoid a muddle of this kind only if he possesses a touchstone that enables him to distinguish economic relations that flow of

necessity from the nature of human labor, that are *posited* by labor as such, from forms dictated by external nature, by the ecological niche in which labor is performed. It is absolutely impossible to make this demarcation with due rigor without the aid of the concept of the substance of labor. The diversity of empirically given special characteristics of archaic forms of property makes the identity of their economic nature simply unrecognizable.

Inasmuch as all these forms are conditioned by *natural* conditions of labor, it is simplest to classify them *topographically*, as Weber does, distinguishing among riverine, maritime, and continental economic cultures (approximately corresponding to the oriental, ancient, and Germanic forms of property in Marx). It is easy to add other cultures to this list—steppe, mountain, tropical, and so forth.

The forms of labor and property in these natural zones are, of course, extremely diverse. And yet the formational “genotype” is everywhere the same—labor and property are identical; they have a single subject—the commune, that is, workers linked by *bodily* kinship; the tools of labor are extensions of the human *body*; and the final goal of labor is to obtain means to support the life of the *body*.

Key differences in archaic forms of property concern the following:

- (a) whether the commune has an objective existence separate from individuals;
- (b) whether labor proceeds in a joint or individual form; and
- (c) whether private property exists in the objective conditions of labor.

We need to determine the specific weight of these differences in the “ether” of substance. Do any of them correspond to a difference in the universal aspects of labor? If so, we would be dealing with different formations. Or must they be attributed to external, natural conditions of labor’s immediate being? If so, they are merely different forms of the same archaic property, as Marx thought. Only a special historical investigation can answer these questions. I shall confine myself to certain considerations that are drawn from *The Grundrisse* and appeal to the simplest historical facts.

Administrative institutions that possess an autonomous reality in relation to workers grow up where *natural* conditions of labor require combination and coordination of the efforts of many communes, the joint labor of large masses of people. Yet, for instance, “among the Germanic tribes, where the individual family chiefs settled in the forests, long distances apart . . . the commune therefore does not in fact exist as a *state*” but only in the form of coming-together.^{36*} Under northern natural conditions (of the continental

*From K.Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook V. Marx distinguishes between just “coming-together” (*Vereinigung*) and “being-together” (*Verein*).—Ed.

type), there is simply no economic need for a colossal “excrescence on the economic order” (Marx) like the Oriental state. The greater the extent to which the labor process itself takes individual forms, the more quickly and easily do private property relations emerge.

Mark Block cogently argues that the appearance of private property in land was a response of the commune to change in the natural conditions of labor. Describing the archaic economy of the southwestern region of Europe, he observes that private property in land (the “enclosed-field system”) emerged in sparsely populated areas of rugged terrain, poor soil, and weak, irregular, and extensive cultivation, while “collective tilling of arable land” and directly communal property (the “open-field system” with a prohibition on enclosures and communal land-use rights) were preserved in the most fertile zones.³⁷

Thus, nature itself fosters the individualization of labor and, as a consequence, the fragmentation of communal property in land. But for so long as the property owners themselves remain workers, private property does not affect the *substance* of labor. Change of economic formation begins when the *living labor* of people is appropriated together with the land.

The secondary formation

The archaic formation is oriented toward reproduction of the body—both the bodies of individual workers and the collective “quasi-body” of the commune. Sooner or later, improvement in the tools and techniques of labor makes this into expanded reproduction, while the scale of property in land remains practically unchanged. There appears a *surplus of labor power* that the commune is unable to put to effective use. Relations of collective property in land turn into an impediment to further development of the economy.

The crises of the archaic economy are a consequence of the *overproduction of labor power*, of *human bodies* (just as capitalist crises arise out of the overproduction of exchange values of commodities). Successful performance of the mission of the primary economic formation—production of the workers themselves—decomposes the foundation and basis of this formation—the commune. The commune is forced to expel surplus labor power to new territories or other sectors of the economy. The building of pyramids and huge temples, the great migrations of peoples, settlement of the forests of the taiga and tropical jungles, alpine meadows and polar regions—all these are consequences of the rising “blood pressure” in the body of the communal economy. This is how it tries to solve its demographic problem and get rid of “superfluous people”—the unneeded labor power that the commune itself produces (that is the goal of archaic production). Local population explosions in the context of land shortage in societies of the primary formation become

the chief engine of economic progress, and at the same time the cause of its collapse and the transition of archaic societies to the mode of production of the secondary formation.

Marx first uses the term “secondary formation” in drafts of his letter to Vera Zasulich. He includes in this formation “the series of societies based on slavery and serfdom.”^{38*} But in *The Grundrisse* too Marx constantly considers slavery and serfdom (usually mentioned together) as *secondary* forms of property: “Slavery, serfdom, and so on are always secondary forms” (where “and so on” signifies any other forms of property in which “the worker himself who appears among these conditions of production”).^{39**} Later the idea is repeated, now in an expanded form: “The original forms of property . . . are essentially modified by the inclusion of labor itself among the *objective conditions of production* (serfdom and slavery), through which the simply affirmative character of all forms of property included under No. 1 is lost and modified.”^{40†}

The genetic features of societies of the secondary economic formation are as follows:

1. Their economic substance is *private property in other’s labor*. Labor power is alienated from its natural subject and becomes the property of another subject.

It is clear that this alienation can concern only *living activity* (the second abstract aspect of the simple concept of labor) and not capacity for labor as such. The latter is an unalienable attribute of a person’s organic body, while the *actual process* of labor is imposed on him from without and directed by another person. The worker is turned into the tool of an alien will—a *human machine*. “As labor capacity, he is a thing [*Sache*] belonging to another, and hence does not relate as subject to his particular expenditure of force, nor to the act of living labor.”^{41††}

In this way, the previous *direct identity* between labor and property (workers were subjects of property relations and property owners were workers) turned into its *opposite*: the worker is not a property owner and the property owner does not work—one excludes the other.

Into the gap that has opened up between these poles of economic existence a wedge is driven—the *relation of appropriation of an alien will*. This relation becomes the first purely historical (wholly artificial, not given by nature) premise of the labor process. Like any social relation, expropriation of the will is a form of labor, so the formula “the property owner does not work”

*From K. Marx, *Letter to Vera Zasulich*, Third Draft.—Ed.

**From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook V.—Ed.

†From *ibid.*, Notebook V.—Ed.

††From *ibid.*, Notebook IV.—Ed.

is subject to an important reservation: he does not *physically* take part in the process of production of material goods. The lot of the property owner is mental labor (determination of the goals and methods of labor, sanctions and incentives), the exercise of state power, and war.

2. The secondary formation mainly inherited its tools of labor from the archaic formation. Mute instruments (tools for agriculture and handicrafts) and semivocal instruments (domestic animals) did not undergo any fundamental changes; vocal instruments (slaves and certain other kinds of expropriated workers) were used in one way or another in the economy of the majority of archaic societies.

Real and significant progress was achieved in the field of *organization of the labor process*. Torn away from its material embedding in property, living labor became much easier to divide and combine. In the era of the secondary economic formation, *living activity* underwent much more rapid improvement than material tools.

The pioneers of ancient economics, from Aristotle to Columella, devote their works to a search for optimal forms of the distribution and use of labor resources and for the rational organization of economic activity in general. In Plato's *Republic*, a rational division of labor is key to the ideal social order.

In his works, E.M. Shtaerman shows in detail that the ancient Roman economy progressed almost exclusively as a result of improvements in living forms of labor: "In general, the tools of labor did not undergo any noticeable evolution. . . . The development of the forces of production that made possible the growth in agricultural output resulted not from advances in technology but from improvement in the skills and organization of the workforce."⁴² Shtaerman demonstrates this using the villa [*villa rustica*—Ed.] and the craftsman's workshop as examples:

The advantages of the villa . . . lay in the fact that it facilitated simple cooperation, thereby raising labor productivity. It is also most expedient to organize slave labor and establish a certain division of labor, both between different districts and households and within individual households; this improved workers' skills and strengthened their work habits.

Corresponding to the slaveholding villa in agriculture was the medium-sized workshop in handicrafts. Here too we see that development occurs not so much through technological improvement as through a certain primitive division of labor within the workshop and an extraordinarily detailed specialization.⁴³

The large-scale and skillful exploitation of "human machines" leads to remarkably rapid (in comparison with archaic society) growth in material wealth and gives the property owners a great deal of free time for intellectual

labor. As a consequence, the productive power of social labor increases by an entire order of magnitude.

3. The specific economic goal of production in the secondary formation is *power over people*—the subordination of others to oneself, the appropriation of an alien will. In other words, economic relations of *personal dependence* come to the fore.

In *Capital*, Marx says the following of medieval society: “Personal dependence here characterizes the social relations of production just as much as it does the other spheres of life organised on the basis of that production. . . . Personal dependence form the groundwork of society.”^{44*} Exactly the same point applies to ancient society. The feudal and slaveholding forms of property have a common basis—relations of personal power, of domination and submission.

Here the primary goal—sustaining the life of the body, preserving labor power—is, naturally, not abolished; it is merely overshadowed (Hegel would say “sublated”) by a historically higher goal. The same happens with archaic tools. They have remained in use and undergone improvement throughout history, right up to the present day. However, in the secondary formation they were already eclipsed by a more perfect tool of labor—the “human machine.”

And so *power turns into a form of property*—that is, it becomes an economic category and a specific “relation of production” (personal dependence).

A.Ia. Gurevich in his works constantly emphasized this circumstance with regard to feudal society: “Indeed, what is the power of the lord over his lands and his people—a political fact or an economic fact? It seems a false alternative, for power relations and relations of production here were inseparable and fused.”⁴⁵ “In the medieval era there hardly existed distinct economic and political spheres; property and power constituted an undifferentiated unity.”⁴⁶

I suggest that it would nonetheless be better to call this an *organic* unity, clearly distinguishing its two components—property and power. The relation between them is analogous to the relation between value and price. Just as price is the form of expression of value, power is the *form* of property in the secondary formation.

As a rule, this power is initially acquired by force in the course of war. In *The Grundrisse* war is regarded as labor, as production: “War is therefore the great comprehensive task, the peat communal labor.”^{47**} Thanks to war with its “great communal labor” (*die große gemeinschaftliche Arbeit*), con-

*From K. Marx, *Capital*. Vol. I, Ch. 1.—Ed.

**From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook IV.—Ed.

ditions take shape for the rise of the bourgeois formation: within the army itself “certain economic conditions, e.g., wage-labour, machinery, etc., were evolved earlier than within civil society. The relations between productive power and conditions of communication are likewise particularly obvious in the army.”^{48*}

For the archaic formation war was the most effective means of getting rid of the “surplus” labor power that the communal economy constantly generated. War, unlike agriculture, is capable of employing practically any quantity of labor power (both in combat and in construction, transportation, etc.).

With the start of the secondary formation of human history war becomes the *dominant form of the production of tools of labor*, for what is appropriated in the person of the slave or serf is none other than a tool, albeit a tool of a very specific kind. The *military expedition* to seize and appropriate another’s land and the living labor of the individuals inhabiting it expresses the essence of the secondary economic formation just as directly as hunting, herding, or farming carried out by the commune in the territory belonging to it expresses the essence of the archaic economic formation. It is precisely the military expedition and not the Roman villa or latifundium or the medieval fief that merits study as the *simplest concrete economic form*—the living cell that contains within itself the karyotype of the secondary economic formation.

In all societies that rest on relations of personal dependence, the forms of physical compulsion are the most dynamic and developed aspect of the economy. Highly complex fortifications and siege engines, sophisticated military tactics and techniques for the handling of arms—such advanced technologies and rapid rates of development were unknown to the civilian economy of the secondary formation. Agriculture and livestock rearing stagnated for centuries.

The military expedition acquires an economic function absolutely different from the function it performs in archaic societies: besides use values, it now also creates *value as such* in the person of the slave or serf. “In the slave relation the worker is nothing but a living labor-machine, which therefore has a value for others, or rather is a value.”^{49**} He possesses use value for his master only as a source of living activity and value, or else as a commodity, as exchange value.

In general, the military expedition appears as an *exchange of living labor for living labor*—as the nonequivalent exchange of a lesser quantity of one kind of labor time (military) for a significantly greater quantity of universal

*From K. Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Introduction.—Ed.

**From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook IV.—Ed.

labor time—that is, in essence, as a *personal* relation, albeit one capable of assuming various material forms. It is easy to see that here too the second aspect of the universal concept of labor is predominant.

In antiquity the soldier's labor was valued as a noble pursuit. "Such a war is just by its very nature," wrote Aristotle concerning "the art of hunting" for people whom nature itself predestines to be slaves.⁵⁰ In his celebrated Hegelian readings, Alexandre Kojève saw "the first outline of Individuality" in the military service (*Dienst*) of the feudal lord: "In making war, the Lord, like the Slave, *labors*. His Labor is war; his craft is killing."⁵¹

Contemporary historians, as a rule, do not regard war as labor in the true sense of the word, because it does not create material values (on the contrary, it destroys them and the workers themselves); thereby they miss any chance of understanding the nature of the economy of the secondary formation. The historical literature speaks constantly of the *influence* of war on the economy and of the economy on war, as though these were two different "substances." War is called a continuation of politics, although war existed long before the emergence of politics and politicians. In fact, war belongs to the sphere of production and social existence and not—like politics—to that of consciousness. What then does it produce, apart from death and destruction?

War supplies societies of the secondary formation with means of production—"living machines." The ancient or feudal military expedition is not so much a hunt as a *branch of machine building*, the "heavy industry" of the ancient world.

No less valuable a product of military labor is the production of *new human communities*. In general, besides material goods, any labor produces man himself, forms of human intercourse and thinking. In the era of the secondary formation, military labor is the chief creator and innovator in the formation of social ties and institutions.

The feudal economy was created by war⁵² and militarized from top to bottom. The mighty empires of the secondary formation were created through centuries of warfare. The states of Alexander the Great and the Romans, Chingizids, and Ottomans, the Holy Roman Empire, the Russian and British empires: these are all great masterpieces of human labor—above all, military labor. Their builders swept away local political boundaries and with them the economic, ethnic, religious, and other partitions that divide people.

The history of the secondary economic formation knows just two comparatively pure forms of property—slaveholding and feudalism. All the substantial features of this formation are in clear evidence both in ancient and in medieval society. It remains to explain the causes of the differences between the slaveholding and the feudal system.

1. The first difference concerns the character of the appropriation of

others' labor power. Almost the entire spectrum of conditions of dependence already existed in archaic societies: from direct and complete expropriation of the worker to appropriation that from the outside looked like his voluntary surrender of land and some of his freedoms in exchange for the protection of a possessor of *power*. What changed was only the specific weight of one or another condition in the economy: the forms of the worker's dependence shifted periodically—sometimes milder and more complex, at other times harsher and more direct.

Variations in the forms of personal dependence can to a large extent be explained by reference to considerations of the effectiveness of using others' labor under various natural conditions. For example, slave labor is poorly suited to grain farming,⁵³ but is very effective for the cultivation of plantation crops. Hence it is clear why in the north of Europe, for instance, where natural conditions required intensive tilling of the soil, slavery simply could not exist as an effective economic system. Other, indirect forms of personal dependence were predominant there—in particular, feudal relations.

Indeed, even within the ancient Roman economy slave labor was not profitable in all branches of agriculture: "In Cato's time the labor of free farm laborers and sharecroppers was used mainly for the old well-known grain crops, while slaves were used for the new intensive crops—grapes and olives."⁵⁴

The character of relations of dependence was also influenced by such purely economic factors as the market situation. In particular, E. Shtaerman refers to a study by R. Rémondon, according to which the transition from slavery to serfdom was to a large extent the result of the narrow and highly competitive character of provincial markets: "Vineyards and olive groves ceased to yield a profit, and landowners returned to grain crops, for which serfdom was more advantageous than slavery."⁵⁵ Fluctuations of this kind in the relations of personal dependence in no way affect the substance of labor.

2. The second difference is that the slaveholding economy grows out of the ancient form of property through the expropriation of property of the oriental type (*ager publicus*), while the feudal form of property in the West has its genesis *within* a society of the secondary formation (Roman society) and uses surviving fragments of its economic and legal forms.

This circumstance does not show that feudalism constitutes a separate formation; it demonstrates only its blood kinship with the ancient slaveholding order. However striking the difference in the "physiognomy" of slaveholding and feudal societies, their economic "genetics" are practically identical:

—alienation of the worker's living activity from the objective conditions of labor, opposition between labor and property;

—priority development of living forms of labor and the primacy of military labor;

—relations of personal dependence as the foundation of the economy and power over people as the highest subjective goal of labor.

In the economy, personal relations of dependence are always concealed inside a material shell: a slave or serf, like any thing, does not belong to himself and is subject to exchange or sale on the same basis as a thing. Feudal relations of personal dependence are mediated at all levels by material relations (of landed property), practically merging with them, and the worker turns into an element of landed property, *servus glebae* (a category in Roman law, “slave of the soil”).

This material form of labor is often viewed abstractly, in a bourgeois spirit, with the result that the latifundium, for example, is presented as a truly capitalist enterprise and the manorial estate “as an enormous firm . . . in which land was usually granted in lieu of wages.”⁵⁶ In fact, although the layer of material relations grows ever thicker throughout the history of the secondary formation, relations of personal dependence remain its foundation to the end. The medievalist Gurevich has proven the correctness of this judgment of Marx’s on the basis of extensive historical material. His summary states: “The essence of feudal property in land is power over the people who live on that land; under the material economic form lies the personal relation.”⁵⁷ Sooner or later, however, the material, commodity relations dissolved the personal connections among people and together with them the secondary economic formation itself.

The capitalist formation

Wage labor and capital—trading and financial—already existed in the first civilizations. The code of Hammurabi* stipulates wage rates for various occupations and categories of worker (with a separate line for the hire of others’ slaves), conditions for extending credit, sanctions for debtors, and so on. We invariably encounter wage labor wherever complex mechanical devices (such as ships) are created and used or social megamachines—state institutions, armies—operate.

The military enterprise as a substantial form of labor of the secondary formation *unites* within itself both elements of capitalist property—wage labor and capital; moreover, capital appears here in its *basic* form, as tools of labor—military machinery and equipment. War fosters the concentration of social wealth in its monetary form in the hands of a few property owners—that is, it accomplishes the primitive accumulation of value required for its conversion into industrial capital. War creates an abundance of free hands—a *labor market*—by ruining enormous masses of people, and war itself provides many of them with work as hired mercenaries.

*A Babylonian law code, dating back to about 1772 B.C.E.—Ed.

In a work of fundamental importance, L.P. Marinovich traces how in the space of just one century commodity-money relations became firmly dominant in the ancient Greek army, “turning it into one of the spheres for the investment of ‘capital’ and extraction of profit.”⁵⁸ War came to be waged primarily for mercantile purposes: war became “to some extent a financial undertaking, in terms both of planning and of the conduct of military operations.” The army now consisted almost wholly of mercenaries; moreover, wage labor was incomparably more prevalent in the army than in any other sector of the Greek economy.⁵⁹

The ancient Roman army underwent a similar evolution in the last centuries of the Empire, as did the feudal army of the late Middle Ages with its *condottieri* and *lands knechte*. In all societies of the secondary formation, the military economy invariably generated bourgeois property relations, reproduced capital and wage labor on an expanding scale, and firmly welded them together.

Like practically all historians, Marinovich excludes war from the sphere of production, seeing in it only “extra-economic appropriation of property.” However, what seems extra-economic to a historian of the bourgeois era was the real *core of the economy* of the secondary formation. And it was precisely to war—to the military enterprise—that history assigned the mission of making bourgeois property relations dominant.

In his book *War and Capitalism*, Werner Sombart narrates in concrete terms how this happened in feudal society. The author sees in the development of military affairs the same regularity as in the evolution of “forms of organization of economic life: from handicrafts to capitalist industry” (it is worth noting that Sombart too removes war as such from the sphere of economic life). “The Protestant ethic,” he observes, “is literally permeated by ‘the spirit of militarism.’ The virtues preached by the Calvinists and Puritans coincide with the militaristic ideal of man in the striving to ‘subordinate him to a whole of a higher order’. . . *Discipline becomes the leitmotif*.”⁶⁰ In labor Calvin sees man’s *service and duty* to God. Laziness and violations of labor discipline must be sternly punished, like the soldier’s betrayal of his oath or cowardice in battle.

There is also historical continuity between wage labor in the army and in the factory. Noting that “wage labor as a phenomenon has its roots deep in the Middle Ages” and that “it is perhaps just as old as knighthood,” Sombart traces how army routines are borrowed by the emerging capitalist factories and finally comes to the conclusion: “That it was by no means economic life that found reflection here in military discipline, as inveterate adherents of the materialist understanding of history usually suppose, is shown by the temporal sequence in which these phenomena followed one another.”⁶¹ Historically industry arose out of the military enterprise; it was fostered by war and copied army routines, and not vice versa.

It is not easy for Marxists who, like Sombart, reduce the economy to the production of material goods to parry this argument. But Marx, as we have seen, considered war itself a kind of labor, a special field of economic life.⁶² The interaction between war and industry takes place *within* the economy, between different sectors thereof; it is by no means an infusion of the economy with the spirit of army discipline *from without*, as Sombart portrayed the process.

The changes that the substance of labor undergoes in the capitalist economy are as follows.

1. The third aspect of the simple concept of labor—*objectified labor, labor as a thing*—is separated (according to Marx—alienated) from labor power and living activity and turns into the dominant factor of social production. Relations among people in the process of labor are thereby *reified*—that is, they acquire the form of a relation among things, commodities. The labor process itself now appears as an exchange of the commodity “labor power” for the means of production.

In bourgeois society, the things created by human labor rule over their creators, people. Capital is none other than reified past labor, which dominates living labor and augments itself by swallowing up the labor of others.

“Social wealth confronts labor in more powerful portions as an alien and dominant power;* on the condition that the monstrous objective power which social labour itself erected opposite itself as one of its moments belongs not to the worker, but to the personified conditions of production, i.e. to capital.”^{63**}

In the form of capital, the objective might created by labor, or objectified labor, turns from a simple aspect of the substance of labor into its plenipotentiary representative—posits itself as the *subject* of social production as a whole, appearing in a historical form that is alienated and isolated from the three other aspects of substance. (Marx gave an exhaustive description of this reification and alienation of labor, although he erred by an order of magnitude in assessing the potential and robustness of the capitalist formation and—a much more serious matter—in determining the *means* of its transformation into a higher formation.)

The substantial principle of the bourgeois economic formation is the *contradiction between labor and property*.

The secondary formation already broke up the identity between labor and property and counterposed them as two mutually alien essences: labor relates

*The emphasis comes to be placed not on the state of being *objectified*, but on the state of being *alienated*, dispossessed, sold [Der Ton wird gelegt nicht auf das *Vergegenständlichtsein*, sondern das *Entfremdet-, Entäußert-, Veräußertsein*].—Ed.

**From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook VII.—Ed.

to the objectivity created by it as to the property of *others*, while this property affirms itself only by appropriating the labor of *others*. The capitalist formation deepens this alienation, shifting the opposition between labor and property *from within each side*. Labor is now alienated not only from property but also from itself (living labor confronts reified labor); and property suffers the same kind of split (the owner of labor power confronts the owner of the objective conditions of labor). In logic, this kind of “reflected-in-itself” absolute opposition is called a *contradiction*.

2. In the labor process itself, reified labor starts to dominate with the appearance of *mechanical machines*. In acquiring the form of a machine, the tool of labor ceases to be a simple conductor of human activity and extension of the organs of the body. The concrete determination of labor, for the sake of which man has improved the organs of his body over the ages, passes to the machine: now “the machine is a virtuoso” (Marx).* The worker merely services the machine; his labor becomes abstract.

Intellectual activity confronts physical activity as before, but now it appears on the side of the tool of labor—the machine. The machine obtains preferential development relative to labor power, reified labor relative to living labor, and value relative to use value. In this sense, capital is the economic expression of domination by machines, and the most adequate form of existence of capital is “fixed capital.”

“In machinery, objectified labor confronts living labor within the labour process itself as the power which rules it; a power which, as the appropriation of living labor, is the form of capital. The transformation of the means of labor into machinery, and of living labor into a mere living accessory of this machinery, as the means of its action, also posits the absorption of the labor process in its material character as a mere moment of the realization process of capital. . . . In machinery, knowledge appears as alien, external to him [the worker]; and living labor [as] subsumed under self-activating objectified labor.”⁶⁴**

In machine production, the third, material aspect of the simple concept of labor is *posited* as the dominant “existing-for-itself” subject.

3. The goal of capitalist production is the augmentation of wealth, again in its *material* (commodity-money) form. “The real producer [appears] as a mere means of production, material wealth as an end in itself. And so the

*The quote appears in the Notebook VI of *The Grundrisse*; it reads: “it is the machine which possesses skill and strength in place of the worker, is itself the virtuoso, with a soul of its own in the mechanical laws acting through it.”—Ed.

**Ibid.—Ed.

growth of this material wealth is brought about in contradiction to and at the expense of the individual human being.”^{65*}

In and of itself, capital is not a thing; nor is money a thing; both are social relations of the domination of things over people. The real content of this alienated-material form—as has always been and still is the case in the history of mankind—is the self-development of the productive powers of labor.

The problem of definition of the forms of capitalist property remains open, insofar as its history has not finished. However, it is already possible to indicate at least two sufficiently pure forms: the classical bourgeois order and state capitalism (socialism).

Despite the prophecies of Marx, the mutation of the bourgeois economy continues to this day; its forces of production have grown immeasurably and rates of growth remain high. During the twentieth century, the “visible hand” of the state took a considerable share of work (and power) away from the “invisible hand” of the market. On the periphery of the capitalist world there appeared a new form of property that called itself socialist.

Socialism began with the expropriation of the means of production as property of the state. This did not change the economic substance of the capitalist formation in the least. Marx’s dream of “converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it”^{66**} did not come true—the reality was precisely the opposite. In the country of the victorious proletariat, the state turned into a *self-sufficient machine*, a superpower, and society itself into its living appendage, a *collective proletarian*.

Despite the illusions of the socialists, state monopoly of the means of production in no way abolishes private property. On the contrary, it elevates private property to the level of universality, creating—to use Marx’s expression—“*universal private property*.” The socialist state is none other than “the communal capital, the *community* as universal capitalist.”^{67***} At the same time, society also finds itself in the position of a universal proletarian. The process of the alienation of property has reached completion, become absolute: alienation is no longer distributed among the classes of society, but encompasses society as a whole, *in integrum*. *Real socialism is absolute capitalism*.

The proletarian revolution eliminated class inequality among people, but by no means overcame the contradiction between labor and property; on the contrary, each of the aspects of this contradiction acquired the form of universality: now *each individual* was both a worker and an owner of the

*From K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I.—Ed.

**From K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Ch. 4.—Ed.

***From K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Third Manuscript: Private Property and Communism.—Ed.

objective conditions of labor. Alienation is not distributed in an external manner between two classes of people, but embedded wholly within each individual personality. This is the limiting, complete form of alienation of human existence: man as worker confronts *himself* as property owner. He is like a commodity that exists simultaneously in two mutually exclusive value forms—relative and equivalent.

Under the pressure of this contradiction, socialist society undergoes stratification into those who work and those who manage property. The proletarian leader represents in his person the whole of society, just as the commodity that has acquired the function of money represents all other commodities as the “universal equivalent.” In socialist society, the fetishism of commodities is replaced by a *fetishism of power*: the state cult of personality [*lichnost*] and impersonality [*bezlichnost*] (the party) has conquered the market cult of cash [*nalichnost*].

The self-presentation of private property in the opposite form of collective or social property can be called its *socialist pseudomorphosis*. In fact, state property was and remains *private*: it owes its existence to the division of labor. In all societies of the bourgeois formation without exception, the state is the largest property owner. Socialism turns state property into a *monopoly*—that is all (with the “tendency to decay” that is characteristic of monopoly and the degeneration of civil society into a “farmyard”).

Private property cannot be destroyed by revolutions and dictatorships—it can only be intensified. For so long as the division of labor continues to exist, so will its consequence—private property. And the division of labor will not end until all the forces of production for which it gives sufficient scope have developed and until divided labor has created the material conditions for all-sided development of the personality.

Contemporary technologies of labor require mainly workers with narrowly specialized skills; the economic demand for universals is still comparatively small. Obviously, society will long continue to need divided labor (and, as a consequence, private property). And with it there will also remain the state—the intermediary institution that connects narrow specialists with the aid of other equally narrow specialists (in the field of administration). The other, competing intermediary is the market—the institution through which commodity-money relations regulate themselves. The *form* of capitalist property is determined by the balance of power between these two suprapersonal intermediaries. The principles of *laissez faire* and the state plan are the two extreme poles of this form, and between them lies the entire spectrum of economic reality, of economies that are neutral or gravitate toward one of the poles. On this spectrum, the contradiction (alienation) between labor and property may be exacerbated or mitigated but cannot be overcome.

The communist formation

As Marx observes in *The Grundrisse*, the self-development of capital is fraught with a contradiction: capital augments itself by appropriating surplus labor time, and at the same time strives to reduce outlays of labor time to the minimum by automating production. In replacing the abstract labor of the worker by the concrete universal labor of the scientist and engineer, capital dries up the source of its own existence. “Capital thus works towards its own dissolution as the form dominating production.”^{68*} Therefore the gravedigger of capital is capital itself and not the proletariat. It is, rather, capital that digs graves for the proletarians. By stimulating the development of high technologies, capital pushes direct labor out of social production. The decline in the quantitative share of direct (abstract) labor leads to the situation that labor is also reduced “qualitatively, as an, of course, indispensable but subordinate moment, compared to general scientific labor.”^{69**}

By killing its *alter ego*, abstract labor, capital—like Dorian Gray^{***}—commits suicide. Released by capital, the force of universal labor—“the force of science and nature”—does not fit into the bourgeois form of property or into the market economy in general. Outlays of universal labor cannot be measured in units of labor time; private property in the products of such labor—ideas, knowledge—is impossible in principle, because knowledge is inalienable: in acquiring and exchanging ideas, a person does not take them away from someone else or himself lose them; the law of value (the exchange of equivalents) and the principle of correspondence between demand and supply do not operate and make no sense in the world of ideas. A market economy is therefore incapable of effectively regulating the production and exchange of knowledge. Universal labor destroys the foundations of the market.⁷⁰

The commodity “knowledge” pushes the commodity “labor power” out of the market. The proletarian finds himself in *short supply*, so the price of labor power sharply rises; capital has to import proletarians from underdeveloped countries or relocate itself closer to the living source of its existence. Except that no sources are inexhaustible.

The share of universal labor in the world economy is not as yet all that large—even in the technologically most developed countries where it is rising irreversibly. The total knowledge contained in each individual commodity is also increasing, while the share of abstract labor is falling. Sooner or later,

*From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook VII.—Ed.

***Ibid.*—Ed.

***The anti-hero of Oscar Wilde’s novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* dies when he plunges a knife into a painting of himself.—Trans.

the time will come when universal labor reduces the outlay of abstract labor to a vanishingly small magnitude. That day, evidently, will be the last for the market economy. Its world-historical mission—to satisfy the material needs of man—will be accomplished, and people do not need the market to satisfy their need for knowledge: it is simply useless for that purpose.

1. And so in the last economic formation of world history *knowledge and reason, intellectual labor* (the fourth and last aspect of substance) come to the fore. The history of the formation of labor returns finally to its foundation—to man. This is no longer the physical subject who once laid the basis for history; it is a thinking subject, *homo intelligens* (knowing, “intellectual” man).

Marx called intellectual labor “universal,” counterposing it to particular and abstract-universal labor. The subject of universal labor “appears in the production process not in a merely natural, spontaneous form, but as an activity regulating all the forces of nature.”^{71*} In capitalist production, for the first time in history, “general social knowledge [*Wissen*] has become a *direct force of production*”;^{72**} in the communist formation knowledge will become the *sole* productive power and the universal form of property in the conditions of labor.

Throughout its history, mankind has acquired and accumulated diverse kinds of knowledge. Never before, however, have knowledge and the suppliers of knowledge—scientists—governed social affairs. Indeed, the quality of the knowledge at the disposal of mankind has not been good enough for coping effectively with such a task. Nowadays, it is already obvious that mankind is moving toward a *knowledge-based society*. Knowledge is the “gene” out of which will develop not only new technologies of labor but also completely new forms of relations among people.

Intellectual labor bears the imprint of universality and remains in its essence collective, even if you are working in complete solitude.⁷³ If the materialist understanding of history is correct in assuming that property relations must correspond to the character of labor, then in a knowledge-based society private property will give way to *collective, directly social property*. It is precisely this form of property that is adequate to universal labor, to the concrete-universal character of intellectual labor.

Another person’s idea, as soon as you have understood it, becomes your own idea, part of your personal and inalienable property. And each thinker strives to make his own ideas common to all people. In the world of ideas

*From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook VI.—Ed.

**Ibid., Notebook VII.—Ed.

and knowledge, the boundary between “mine” and “not mine” is no more than conventional. The *personal need* for one or another idea determines the character of its appropriation and assimilation. Here the communist principle of “to each according to need” has always applied.

The extension of this social form of property—innate to the human spirit—to the material conditions and products of labor will become possible when the concrete-universal predominates over the particular and abstract in the labor process itself. When creative labor *reduces* mechanical, stereotyped, and monotonous labor *to zero*, replacing with its action other forces of nature. Not before.

Labor and property must again coincide and merge, but now on a socio-cultural basis, created by labor itself, rather than a natural basis. The worker will again become the owner of the objective conditions of his labor.

2. The tools of labor in the economy of the communist formation operate automatically; they exclude “direct labor” and no longer depend on the physical labor power of man. It is much easier to believe in the possibility of the total automation of production in the computer age than it was in Marx’s time.

Marx used the word “automaton” to refer to a machine that “sets itself in motion” while man retains the functions of “controller and regulator.” He was not yet able, of course, to imagine a machine that would control and regulate itself with the aid of computational devices. In relation to this kind of automaton man is only a *programmer*.

The utopians wanted to place social “megamachines”—the state and the market—in the service of man. It seemed to them that the political will of a party and/or a class—a proletarian dictatorship of some kind—would suffice for this. Marx, unlike Fourier and Proudhon, realized that the human will would not succeed in subordinating the market to itself—on account of the anarchy that is immanent to the market. The theorists of anarchism, unlike More and Marx, understood that the state too could not be subjected to conscious regulation. Neither of these *machines of alienation* is any more susceptible to programming than a stone axe. At best, people are able to correct the “self-activity” of the state and the market. And yet people themselves—personalities—are highly susceptible to programming. For millennia the state and the market have successfully compelled people to serve their *supra-personal* interests. And this will continue until they are pushed out of social life by *freely managed* machines—programmable automata created by universal labor. Machines in which for the first time in history the personality will be able to become not a screw but a creator, a “programmer.” Informatics is the ABC of communism.

3. The economic goal of labor in the communist formation is the *development of the human personality*—“a rich and well-rounded individual, deep in all his senses and sense-perceptions,” as the young Marx described him.⁷⁴ Here the subject of the labor process—the human individual—is also the final goal of this process. The circle of the history of labor closes.

Communism for Marx is the process of man’s “reappropriation” or “reconquest” of his objective essence, which confronts him in the form of capital. Not the abolition of private property in the conditions of labor, as the ideologues of the previous leveling communism had demanded, but the conversion of the entire cultural “capital” accumulated by private property into the *personal* property of each individual (E. V. Il’ enkov).

In his mature years Marx continues to see the mission of the communist movement in the formation of “the rich individuality [that] is as varied and comprehensive in its production as it is in its consumption.”^{75*} The roots of this ideal of the harmonious personality—intelligent, kind, healthy, hardworking, and with a fine sense of beauty—must be sought in the works of the Renaissance humanists and even further back—in the ancient classics. There too is the original source of the communist idea of a community of free and creative people, and also of the idea of free time as a condition of truly human life activity—“idle time and time for higher activity.”^{76**}

In this sense, “‘communism’ is the historical promise of the ancient dream of the free individual”—as Birger Priddat aptly says in a collection with a no less eloquent title—*The Communist Individualism of Karl Marx*.⁷⁷

In a free society, labor will turn into collective (*gemeinschaftliche*) creative self-activity and “an experimental science”; the wealth of such a society will be measured in the amount of free [disposable—Ed.] time—“time for free development” of the human personality. In the creation of disposable time Marx also sees “the chief role of capital.”^{78†}

Marx highly valued and liked to quote the words of the anonymous author of the pamphlet *The Source and Remedy of National Difficulties* (1821): the wealth of society is free time, and nothing more. Sometimes Marx says the same thing in his own words, and sometimes he says that “real wealth is the developed productive power of all individuals”^{79††} and that free time is the *measure* of this wealth.

Undoubtedly, however, the productive power of *universal labor* cannot

*From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*.—Ed.

***Ibid.*, Notebook VII.—Ed.

†*Ibid.*, Notebook VII.—Ed.

††*Ibid.*, Notebook VII.—Ed.

be measured in time—neither in labor time nor even in free time. Universal labor produces knowledge, ideas—and ideas are eternal (Plato’s theorem) and express the nature of things “under the form of eternity” (Spinoza’s theorem). Time is a physical category, a measure of material processes. Universal scientific labor is an ideal, intellectual process. Take Marx’s *Capital* or any other scientific work and try to estimate the amount of wealth contained in it in units of time. With equal success you can measure depth of thought in beats.

It would be more correct to say that free time is a *precondition* for the development of the productive power of each and every individual—an absolutely necessary but far from sufficient condition. The release of time gives a person only the *abstract possibility* of development. He may put his free time to good use or to bad, for himself and for society, or simply kill time. The presence of free time “opens up space for free activity and development”^{80*}—or equally for idleness, vacuous entertainment, and evil-doing. The lower a person’s cultural level, the greater the danger that an excess of free time poses to himself and to the whole of society.

Universal labor is nourished by free time, which it fills with “the most intense exertion” of mind and body; thereby it turns free time into labor time and vice versa, practically *removing the very difference* between free and labor time. Only in this way can the division of labor really be overcome.

In *The Grundrisse*, Marx reflects upon the necessity of “suspension the contradiction between free time and labor time”^{81**} and in fact solves this problem, although he does not formulate the solution with due theoretical directness. There remains in *The Grundrisse* not a trace of the primitive solution to the problem of the division of labor once proposed by the authors of *The German Ideology*. The simple alternation of kinds of activity—catching fish in the morning, grazing livestock in the afternoon, and “indulging in criticism after dinner”—no longer satisfies Marx. The labor process itself must undergo radical change. The forces of nature must take the place of the labor power of the proletariat, “where labor in which a human being does what a thing could do has ceased.”^{82***} In other words, for so long as social production continues to involve material, uncreative labor, the division of labor cannot be overcome—it is simply impossible. And therefore relations among people will also remain material, commodity-money relations, and the power of things over people and of reified over living labor will not die out.

Private property will not give way to social property until a revolution is accomplished in the forces of production that leaves purely individual, creative activity to people but automates all mechanical operations. For so long

*From K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. IV.—Ed.

**K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook VII.—Ed.

***Ibid., Notebook III.—Ed.

as imperfection in the technologies of labor compels people to do what in principle could be done by things, living human labor will remain under the power of reified labor—capital. And the human personality, alas, will remain merely a servant of the things it has created.

The division of labor does a great service to mankind by stratifying the process of production into abstract-mechanical and concrete-creative activity; it is thanks to this that there opens up the possibility of man transferring all mechanical work to automated machinery and the forces of nature while retaining purely universal, creative labor for himself. And at the same time the boundary between free and labor time will disappear, for this twofold division of time is a direct consequence of the division of labor. *All* my time becomes free, including that part of it that I devote to labor, as soon as labor itself turns into a means for the creative self-realization of my personality. Universal labor not only preserves but also frees labor time—it makes man free *during* labor, turning the labor process itself into a delight, if not into the meaning of life. Such labor creates not only useful things but also that very “rich individuality” that is the goal of social production in the communist formation.

Marx’s celebrated reference to material production as “the realm of necessity,” where man is unfree “by the nature of things” (*der Natur der Sache*),⁸³ has nothing in common with dialectics. From where have freedom and necessity thus diverged into different realms? In this case, the *division of labor* into free labor and necessary labor is primordial and ineradicable. Not freedom *from* necessity or *beyond* necessity, but *free necessity, libera necessitas* (Spinoza)—such is the formula of dialectics. Necessary labor must make itself free and free labor must make itself necessary, the inner need and meaning of life of each individual.

Nor is the concept of freedom “beyond” necessity consistent with materialism. Where is it acquired—this otherworldly freedom? In the sphere of material production, man is doomed to remain forever fettered by need and external expediency—we can only conjecture that by “the true realm of freedom” Marx means the sphere of the spirit, of social consciousness. Only here is the development of man an end in itself, while in the economy our freedom is reduced to “common control” and “the least expenditure of strength.” It seems that consciousness is something much more than simply self-aware being. . . .

And yet in his youth Marx saw in material production the *species life* of men, “self-activity, free activity” (*die Selbsttätigkeit, die freie Tätigkeit*), which the alienation of labor degrading “to a means, [and] makes man’s species life a means to his physical existence.”^{84*} Nowhere in his *Paris Manuscripts* is

*K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Estranged Labor.—Ed.

there a trace of the treatment of material production as a lower sphere of human existence, lying outside and beyond the true realm of freedom.

As a matter of fact, it is Marx himself who has shown how true freedom is possible in the economy: for this the direct process of production has to be turned into “experimental science, materially creative and objectifying.”^{*85*} Organization of the production process must become a *scientific experiment* that in the event of success continues automatically. Thereby universal labor practically frees labor time, transforming material production into applied science—the realm of *free* necessity.

It is logical to conjecture that at the same time management of the economy will pass from the “invisible hand” of the market and money and the impersonal structures of the state to people of science and, like phenomena of external nature, be subordinated to their *reason and knowledge*.

5

Guided by the simple concept of labor, I have found four economic formations, each of which *posits* one of the aspects of the substance of labor as the dominant relation of people in social production. For each formation, I have determined the special relation between labor and property that is characteristic of it (direct identity, opposition, contradiction, concrete identity), the specific type of tools of labor (bodily, human, mechanical, automated), and the supreme economic goal (production of the body, power, commodities, knowledge). I have demonstrated that the character of the property relations, tools, and goal of labor in each economic formation is directly determined by the general structure of labor and changes in conformity with the logical sequence of aspects of the substance of labor. Finally, I have shown in general outline how and why formations succeed one another.

In choosing my axiomatics and method of investigation, I have followed the works of Marx and in general borrowed a great deal from his theory of history—right down to the names he used for economic formations. Even in criticizing Marx, I have been guided by his own practically materialist and dialectical principles.

In light of my deduction of economic formations, it is necessary to adjust the well-known triad of Marx: “personal dependence—material dependence—free individuality.” Relations of personal dependence of man upon man were preceded historically by the *natural dependence* of man upon the natural conditions of labor (including the commune as the naturally given form of connection among people). Marx himself demonstrated this best of all.

*From K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook VII.—Ed.

In societies of the archaic formation, people are still ruled by nature. In the economy of the secondary formation, some people rule others and compel them to work. In the capitalist economy, people are ruled by things. Communist man governs himself with the aid of reason and knowledge; he is prompted to work not by natural imperatives, not by the will of other people, and not by the suprapersonal (material) forces of the market and the state, but by his personal, inner need to work.

With the transformation of “physical man” into “rational man,” the economic substance of world history became wholly manifest, *positing* itself as a practically true abstraction. Each of its four aspects has left its “[specifically] shaped imprint” upon history.⁸⁶ All historical barriers to the free flow of labor from one of its universal forms to another have been overcome, and it has become clear that a simple logical sketch of the substance of labor conveys the general contours of the highest formation of human history. “All the characteristics of Robinson’s [that is, abstract general definitions of labor, irrespective of its historical forms—A.M.] are repeated here, but with the difference that they are social instead of individual.”^{87*}

Labor that has completed the cycle of historical return to its subject through complete alienation and reification may be defined as *absolute labor*. It has fashioned a form of property that is adequate to its simple concept, and thereby made itself free. I do not know and shall not try to guess what the concrete historical forms of this social property may be like. In one way or another, its ideal crystalline grid, formed by the four aspects of the substance of labor, will be able to lend appropriate form to the material of human history.

At the dawn of civilization, having given life to theoretical knowledge—*science*, labor had already acquired the highest, concrete-universal form of its being. The final and complete triumph of science in the sphere of material production will exhaust the possibilities for formation of the substance of labor, having overcome the alienation of labor from the human personality and ended the division of labor into material and intellectual, necessary and free. The end of the conflict between labor and property will complete the *material prologue* of its “ascent to the concrete.” World history will then continue in another, *ideal* plane, in the ether of scientific knowledge. But that is already an altogether different (hi)story.

Notes

1. K. Marks [Marx] and F. Engel’s [Engels], *Sochineniia*, 2d ed. (Moscow, 1960), vol. 23, p. 72.

2. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 23, p. 46. In the original: “Als Kristalle

*From K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I.—Ed.

dieser ihnen gemeinschaftlichen gesellschaftlichen Substanz.” It is difficult to convey in Russian the distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (“community”) and *Gesellschaft* (“society” or “association”), and the Russian translators of *Capital* decided to ignore it and merge these two categories into one.

3. *Ibid.*, vol. 42, p. 126.

4. *Ibid.*, vol. 42, p. 159.

5. This is what the authors of *The German Ideology* call themselves: *praktischen Materialisten*, d. h. *Kommunisten* (“practical materialists, that is, communists”).

6. Reflexive definitions of essence in *The Science of Logic*: identity–difference–contradiction–foundation.

7. “Die Arbeit hingegen ist *gehemmte* Begierde, *aufgehaltenes* Verschwinden, oder sie *bildet*” (G.W.F. Hegel, “Phänomenologie des Geistes,” in *Werke, in 20 Bde*, Frankfurt 1979, vol. 3, p. 154).

8. Here is the commentary of A. Kojève: “Labor transforms the World and forms and trains Man. . . . In the course of labor he crosses over beyond himself or, if you prefer, trains, ‘cultivates,’ or ‘ennobles’ his instincts in such a way as to restrain them. At the same time, he does not destroy the thing without reworking it. He defers destruction of the thing, first transforming it by his labor; he prepares it for consumption; in other words, he ‘forms’ it” (*Vvedenie v chtenie Gegelia*, St. Petersburg 2003, p. 33).

9. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. 1, p. 252.

10. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. 1, p. 246.

11. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. 1, p. 247.

12. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. 1, p. 247.

13. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. 1, p. 324.

14. G.V.F. Gegel’ [G.W.F. Hegel], *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 168.

15. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. 1, p. 252.

16. In the original there is a play on words here: “*sich selbst verwertenden Wert.*”

17. In the original—*Erzeugung*.

18. “*Praktisch wahr Abstraktion*” is the term used in the celebrated introduction to *The Grundrisse*.

19. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. 1, pp. 45, 173.

20. See A.D. Maidanskii, “Fenomenologiia mirovoi istorii ot Gegelia k Marksu,” in “Fenomenologiia dukha,” *Gegelia v kontekste sovremennogo gegelevedeniia* (Moscow, 2010), pp. 541–49.

21. “Nature is man’s *inorganic* body . . . with which he must remain in continuous interchange if he is not to die.” (Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 42, p. 92). [From K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, *Estranged Labor*.—Ed.]

22. *Ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 191.

23. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. II, p. 205.

24. *Ibid.*, vol. 19, p. 418.

25. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 463.

26. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 480.

27. “The human hand is the *tool of tools*, capable of serving as the expression of an infinite set of manifestations of the will” (Gegel’, *Sochineniia*, vol. 3, p. 196). “As the hand is a tool of tools, so the mind is the form of forms” (Aristotel’ [Aristotle], *O dushe* [On the Soul], 432a 1–2).

28. “The goal of this work is not the *creation of value*—although they may do surplus labor in order to obtain *alien*, i.e. surplus products in exchange—rather, its

aim is sustenance of the individual proprietor and of his family, as well as of the total community.” (Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 462). [From K.Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook IV.—Ed.]

29. See G.B. Schaller, “Are You Running with Me, Hominid?” *Natural History*, 1972, vol. 81, no. 3, pp. 60–68. A similar but even bolder hypothesis has been put forward by Vsevolod Vil’chek. “Protoman” borrowed from the animals technologies of activity and of relations with his fellows. It was life in accordance with artificial programs, “in another’s image and likeness,” that turned him into a cultural being—man (V.M. Vil’chek, *Algoritmy istorii*, 3rd ed., Moscow 2004).

30. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 463.

31. *Ibid.*, vol. 19, p. 404.

32. Max Weber saw the “ultimate cause” of the might of oriental rulers in “*the social labor of building canals*” (M. Yeber, *Agrarnaia istoriia drevnogo mira*, Moscow 2001, p. 148). Karl Wittfogel’s theory of the hydrotechnical society (*Wasserbau-Gesellschaft*) was based on the same idea in a somewhat exaggerated form.

33. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 464.

34. For example, Max Weber proposed extending the concept “feudalism” to Babylon, Egypt, Sparta, and in general all social structures based upon separation from the mass of the population of a ruling stratum (*Herrenschicht*) whose members live in order to serve and fight for the sovereign and are maintained with the aid of privileged land ownership (Weber, *Agrarnaia istoriia*, p. 97).

35. *Werke*, vol. 42, p. 407. Russian edition: Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 489. The term “social formations” (*Gesellschaftsformationen*) is encountered in *The Grundrisse* only in the very last sentence, which is broken off. Marx uses it in the sense of “systems of production” or “economic systems” (on the basis of communal property).

36. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 470.

37. See M. Blok [Block], *Kharakternye cherty frantsuzskoi agrarnoi istorii* (Moscow, 1957), pp. 101–4.

38. “Die Reihe der Gesellschaften, die auf Sklaverei, Leibeigenschaft beruhen” (*Werke*, vol. 19, p. 404).

39. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 485. In brackets Marx explains that it would be a mistake to look for secondary forms of property in the Orient—this is how things look “*only* from the European point of view.” Marx assigned Oriental societies with their “universal slavery” to the archaic formation, denying the presence in these societies of “no private ownership of land exists, although there is both private and common possession and use of land” (*ibid.*, vol. 25, pt. II, p. 354). [From K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III.—Ed.]

40. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. I, pp. 490–91.

41. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 454.

42. E.M. Shtaerman, *Drevnii Rim: problemy ekonomicheskogo razvitiia* (Moscow, 1978), pp. 103–4.

43. E.M. Shtaerman, *Krizis rabovladel’cheskogo stroia v zapadnykh provintsiakh Rimskoi imperii* (Moscow, 1957), pp. 32–33, 37.

44. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 23, p. 87.

45. A.Ia. Gurevich, *Istoriia—neskonchaemyi spor. Medievistika i skandinavistika: stat’i raznykh let* (Moscow, 2005), p. 201.

46. A.Ia. Gurevich, *Istoricheskii sintez i shkola “Annalov”* (Moscow, 1993), p. 142.

47. “Der Krieg ist daher eine der ursprünglichsten Arbeiten” (*Werke*, vol. 42, p. 399).
48. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 46.
49. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 454.
50. Aristotel’, *Sochineniia* (Moscow, 1983), vol. 4, p. 389.
51. Kozhev [Alexander Kojève], *Vvedenie v chtenie Gegelia*, pp. 157–58.
52. “Feudalism was by no means transferred in readymade form from Germany; its origin is rooted in the organization of military affairs among the barbarians during their conquest [of Roman lands]” [Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 3, p. 74; from K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*.—Ed.].
53. “The application of slave labor to the production of grains, placed on a broad scale, is . . . impossible, because ancient agricultural technique required intensive labor; slaves could be used in large-scale production to real advantage only on good soil and with low market prices for slaves, and their employment usually signified transition to extensive cultivation” (Veber, *Agrarnaia istoriia*, p. 24).
54. Shtaerman, *Drevnii Rim*, p. 103.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 5. (Rémondon is the author of the chapter about the ancient world in *Histoire du travail*, Paris 1959.)
56. M. Blok [Block], *Kharakternye cherty*, pp. 117, 124. Here Block follows in the wake of the influential tradition of E. Meier and M.I. Rostovtsev.
57. A.Ia. Gurevich, *Problemy genezisa feodalizma v Zapadnoi Evrope* (Moscow, 1970), p. 23.
58. L.P. Marinovich, *Grecheskoe naemnichestvo IV vol. do n.e. i krizis polisa* (Moscow, 1975), p. 250.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 270.
60. V. Zombart [W. Sombart], *Sobranie sochinenii* (St. Petersburg, 2008), vol. 3, p. 279.
61. Zombart, *Sobranie sochinenii*, p. 281.
62. In *The Grundrisse*, Marx intended to investigate the formation of capitalist relations in the ancient army: “When labor is wage labor, and its direct aim is money, then general wealth is *posited* as its aim and object. (*In this regard, talk about the context of the military system of antiquity when it became a mercenary system.*)” [Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 169; from K. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, Notebook I.—Ed.].
63. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. II, pp. 346–47.
64. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. II, pp. 204–6.
65. *Ibid.*, vol. 49, p. 92.
66. *Ibid.*, vol. 19, p. 26.
67. “Das gemeinschaftliche Kapital, die *Gemeinschaft* als der allgemeine Kapitalist” (*Werke*, vol. 40, p. 535). In the Russian edition “Gemeinschaft” has been translated as *obshchina* (English commune, German *Gemeinde*)—probably to make it more difficult for the Soviet reader to understand the nature of his own society “according to Marx” (*Sochineniia*, vol. 42, p. 115).
68. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. II, p. 208.
69. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. II, pp. 207–8.
70. For a more detailed discussion, see A.D. Maidansky, “Vektory i kontury obshchestva znaniia,” *Vestnik Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta kul’tury i iskusstv*, 2005, no. 2, pp. 4–12.
71. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. II, p. 110.

72. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. II, p. 216.

73. “What am I? What have I done?” Goethe asked himself. “I have collected and used everything that I have seen, heard, or observed. My works have been nourished by thousands of different individuals—wise and ignorant, clever and foolish . . . I have often reaped a harvest sown by others; my labor is the labor of a collective being and its name is Goethe” (I.V. Gete [J.W. Goethe], *Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedeniia*, Moscow 1964, p. 377).

74. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 42, p. 123.

75. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 281.

76. “Die freie Zeit, die sowohl Mußezeit als Zeit für höhere Tätigkeit” (*Werke*, vol. 42, p. 607).

77. “Der ‘Kommunismus’ ist die geschichtliche Versprechung eines antiken Traumes des müßigen Menschen” (B.P. Pridatt, “‘Reiche Individualität’—Karl Marx’ Kommunismus als Konzeption der ‘freien Zeit für freie Entwicklung,’” in *Karl Marx’ kommunistischer Individualismus*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005, p. 129).

78. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 281.

79. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 217.

80. *Ibid.*, vol. 26, pt. III, p. 264.

81. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. II, p. 509.

82. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. I, p. 280.

83. “In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilized man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis” [Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 25, pt. II, pp. 386–87; from K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III.—Ed.]

84. *Ibid.*, vol. 42, p. 94.

85. *Ibid.*, vol. 46, pt. II, p. 221.

86. The term in *Phenomenology of the Spirit* is: *gestalteten Abdruck*.

87. Marks and Engel’s, *Sochineniia*, vol. 23, p. 88.