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HISTORY AND THEORY: THE ROLE OF INTERPRETATION AND
CRITICISM IN THE THOUGHT OF GEORGE LICHTHEIM

City University of New York

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THE THOUGHT OF GEORGE LICHTHEIM

by

RICHARD A. KAGAN

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ABSTRACT

HISTORY AND THEORY: THE ROLE OF INTERPRETATION AND CRITICISM IN THE THOUGHT OF GEORGE LICHTHEIM

by

Richard A. Kagan

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In the history of debate and interpretation over the meaning of Marxism and socialism, George Lichtheim stands out as a complex and fascinating figure. As a life-long Marxist who had himself experienced the bitter frustration of socialism in Europe in the 1920's and 30's, Lichtheim was in a unique position to understand both the hopes and failures of Marxism as a body of thought and a movement for human emancipation. What sets his writing apart from that of other commentators is his attachment to ideas as potential "movers" of human action and events, as well as the ambiguous and often difficult relationship between theoretical "intentions" and their practical realization. Marxism, as Lichtheim viewed it, was a prime example of such ambiguity. The "promise" of nineteenth-century Marxian theory had been frustrated and perhaps exhausted by events in the twentieth century.

Furthermore, like the body of thought and the movement it spawned, Lichtheim's own life and writings reveal an ambiguity of intentions that are often difficult to reconcile. What the present study sets out to achieve is an understanding of Lichtheim's approach to the interpretation of thought, how that approach relates to what Lichtheim took to be the dominant political theory of its time,

namely Marxism and socialism, and finally, the adequacy of Lichtheim's conclusions regarding the fate of political theory in the contemporary period.

It is felt that Lichtheim's major contribution was to have transmitted the heritage of Hegel and Marx to an English-speaking audience. Amidst the confusion and misunderstanding of these two seminal thinkers, Lichtheim's writing restores the true significance of this tradition to Western thought. In particular, Lichtheim adopted an approach to the interpretation of theory and history that had been neglected by Lichtheim's contemporaries, and which proved extremely useful in resolving the long-standing dispute over Marx's relation to his various progeny.

Not all of the conclusions that Lichtheim drew from his "historical and critical" approach were, however, sound, in the present view. His interpretation of contemporary society and culture is thought to have been colored by his own disillusionment with the outcome of the socialist movement in Germany during the 1920's and 30's. His later writings reflect a certain pessimism that Marxism and liberalism had both been rendered obsolete by events in this century. The roots of Lichtheim's disillusionment are traced to the difficult situation he occupied during the Weimar period, and the scars which it left after his forced resettlement in the West.

Finally, an attempt is made to reconstitute Lichtheim's approach as an adequate theory of contemporary society, and as a means of orienting future political action.

PREFACE

In the history of debate and interpretation over the meaning of Marxism and socialism, George Lichtheim stands out as a complex and fascinating figure. As a life-long Marxist who had himself experienced the bitter frustration of socialism in Europe in the 1920's and 30's, Lichtheim was in a unique position to understand both the hopes and failures of Marxism as a body of thought and a movement for human emancipation. What sets his writing apart from that of other commentators is his attachment to ideas as potential "movers" of human action and events, as well as the ambiguous and often difficult relationship between theoretical "intentions" and their practical realization. Marxism, as Lichtheim viewed it, was a prime example of such ambiguity. The "promise" of nineteenth-century Marxian theory had been frustrated and perhaps exhausted by events in the twentieth century.

Furthermore, like the body of thought and the movement it spawned, Lichtheim's own life and writings reveal an ambiguity of intentions that are often difficult to reconcile. What the present study sets out to achieve is an understanding of Lichtheim's approach to the interpretation of thought, how that approach relates to what Lichtheim took to be the dominant political theory of its time, namely Marxism and socialism, and finally, the adequacy of Lichtheim's conclusions regarding the fate of political theory in the contemporary period.

While the present study focuses on Lichtheim's contribution to political theory, specifically upon his extensive writings of the 1960's, his earlier life as a German-Jewish student during the Weimar period, and later the ambiguous situation of a Central European intellectual exiled in England over the last twenty-five years of his life have bearing on his mature views and ideas. Here too, the parallel with Marx is instructive: both were forced to leave Germany for fear of persecution and, as much as both learned from their experience of English society and politics, both retained strong attachments to German culture and ideas.

In Lichtheim's case, the forced exile from Germany in the early 1930's, due to religious and political persecution at the hands of the Nazis, brought with it the disruption of his academic career as well as the necessity of having to survive in a new and unknown environment. After leaving his family, which had settled initially in England, Lichtheim moved to Palestine, where he remained until 1948. It was in this interim period, between 1933 and 1948, that Lichtheim established his credentials as a journalist for the English-¹ language newspaper The Palestine Post. This pivotal experience enabled him to acquire the language and outlook of an English-speaking audience, while retaining his interests and concerns with Continental European problems. As such, the period spent in Palestine prepared Lichtheim for the role he was to perform so admirably when he returned to England in 1948 and began his association with the outstanding literary and political journals of England and America, namely his role as a transmitter of Continental thought to an "Anglo-American" audience.

There is considerable evidence in Lichtheim's later writings, especially in the late 1950's and 60's that the role of "mediator" between Continental and Anglo-Saxon culture was uneasy for him, however well he was able to perform it, at least in print. Like other young intellectuals forced to leave Germany for religious or political reasons, settlement in the West was difficult. For Lichtheim, re-settlement enabled him to pursue a journalistic career and toward the end of his life to gain considerable academic respectability in the West. But this was largely accomplished on the basis of his ability to translate the past into meaningful terms for a new audience unacquainted and even hostile to Continental European thought.

Lichtheim was instinctively attracted to "grand conceptions," to theoretical systems that embraced the totality of human existence, and especially to their role in history. British and American culture typically did not measure up to these standards. The dominant point of view, according to Lichtheim, was that of a liberalism tied to empirical methods of science, and a skeptical attitude toward truth in its broadest sense (a skeptical attitude which amounted to "relativism" as far as Lichtheim was concerned). History as anything more than the sum of ideas or events was "meaningless" according to such criteria: that ideas might be understood in their total context and that they might have bearing on human destiny was all but ruled out.

The conflict between Lichtheim's Continental perspective, itself tied to the heritage of Hegel and Marx, and Anglo-Saxon culture enabled Lichtheim to introduce an approach to history and theory that was novel and exciting to a Western audience. The heritage of Hegel

and Marx might now be understood as something other than the precursor of such twentieth-century demons as Hitler and Stalin--a view entertained by the eminent philosopher Karl Popper, among others. Marxism as both a body of ideas and the emblem of rival socialist movements might now be understood on its own terms, rather than according to the precepts of English and American science.

The problem of not being existentially rooted in either culture, German or Anglo-Saxon, was, however, troubling to Lichtheim. His attachments to Germany had been severed in the early 30's, leaving him with a cultural heritage that offered useful perspective on the world, but without hope of its fulfillment, at least in its place of origin. German Fascism and the world-wide slaughter which was to come had destroyed the homeland of the most prominent socialist movement in the West, as well as having made exiles of a generation of promising German-Jewish intellectuals. Lichtheim was among Fascism's victims, in spite of his survival in England. While his new homeland offered him the opportunity to pursue a career in journalism and even scholarly research, Lichtheim still felt estranged.

Evidence of this estrangement can be detected in his historical studies of Marxism and socialism, as well as his various essays. Unlike Marx, who successfully adjusted his sights to the different political terrain of England in the early 1850's, Lichtheim's vision of Marxian socialism did not survive transplantation on English soil. The "historical possibility" of socialism as conceived of by Marx and succeeding generations of socialists was at an end. Lichtheim had become convinced that the revolutionary

explosion that had begun in Russia in 1917 and flickered briefly in Central Europe in the 1920's had been exhausted by the 1930's. What was left was an "eastern" version of Marxism that had been transformed into the justification for modernization in an economically backward country, and ultimately the necessity of a "revolution from above"--in other words--Stalinism. The prognosis in Western Europe was no better: both liberalism and socialism had been casualties of Fascism in Germany and Italy, while France, England and America were powerless to stem the tide toward a second world war.

In brief outline, this constitutes what I have later termed Lichtheim's "resolution thesis." I do not take Lichtheim's reading of the contemporary situation at face value. I believe that in order to understand how Lichtheim arrived at this point of view, one must examine his attitude toward the outstanding intellectual figures and movements of his own day. I believe that his polemical biography of Georg Lukács reveals the core of a disillusionment with theory and history that was to color his thinking about contemporary society, or the social and political arrangement that was created following the Second World War.

Lukács is believed to be a central figure in Lichtheim's disillusionment, not simply for his political commitment to Communism but because Lukács had produced perhaps the most brilliant breakthrough in Marxian theory in the twentieth century, namely History and Class Consciousness, only to betray its promise in later years through disingenuous loyalty to Stalinism. In Lichtheim's view, Stalinism and its influence in Western Europe des-

troyed whatever chances socialism had in this century.

However true this hypothesis may be, does it follow that Marxism is dead, that it survives only as an historical artifact, or as a method for interpreting the world--but not as a practical guide? If Lichtheim's resolution thesis is to be granted, what is left of Marxism is its intellectual structure for analyzing and interpreting the world, but not its critical structure for changing it. This was a view that originated, in part, with Lukács' History and Class Consciousness. Lukács had proclaimed that even if Marx was wrong about every so-called prediction he had made about the future, even if all previous attempts by socialists to achieve power had failed, what was still valid was the dialectical method by which Marx analyzed reality. As Lukács testified: "Orthodox Marxism...does not imply the uncritical acceptance of the results of Marx's investigations. It is not the 'belief' in this or that thesis, nor the exegesis of a 'sacred' book. On the contrary, orthodoxy refers exclusively to method."²

The difference between Lichtheim and Lukács was that Lichtheim chose to employ this method entirely in a retrospective manner, as if it had no prospective utility. This is in my view a valuable contribution that Lichtheim has made--the thorough and unflinching examination of the past, including that of the Marxism itself, through the dialectical method discovered by Marx in the mid-1840's and reconstituted by Lukács in the early 1920's. The first chapter of this study is devoted to an explanation of how this approach came about and its relation to others of compelling stature in the literature of contemporary political theory.

However, I do not believe that the method must stop with historical retrospection. The authentic (or what Lukács calls "orthodox") Marxist approach, which derives heavily from Hegel, stresses retrospective interpretation as a means of achieving present orientation and direction toward the future. Although the future may not be "predicted," it rests as a potentiality within the present situation. It is the task of dialectical method to uncover this potential in practical terms. This prospective function of theory Lichtheim felt was no longer possible. I believe the reason for this resides in Lichtheim's past and not in contemporary society and politics. I attempt to sketch out a prospective theory of socialism based on the dialectical or historical method toward the end of this study.

My departure from Lichtheim's resolution thesis, to be found in the concluding chapter, points up what is perhaps only to be expected. Lichtheim's thinking contains a number of exciting ambiguities: to have survived the turmoil of the present century and not to have been marked by its failures is perhaps too much to expect. Lichtheim was a German-Jewish intellectual who was able to transmit to an Atlantic public the heritage of Hegel and Marx in terms that proved useful to an enormous audience of readers. I was among them. Even if he was not able to visualize the present and future in more hopeful terms, he made it possible for his successors to do so.

What Lichtheim regarded as the hallmark of the present epoch, science and technology as incorporated within the bureaucratic state, may not have been as "inevitable" as he perceived them to

be. This attitude was part of his own disillusionment, while his interpretation of Marxism paves the way for future theoretical discovery and practical solution. The democratic-socialist heritage he celebrated in his thought is neither dead nor helpless in the face of technological control. Indeed, it is ironic that today, just seven years following his death, due I suspect in no small measure to his own contribution, Marxian theory is witnessing perhaps its greatest revival among young American intellectuals.³ There is an even greater irony that such serious interest in Hegel and Marx, indeed the entire inheritance of classical German philosophy, is being generated from among the ranks of the New Left that Lichtheim had dismissed during his lifetime.

In any case, the strengths and weaknesses of Lichtheim's position are examined in considerable detail in the present study. As previously indicated, the opening chapter attempts to draw out the controversy over what interpretation represents in current thinking in political theory. The major schools that are examined involve controversies that Lichtheim was familiar with and that he entered into. Chief among them was his opposition to what he termed the empiricism of such interpreters as Karl Popper. Lichtheim felt that empirical methods (which he associated with the random selection of facts in order to generate hypotheses) might have their place in the natural sciences, but not in the study of man and history. Furthermore, Lichtheim's comments on Alexandre Kojève's rebuttal to Leo Strauss make it clear that Kojève is much closer to his own position on interpretation than is Strauss. Kojève is himself an Hegelian, however unorthodox, and it is possible

to trace from Kojève's philosophical perspective the beginnings of Lichtheim's own historical approach. In view of the considerable influence of Professor Strauss on the current generation of scholars in this field, it is believed that a full elaboration of the "classical approach" to interpretation is warranted. What is ultimately found inadequate in Straussian approach is its lack of external verification: the contemplative dialectic envisioned by Strauss rests entirely on the supposition that a "higher" supersensory realm of immutable truths exists and that it can be apprehended in thought. The evidence of this truth rests only with the philosopher's assertion. The historical approach, which involves dialogue between the theorist and his social and historical milieu, offers the possibility of such verification, through retrospective investigation of how this dialogue originates and what becomes of the theorists's intentions.

This approach is especially pertinent to the evolution and practical consequences of Marxism. The second and third chapters of this dissertation are devoted to an exposition of Lichtheim's interpretation of the origins and later ramifications of Marxism and socialism. As such the middle chapters represent a reconstruction of Lichtheim's historical trilogy on Marxism's past and present (namely Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study, 1961; The Origins of Socialism, 1969; and A Short History of Socialism, 1970). Several leading observations on my part may help the reader to place Lichtheim's vantage point on this complex problem. First of all, Lichtheim's method of interpretation is avowedly taken from Marx, although this does not keep him from disagreeing or arguing with

him, let alone others of Marx's progeny. How is this possible? Like Lukács, Marxism is for Lichtheim both a method for understanding the world, as well as a practical movement designed to change it. Its practical results may be in conflict with its theoretical intentions, but this does not invalidate the approach itself.

Having said as much, Lichtheim sets out to understand a doctrine that emerged over time due to the circumstances of Marx and Engels' lives. Because Lichtheim espouses a Marxist approach does not keep him from arguing against certain of Marx's writings, especially in their sometimes obscure practical intentions. The Manifesto is a case in point. Lichtheim does not flinch in recording what he sees as its Jacobin-Blanquist intentions, nor of its implications seventy years later for the Russian Revolution. And in both cases, that is, the role of the document in the upheaval of 1848 as well as in 1917, he is critical if not damning of Marx's early apocalyptic theory of revolution. The Manifesto is for Lichtheim a premature theory of revolution, that is, in the sense that neither in the case of Western Europe in 1848 nor Russia in 1917 did a mature working class movement exist or a reasonable chance of attaining a new socialist order. Hence the document "intimates" the necessity of an elitist political structure (the Communist Party) to supervise the proletarian overthrow of bourgeois political power. In a document written just over two years later, Marx's Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League, the elitist overtones of the Manifesto are made more apparent; now the Communists must conspire to organize the proletariat to overthrow bourgeois power. According to Lichtheim,

these subtle elements in Marx's early conception of revolution are useful to Lenin and Trotsky in 1917. The Marx of 1848 is the unwitting author of the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917. What happened afterward, with the creation of a totalitarian regime under Stalin, may be irrelevant to Marx, but the road to 1917 is not.

The point of this examination of the Manifesto is that it reveals a striking quality of Lichtheim's approach to Marx. Lichtheim is much more congenial to the democratic-socialist side of Marx's legacy, for which there is much greater evidence in Marx's lifetime of writings. He nevertheless admits that the communist side exists and that, unfortunately it has succeeded in practice while the social-democratic has not. Lichtheim does not defend Marx's political judgment at all times, but he sees Marx in the complexity of his intentions--or, what I have termed elsewhere, in his "totality." Other like-minded and gifted writers on Marx, who share Lichtheim's staunch social-democratic views, have been perhaps less candid in admitting the communist side of Marx and its complex linkage to Leninism. Marx is presented as an amazingly complex and compelling figure by Lichtheim, even if he is highly critical of some of Marx's views. It is a tribute to Lichtheim's unflinching independence that he was an apologist for no one, including Marx!

My own conception of Marx is very much congenial to Lichtheim's approach, and in general, to the conclusions he draws from it. Marx was an exceedingly multi-faceted writer whose major writings, in my view, do relate to such issues as the historical

"situation" of the working class vis-à-vis the rest of society. To argue a universal or singular conception of his intentions is to eliminate the imminent possibilities that lie with Marx's vision of the present situation. In other words, to argue that Marx was forever a communist or social democrat is not born out by an historical examination of Marx's writings. On the other hand, I share Lichtheim's political preference for the "democratic" side of Marx's legacy (which is, I believe, the dominant theme in his writings), even if the elitist or communist side co-exists in the same doctrine. This is a clear matter of preference, however, for Lichtheim and myself.

A second important observation on Lichtheim's interpretation of Marxism and socialism is the role Lichtheim assigns to Marx's life-long associate and companion, Engels. Some other recent interpreters, such as Bertell Ollman, tend to argue that Marx and Engels' writings are entirely congenial,⁵ and that in any case Engels' later philosophical work, such as Anti-Dühring (from which Socialism: Scientific and Utopian is the best-known extract) and Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy are consistent with Marx's earlier dialectical approach. Lichtheim emphatically denies this, and my own examination of the texts confirms Lichtheim's contention.

The point goes beyond the mere interpretation of which version of the Marx-Engels corpus of writings is correct. Lichtheim and others note that by the late 1850's Marx had adopted aspects of a "positivistic" language in his writings on political economy, but that the use of this "scientific" language was a guise that did not

alter its true dialectical character (hence the clear residue of Hegel's influence in the original draft of Capital, The Grundrisse, written in the late 1850's). If Marx's writings are "Janus-faced" on the issue of science, there is no doubt about Engels' later writings, nor about the "scientific" implications that his followers drew from Engels' later work.

Lichtheim presents a picture of a doctrine that inevitably fractured over the interpretation of science and its meaning for the nascent socialist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The line of descent from Engels' "scientific socialism" runs to Kautsky's deterministic version of history and even to Bernstein's positivistic critique of socialism. In this sense, the revisionist debate at the turn of the century resulted in a paralysis of will or revolutionary praxis. Socialism was either "inevitable" or it would evolve gradually from the direction bourgeois society was headed in any case.

In this respect, Lichtheim argues that the essence of Marx's own thinking on history, which laid equal stress on so-called objective and subjective factors, had been replaced by a thorough-going determinism. Theory had been torn from practice, and the result left the socialist movement in Europe powerless to counteract the drift toward war and imperialism prior to 1914. The upshot of this situation is that Marxian theory had been misinterpreted by one of its founders (Engels) and that as a result Engels comes in for considerable criticism by Lichtheim.

Once again, this insight into Engels' singular role had been suggested earlier by others, including Lukács in the early

twenties and Karl Korsch at the same time. My own feeling is that Lichtheim may over-stress the discrepancy between Marx and Engels, especially in their early collaborative efforts. It will be noticed that in the Manifesto, for example, Lichtheim argues that it too is "Janus-faced" over the issue of the role of consciousness and that of technology in social change. Lichtheim argues that Marx favored the former while Engels the latter. To my knowledge there is no evidence of who contributed which passage to the document, and so, therefore, precise authorship over specific sections or ideas that appear in the document cannot be ascertained. I concur with Lichtheim and earlier criticism of Lukács and Korsch that Engels bears responsibility for altering Marx's theory of history, while in the absence of proof, this distortion probably belongs to Engels' later philosophical work rather than his earlier collaborative efforts with Marx.

We may be encountering here a debate over "intentionality" that is no more useful than that which has occurred recently among theorists of American politics over the precise meaning and authorship of The Federalist Papers. Differences no doubt existed between Madison and Hamilton, although what drew them together may have
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been far greater than what separated them. I suspect the same is true of Marx and Engels, and Lichtheim may be over-emphasizing a subtle difference in their analysis beyond what the data would indicate. In any event, it may be that if the doctrine of "historical inevitability" had not existed in the corpus of Marx and Engels' writings, determinists (or what Lichtheim refers to as "orthodox Marxists") like Kautsky in Germany and Plekhanov in Russia

would have probably invented it. It suited their particular mentality as well as the character of the movements they headed.

Otherwise, I find Lichtheim's treatment of other important contributors to Marxism to be a standard of scholarship in this field, including his treatment of the contributions of Trotsky and Lenin. Most historians have tended to miss the originality of these "great men" (truly, world-historical figures for Lichtheim, whether one approves or not), while political theorists have tended, perhaps too easily, to see them as mere ideologues or dogmatists. Lichtheim's subtle blend of history and theory brings out their distinctiveness as intellectuals and historical actors as never before.

The concluding chapter of this study is devoted to an examination of the strengths and weaknesses of Lichtheim's work. My evaluation follows Lichtheim's own historical approach in attempting to reveal the situational origins of his own thought, as well as some of the contradictions that are contained within it. I have already pointed out that his own approach to interpretation owes much to the work of Georg Lukács. His rueful respect for this outstanding thinker and his contempt for Lukács' moral and political example are revealed, I believe, in Lichtheim's biography of Lukács. This book presents Lichtheim at his most polemical and perhaps least fair, but it nevertheless contains much of Lichtheim's own torment over the outcome of Marxism in the twentieth century.

Lichtheim's political disenchantment with the outcome of the Russian Revolution as well as the decline of Marxian social-

ism in the West led him to a number of unfortunate conclusions concerning the contemporary period, in my opinion. He felt, for example, that both classical liberalism and Marxism had "ended" or been largely superseded by the events of 1914 and their aftermath. This attitude is reflected in his pessimism about the new forms that Western society began to assume after World War II. Technology and its impact on the administration of economic and social policy was forging a new mass society incapable of controlling its effects. In such an environment technocracy threatened to push out the traditional liberal values of individual and political liberty, as well as Marxist notions of class and class conflict. To be sure, Lichtheim's fears of bureaucracy are not new--they appear in the writings of some of our most profound social critics, including C. Wright Mills and Herbert Marcuse.⁷ What is disappointing to me is that Lichtheim too often surrendered to the "logic" of the technocratic state as the only solution to our problems, as if liberalism and Marxism were powerless to offer alternatives to what Lichtheim referred to as "bureaucratic collectivism."

One of Lichtheim's suppositions which seems suspect to me is the notion that class or class conflict is a phenomenon only of the past. The events in Paris of May, 1968 were dismissed by Lichtheim as the antics of a fanatical minority of students and workers. Perhaps. But it is also possible to see in such dramatic events the pent-up frustration of a younger generation having to cope with the undemocratic consequences of technological change and bureaucratic state power. Similarly, it is not at all clear

to me that the working class, either traditional blue collar or technically-trained white collar, is "satisfied" or quiescent about its lot in advanced industrial society. The present concern over the environment, the dominance of big business in government, as well as concern about the economic viability of a society that vests enormous power in private hands all raise issues that are related to class and the undemocratic structure of power in Western society. As I indicate in my concluding chapter, democratic socialism may be entering a new and challenging era in its history, despite its undeniable past setbacks.

What is puzzling then about Lichtheim's attitude toward the present epoch is that as a Marxist he tended to dismiss the present and future as beyond the scope of theory, at least as a guide to practice. The renunciation of theory's prospective role was, in my view, a reflection of his own inner torment and frustration. If there had been turning points or crises in the past that offered enormous opportunity for the majority to shape their own future, why were such historical possibilities over? In the end Lichtheim wished to turn theory only backward, to recover what had gone awry with the past. The philosophers had attempted to change the world, and what they had created was a human slaughterhouse. This is, in my view, a cry of metaphysical pessimism, that man is doomed. I believe that too much of Lichtheim's complaint about contemporary society is colored by such disillusionment.

The source of this torment lies perhaps in the role which Lichtheim had been cast by historical misfortune as well as that which he ultimately had created for himself. As a young émigré

intellectual first in Palestine and later in London, Lichtheim had not achieved a personal security that might have enriched his vision of the post-War world. With his roots in German culture, which had itself been demolished by Fascism and had not recovered afterward, and a certain suspicion of Anglo-Saxon conventions, he had been deprived of a "place" in this world. Alienation may take many forms, and Lichtheim's writings--as meaningful as they are to a Western audience not acquainted with the heritage of Hegel and Marx--reflect a cultural loss that must have been extremely painful for him. If Hegel and Marx were dead to contemporary society and politics, as Lichtheim supposed, the world must have looked very lonely to Lichtheim.

Apart from a cultural pessimism that afflicted him, Lichtheim seems to have been deeply troubled emotionally. He rarely recorded his personal feelings, and according to one close associate, was forever self-conscious about the quality of his own journalism.⁸ (This self-consciousness also accounts for his use of the pseudonym "G. L. Arnold" at the beginning of his career in London.) He did however record these lines in January of 1965:

...there are millions of socialists, but only a handful of poets, and--if one can believe the psychologists--not too many accomplished lovers. If a choice has to be made, I for one am willing to trade a carload of political prose for a single solitary glimpse of either love or poetry.⁹

The sadness of this statement speaks for itself. That it must have contributed mightily to Lichtheim's suicide seems unmistakable. It is a terrible irony to have to introduce a study of a man's thought that was in my view so valuable, and

yet was accompanied by so much doubt and even inner pain. We are told that by the end of his life he had virtually walled himself
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off from the world so that he could write. Lichtheim's writing sustained him. Let it help us to understand our world and the prospects that lie ahead.

In concluding, I would like to express my gratitude to a number of people who have guided my education as well as encouraged me in the pursuit of this project. Professor Bernard Morris of Indiana University first introduced me to Marxian theory and was instrumental in my decision to pursue graduate work in political theory. Professor Morris had recognized early on Lichtheim's extraordinary achievement in the field of Marxian theory, and I believe in retrospect that his regard for Lichtheim played a role in my choice of a dissertation topic. Also, while at Indiana University in the late 1960's I was fortunate to have had the advice and friendship of the late Herbert J. Muller. His kindness and appreciation of students I shall never forget.

My graduate career in New York was facilitated and enhanced by Professor David Spitz. As a friend and adviser, I was fortunate to have known him. I would like to believe that David Spitz's ability to teach and inspire students has rubbed off, however slightly, on me. Before his untimely death in March of 1979, Professor Spitz had read and approved the first chapter of this dissertation. The supervision of this project was taken over and greatly aided by Professor Marshall Berman. Professor Berman has encouraged me to broaden the original perspective of this project, and as a result, I believe that I have a more profound

grasp of Lichtheim's over-all significance than before. In addition, I would like to thank Professor Michael Harrington who entered this project in its final stages, and whose comments on an early draft of the manuscript helped to correct some errors in its original form. Both Professors Berman and Harrington have made my own work far easier than it would have been otherwise. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the useful criticism I have received from Professors Peter Bachrach and Young Kun Kim, both of whom read the manuscript and shared their insights on Lichtheim with me.

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FOOTNOTES

1

See Walter Laqueur, "George Lichtheim, 1912-1973," Commentary, LVI (Aug., 1973), p. 47.

2

Georg Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, trans. Rodney Livingstone, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), p. 1.

3

(unsigned article), "Marxists on the campus--in the faculty," Business Week, (April 28, 1980), pp. 126-28.

4

See Lichtheim's review of Shlomo Avineri's The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx in his Collected Essays, (New York: Viking Press, 1974), p. 366.

5

Bertell Ollman, Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society, 2nd ed., (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 52.

6

The analogy between Madison and Hamilton's collaboration in The Federalist Papers and Marx and Engels' collaborative efforts of a lifetime is suggested by Andrew Hacker in his The Study of Politics, 2nd ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), p. 61.

7

See C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), *passim*; also see Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), *passim*.

8

Laqueur, op. cit., p. 49.

9

George Lichtheim, Collected Essays, (New York: Viking Press, 1973), p. 165.

10

Laqueur, op. cit., p. 52.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: TOWARD AN HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETATION IN POLITICAL THEORY

Political theorists are characteristically concerned with three different modes of activity. The first and perhaps most formidable involves the formulation of a general theory of politics which challenges existing ideas and raises new problems and issues. Such "breakthroughs" are indeed rare and form part of a tradition which might be termed "grand theory." The most obvious representatives in this tradition include Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, and Marx. A second mode of activity focuses not on the entire complex of problems that go into a general theory but on specific and even immediate issues of concern. Representatives of this second group of political theorists include Cicero, Harrington, Tocqueville, and J. S. Mill. In each case the writer typically addresses what is thought to be a pressing issue, whether it be the problem of law, property, equality or liberty.

There is, however, a third and increasingly prominent approach to political theory: that is, to go about the business of understanding and interpreting political theory itself. The problem of interpretation has seldom been a compelling issue for writers in either of the two other traditions. Aristotle assumed he understood Plato when he went about criticizing The Republic,

and Cicero made the same common-sense assumption when he modelled his own writing after Plato's. However, political theorists today are much more reluctant to make such assumptions about what a particular theorist meant or what he or she intended. Interpretation has become a major concern in political theory, with no commonly agreed upon criteria.

What will be explored initially in this study is the emergence of interpretation as an issue unto itself in political theory. Later the discussion of interpretation will shift to a focus on a specific tradition in modern and contemporary political thought, namely Marxism and socialism. Both the question of interpretation and its resolution in terms of Marx and his various progeny were the concerns of George Lichtheim. It is felt that Lichtheim's work marks a notable contribution to this field for several reasons. Chief among them is the fact that Lichtheim's approach to interpretation employs an historical methodology derived from Hegelian philosophy (as well as from Marx) which has been all but neglected by other prominent interpreters. The reasons for this neglect of Hegel, at least for purposes of interpretation, have to do perhaps foremost with his metaphysical conception of historical knowledge and its consequent departure from the canons of empirical science. Therefore, one is not surprised to read in Professor George H. Sabine's influential text in political theory that "...it is impossible by any logical operation to excogitate the truth of any allegation of fact, and neither logic nor fact implies a value." Nor is there apparently any merit to the notion, derived from Hegel and later from Marx, that "there is a determinant order of

evolution or historical progress," according to Professor Sabine.¹

Lichtheim's approach to interpretation challenges this widely held view, concerning the intelligibility of history as a "logic of development," as well as the ability of the interpreter to criticize political theory in order to arrive at its present adequacy. Therefore, the argument over facts and values in political theory, the empiricist claim of value relativity, as well as the metaphysical claims entertained by Hegel and other natural law theorists concerning Absolute Knowledge forms the background of a debate which serves to illuminate Lichtheim's own methodological standpoint. If one traces this argument in Lichtheim's writings, the empiricist standpoint is represented by Professor Karl Popper, that of natural law by Professor Leo Strauss, and finally, Hegel's position (which approximates Lichtheim's own) by the French philosopher Alexandre Kojève.² The effort in this first chapter will be to reconstruct this argument along the lines suggested by Lichtheim, while examining the adequacy of each position and its relation to Lichtheim's own historical approach. A preliminary discussion of the problem of interpretation as it appears generally in the literature of political theory may serve to introduce the main currents of the argument that ensues between Strauss, Kojève, and Popper.

If the interpretations of several of the leading theorists in the field are examined, it can be seen that they not only go about their activity in different ways but employ the same terminology with widely divergent meanings. For example, one of the commonly accepted categories of analysis in political interpretation

is the "history of political theory." By "history" is usually meant a chronology of writings in political theory, beginning most often with the "ancients" (the Greeks and Romans), continuing with medieval theorists such as Aquinas and Augustine, and leading up to modern and contemporary writers in political theory. Beyond the point of accepting an historical point of reference for ordering purposes, it is not clear what is meant by history of political theory.

One leading interpreter, Sheldon Wolin, speaks of "a tradition of common conceptual language with fairly stable meanings."³ The difference between one theory and another, especially as they approximate each other in time, rests upon the emphasis that the theorist places on certain terms and their meaning. As Wolin states: "A theory is preceded by, and is a working out of, a decision to study political life in one way rather than another.... every theory represents a...particular distribution of emphasis indicative of what the theorist deems important."⁴ Thus, the problem for the theorist is to comprehend the world in its wholeness or totality, but in so doing, it is inevitable that different theorists will tend to emphasize certain features of a common or shared reality while de-emphasizing others. As Wolin is careful to admit, this definition of history of political theory does not escape the problem of relativism with respect to the "plausibility" of each theory, nor does it help us to discern why particular theories arise when they do or why they decline.⁵

What is perhaps most distinctive about this approach to interpretation is that it assumes that there are distinguishable

linguistic similarities in the history of political theory, such that patterns of meaning emerge from the various writings of the contributors to political theory. Among the common themes or terminology that can be compared in the writings of the contributors are conceptions of citizenship, law, justice, liberty, and authority. Quite often, those who employ this approach to the history of political theory go a step beyond looking for linguistic similarities in the writings of contributors, that is, they construct supra-historical categories in order to analyze various writers. John Plamenatz points to "a close connection between a philosopher's conception of what man is, what is peculiar to him, how he is placed in the world, and his doctrines about how men should behave, what he should strive for, and how society should be constituted."⁶

Plamenatz's contention that an understanding of human nature is broadly implicit in political theory is only one means of drawing parallels between different theorists. A more elaborate variation on this approach to the history of political theory is Robert D. Cumming's work in interpretation.⁷ According to Cumming, two themes compete with one another in the works of the major contributors, namely the humanist tradition which centers on the search for a corollary between the structure of man's nature and the structure of the state (this follows the Plamenatz conception) and what Cumming refers to as the "historicist adjustment," or the shift from a humanist conception to one which focuses on the theorist's search for historical patterns of change and stability as a basis for analyzing political structure. Cumming is quite clear in pointing out that he himself does not employ an historical

or "historicist" approach, rather, that he is able to discern this theme in the works of others by means of a "literary" approach.

What is most important about the interpretations by Wolin, Plamenatz, and Cumming, at least for present purposes, is that they tend to concentrate on the literature of political theory itself and seldom raise questions which pertain to the reality which political theorists address. In this way, by concentrating on linguistic usage and by discerning patterns of similarity in the history of political theory, it becomes possible to construct what appears to be a "dialogue" between the prominent representatives of political theory. Theory construction is thus seen as a response to the writings of one's predecessors. To be sure, there are ample opportunities in the history of political thought to point out such instances of "dialogue": the already mentioned extensive remarks of Aristotle on Plato's Republic; Hobbes' disavowal in Leviathan of a Platonic "greatest good"; similar remarks of Madison in The Federalist; Machiavelli's candid declaration in The Prince to "represent things as they are in real truth, rather than as they are imagined" by the ancients.

The question which is for the most part unaddressed by the interpreters above is the theorist's relation to his own world, and how that world shapes the theorist's perceptions and judgments about politics. Put differently, is the history of political theory more than a study of succeeding theories of politics, each responding to the "defects" or "aberrations" of the preceding dominant figures in the field? An alternative view would be to examine whether or not political theory is an expression of the changing

times of the theorists themselves. To view theory in this light is to accept the proposition that the theorist and his writings are embedded in a particular historical universe rather than in a timeless realm of abstract ideas or logical propositions. This approach would not deny that there is a sense in which ideas are an expression of universal concerns, such as the nature of justice, the ideal political arrangement, law, and citizenship, together with the host of concepts which form the vocabulary of political theory. It is only to suggest that these concepts possess a specific content which relates to the time and place in which they are used and that one cannot impose a singular meaning upon any of them.

Another problem which would seem to be inherent in the use of the concept of "history of political theory" is the issue of the validity of a particular theory of politics. How does one go about examining whether or not one theory is more valid than another? The above interpreters tend to accept the neo-positivist contention that interpretation concerning issues of value or ethics can do no more than "clarify" divergent ethical positions or values, and that to go beyond this type of clarification would be to inject personal bias into interpretation. An historical approach to the question of validity would suggest a variety of criteria enabling the interpreter to go beyond mere description and comparison of divergent ethical positions. If the subject matter of political theory is enlarged to include not only the literature of political theory but the actual historical process of which the literature is a part, it becomes possible to examine changes of value as part of

a total social and historical development, and furthermore, to suggest a pattern of development in which competing values occupy a temporal relation to each other.

Having said this much, it would seem that another problem (perhaps as great as that of the neo-positivist claim of value neutrality) presents itself at this point. Can an historical approach hope to answer the question of whether one theory is more valid than another? If one follows the argument of historical interpretation it seems that all theories are either equally valid (that is, speak with equal validity to their own time) or equally false, in the sense that they cannot claim validity beyond the time boundaries in which they originate. Those who employ this method would seem to be involved in a relativistic quandary, as much as the neo-positivists.

A tentative response to the validity problem in historical interpretation would be to suggest that thought is not only a creative response to one's own time and place but that it involves a cumulative learning process; whereby succeeding bodies of thought add to, if not altogether resolve, the problems left unanswered by one's predecessors. The idea of a "learning process" is meant to suggest that thought (and history) is progressive and that there is a linkage between different bodies of thought that historical interpretation can uncover once it accepts the idea that all bodies of thought are incomplete, tentative efforts to build upon the strengths and weaknesses of preceding theories.

Involved in this view of interpretation is the contention that the actual historical development affords the interpreter

a vantage point which is superior to that of the theorist himself. The theorist is not able to see the connection between his thought and his own time as well as his successors may, nor is the theorist in a position to evaluate whether or not his theoretical contribution is of practical significance, that is, whether it is of consequence to other theorists or historical actors.

The historical approach to interpretation, a bare outline of which has just been given, is largely the product of nineteenth-century European philosophy, specifically Hegelian philosophy of⁸ history. In the United States this approach to interpretation went largely unnoticed until recently when it was criticized by Professor Leo Strauss and others who subscribe to what is now called "textual analysis."⁹ Those who practice this approach to interpretation in political theory have attempted to move beyond the problem of linguistic or literary analysis--cited above in the works of Wolin, Plamenatz, and Cumming--to the problem of understanding the history of political theory as it was intended by the theorists themselves. It is worthwhile to review the debate between Professor Strauss and the practitioners of the historical approach to interpretation, in this case, French philosopher Alexandre Kojève.

Strauss asserts that there are "two opposed ways in which one can study the thought of the past": one which looks to factors outside human thought as well as thought itself, the other one of which has as its goal the understanding of the past "on its own terms, 'as it really has been,' i.e. to understand it as exactly¹⁰ as possible as it was actually understood by its authors."

Strauss adopts the latter approach to the problem of interpretation, arguing that to link thought to historical time violates the essential validity of virtually all pre-modern political thought. In fact, the historical approach (as opposed to the "textual" approach) is said by Strauss to read back into the classics of political theory a set of assumptions about the nature of thought which derive from modern nineteenth-century theorizing, thereby distorting the intention of the original authors. To raise the temporal limitation implicit in all thought is, according to Strauss, tantamount to saying that the interpreter is capable of understanding the classics better than those authors understood themselves.¹¹

The controversy between Strauss and Kojève is perhaps highlighted by two fundamental problems in political theory and its method of interpretation, namely how to test or derive the validity (or what Kojève refers to as verification) of a theory, and secondly, the relation of theory and action (or practice). Each of these problems requires elaboration in order to understand fully the strengths and weaknesses of the historical and textual approaches.

The verification problem centers on the proper method and criteria to be used in assessing the truth or falsity of a theory. Strauss insists that these criteria, or standards against which theory stands or falls, are internal to the theory itself, that is, that they follow the "conscious intention" of the theorist. For the interpreter to use any other criteria would violate the author's intention. Kojève points in just the opposite direction, that is, to the necessary relation between thought and historical

time (whether the particular theorist is aware of this relation or not), and, therefore, to the necessity of judging thought in terms of its historical significance. Furthermore, Kojève points out that the issue of verification cannot be decided within the time frame in which a theory originates, or, that the over-all truth or falsity of thought can be decided only after its historical significance has passed. It is only through philosophic reflection (dialectic) upon the past that one can comprehend fully the significance and hence the validity of thought.

The widely divergent meanings attached to Strauss' and Kojève's use of "dialectic" help to clarify how each interpreter deals with the issue of validity. For Strauss, there is essentially one method for discerning truth or knowledge from falsity or opinion, that is, the method of discourse engaged in by Socrates and systematized by his student, Plato. It is entirely consistent with Strauss' view of the timeless nature of truth that his name be appended to the conception of dialectic held by the ancients, as Kojève suggests. Strauss has "joined" the ancients in holding that there is a truth that can be known by means of careful intellectual dialogue between those who are capable of grasping the truth (which excludes all but a few), and, furthermore, that this truth resides not in the world of men and human action but in a supra-empirical, ahistorical world of "ideas" or "forms."

Kojève criticizes this conception of dialectic as resting essentially on "subjective certainty." How is one to verify whether a knowledge claim is anything other than a mere prejudice, or worse, the raving of a lunatic? Without external, communicable

criteria to which knowledge can be held accountable, the Straussian-Platonic conception of dialectic is tautological, according to Kojève. Kojève, furthermore, declares this conception of dialectic to be "theistic," that is, resting on some form of privileged, private dialogue, having the same character as a revealed truth.

In contrast to the theistic conception, Kojève offers what he terms an historical dialectic. This conception is verifiable in the sense that while it too rests on dialogue, namely the dialogue which takes place "between men, or rather between a man and his social and historical milieu," the outcome of such philosophical reflection is subject to historical verification. Such "outcomes" partake of both thought and action. The philosopher's reflection upon his social and historical milieu seeks not only to "understand" his own time in thought, but to bring to light the underlying truth of historical events, in other words, to resolve the welter of conflicting opinion in favor of those which are valid. However, neither contemplation, nor discussion, nor dialogue will by themselves bring about this resolution, according to Kojève. It is necessary that the philosopher actively bring his conclusions to social and historical awareness by means of political action. In this sense, Kojève argues that thought becomes "concrete" or "objective" insofar as this process is communicable to others and subject to historical verification, rather than resting upon the contemplative efforts of the philosopher (which can only produce "subjective certainty").

The theory-practice problem is part of Kojève's response to the shortcomings of the Straussian-Platonic conception of dialectic. How then does the theory-practice problem affect the

interpreter's task of understanding and ultimately discerning the validity of thought? Interpretation, which dwells exclusively upon thought and times past, is capable of measuring thought against its historical achievements and failures, as well as seeing its genesis in the active dialogue "between a man and his social and historical milieu." Thought itself (as opposed to the interpretation of thought) always takes place in a world which is partially hidden from its author, with great uncertainty as to its exact origins or likely consequences. Kojève is especially mindful of the hazards involved in bringing thought to social and historical consciousness, or translating theory into practice. Thought, in order to be made practical, has to be "mediated" between its author and others capable of exercising power. In this process there is always the possibility of misunderstanding between the author and his mediators, and even a greater risk that once action has been taken it will not succeed. However, these eventualities lie beyond the philosopher's comprehension and can only be understood after the fact.

The task of the interpreter, on the other hand, according to Kojève, is both reflective and critical. Interpretation, unlike the dialogue between an author and his own time, seeks only to understand the author's work in light of its historical significance. In order to do this, the interpreter must illuminate those aspects or connections between the author and his milieu which could not have been fully known to the author, as well as how the author's work was itself interpreted (and misinterpreted) by others who sought to follow the author's intention by carrying out practical efforts. What could only have been vaguely understood at the time

it was written is now, following its practical testing, ready for historical understanding and verification. It follows that for Kojève the interpreter is not involved in the testing of the author's work, and is in this sense outside the influence of the author's work.

To review the main points of the argument thus far between Strauss and Kojève, the following is especially important: (1) Strauss maintains that interpretation rests upon an understanding of an author's work which reflects as closely as possible the author's own intention. (2) In order to accomplish this the interpreter must "enter" the intellectual world of the author and follow his philosophical method (Platonic dialectic) as the sole criterion of truth or validity. (3) Because thought is itself independent of and superior to the world of men and human action, the end result of thought is contemplation of a pre-existent truth. Kojève's response to Strauss, following the above outline, is: (1) Interpretation rests on an understanding of the author's "dialogue with his social and historical milieu," which means that his intention(s) can only be followed by seeing the author's work as part of the controversy of his time. (2) The validity or verification of an author's work rests on its ability to resolve the controversies of the author's own time, and since this cannot be done by strictly logical or intellectual means but must be carried out by committed action on the author's part, the exact consequences of such action cannot be foreseen by the author and must therefore be judged by an outside observer who is capable of rendering an historical verification. (3) Such a verification can be made only after

the author's time has passed, that is, after his work and its practical intention have been exhausted.

The foregoing arguments (concerning the relation of the interpreter to the author and his world, the problem of verification, and finally, the issue of theory and practice) are perhaps best understood as part of the larger question of what constitutes the nature of truth in political theory. Strauss presents the position of the ancients that truth or "the Good" is the end-product of contemplation reached through arduous dialogue with others and finally with one's self. Its nature cannot be explained to uninitiates incapable of experiencing it, nor can its fruits be shared by the community of men. It is difficult not to agree with Professor Wolin in his complaint over Platonism's disregard for the world of men and human action. As Wolin has stated:

The Good at which the Platonic conception aimed was in no way dependent on the community, nor was it in any real sense a matter for political decision. By insisting that the political order must be linked to a transcendent order, Plato could afford to ignore some of the most pressing issues of a truly political character.¹³

The strength of Kojève's historical approach to the problem of interpretation is that it begins with the assumption that truth is a by-product of the theorist's effort to solve the human dilemma of his time. That dilemma may find a wide variety of expressions, hence the various conceptions of truth in the history of political thought. However, as far as the interpreter is concerned, he may enter the author's intellectual world only as a preliminary gesture in trying to understand how the author conceptualizes his world. That world is neither constant, nor is it

linked to a "universal higher truth" which the interpreter is bound to follow. Having understood how the author sees his world, the interpreter is then, from his retrospective vantage point, able to judge its influence upon human action and/or historical consciousness itself.

The truth which the historical approach looks to is one which develops over time, out of the problems encountered by human beings in conflict with each other and with their material environment. Thought is, in one form or another, an expression of this conflict. While no particular author is capable of addressing the problems of the past or the future in their totality, it would be a mistake not to recognize the contributions theorists make to each other's work (if for no other reason than that of refutation). It is in this sense that truth emerges in the history of thought. The interpreter is able to chart the influence of theorists upon each other (that is of thought over time) as well as the dialogue of the author with his own time.

Because the nature of truth in the historical approach is not universal, it is often claimed by other interpreters (including Strauss) that the historical approach inevitably destroys the truth¹⁴ of those universalist theories it seeks to interpret. According to this criticism of the historical approach, the critical treatment afforded a universalist theory (such as Plato's theory of The Good) reduces the theory to at best a "relative" truth ("true for its own time or by its own standards of judgment") and at worst a falsehood, the theory having been made antique or even "falsified" by succeeding historical investigation. This view of historical

interpretation would relegate past thought to what might be termed "the dustbin of history": each succeeding theory destroying the validity or truth of its predecessors.

In Kojève's presentation of the historical approach, such a view of truth and its relation to the past is denied in favor of one which reflects an "historical dialectic." By this Kojève refers to the way in which succeeding theories raise to a higher level of understanding and clarify the problems encountered by human beings over time. This is not to say that later theories cancel out earlier ones, only that later authors have the benefit of hindsight in seeing the resolution of earlier bodies of thought in practice and are therefore able to build upon this experience in their own work. The German term Aufhebung, to negate or transcend, is often spoken of, by Kojève and others, as the means by which criticism builds upon the truth partially disclosed in past thought as a way of reaching a more complete truth.¹⁵ To speak of historical interpretation in this sense denies that the thought of the past can be "refuted," as may or may not be true of theories of natural science.¹⁶ Historical interpretation goes only so far as to say that a dialectical criticism or critique of past thought is possible. In this way the essential truth of past thought is preserved in interpretation.

The question remains as to whether or not the truth of historical interpretation can itself achieve universality: in other words, if all past thought is only partial in its disclosure of truth, is an historical critique capable of achieving a complete or universal truth? According to those who have adopted this

approach, answers concerning the universality of historical interpretation of knowledge differ. Kojève, who follows Hegel strictly on this issue, argues that such a critique is indeed capable of complete disclosure of truth.¹⁷ To argue this point, it is necessary to suppose that "history" must come to an end before its full truth can be revealed to consciousness. It is precisely because history is an on-going process that thought is incomplete, that is, bound to the limitations of its own time. Only by establishing a vantage point beyond historical time would it be possible to conceive of truth in its universal aspect.

The counterpart to the universalist conception of historical truth is that thought is able once and for all to resolve the human dilemma, that is, the on-going conflict between human beings as well as between man and his material environment. In Hegel (as well as in Kojève), this resolution occurs through the emergence of the modern state, which is the epitome of reason and human freedom.¹⁸ It is with the establishment of the modern state and universal citizenship that thought has finally achieved mastery over the contingencies of human history. From this point forward, the world which thought reflects upon has been disclosed to consciousness because it has been transformed by human action in conjunction with reason, and, therefore, both thought and its object (being) can be said to be identical.

This grand doctrine of universalist truth is only one view of the historical approach to thought. Its prominence is highlighted by Kojève's interpretation of Hegel, elaborated in the 1930's. Others sought to adapt the Hegelian approach to thought and history

but refused to accept Hegel's universalist conception of truth. In particular, what they found objectionable was the idea that history must reach a definite conclusion or ending, thereby enabling the theorist to reflect on it as a completed whole. The disputable point is whether what Hegel took to be the conclusion of historical development (namely the ambiguous inheritance of the French Revolution in the form of the modern nation-state) represented merely the latest, if not most progressive, stage or epoch in human history.

In spite of Hegel's claim that philosophy might be reconciled with human history, his own political philosophy and later legacy failed to achieve such a definitive conclusion. One prominent interpreter, Jürgen Habermas, has recently suggested that Hegel's ambiguous inheritance reveals at least three attitudes toward modernity (derivative of the French Revolution)--each of which was to be taken up by competing factions among Hegel's progeny. The first was the attitude of liberals which suggested that his philosophy achieved its apotheosis in the celebration of civil society as the domain of individual freedom. A second conservative faction sought to emphasize Hegel's attachment to a superordinate state which would harness individual freedom for the "greater" purposes of the nation. And still a third contingent, made up of the German Left (Marx among them) sought to argue that Hegel's true legacy was to have pinpointed the underlying antagonism between civil society and the state, and consequently, the likelihood of a new wave of revolutionary agitation bent on the emancipation of civil society from the authoritarian rule. These three radically different

interpretations of Hegel describe the major off-shoots of his political philosophy in the century-and-a-half since his death, and correspond to the greatest controversies since his time.

As Habermas states:

...in these competing arguments the tensions of Hegel's own deeply ambivalent relationship to the French Revolution are developed more fully.... these interpretations also form themselves in accordance with the political fronts of the European civil war which has raged in Europe during our century and which still determines our relationship to the Revolution down to the present day.... Hegel did not achieve mastery over the complex of his critique of the French Revolution without leaving some scars.¹⁹

Hegel's uncertain view of his own time did not, however, invalidate the historical approach he helped to inaugurate. If the historical method could be dissociated from the universalist conclusions Hegel drew from it, historical thought would still possess considerable value as a standard for interpreting the thought of the past. It is this method which has been most often adopted by present-day historical interpretation (especially since the Second World War). Shorn of its universalist claims, the historical approach makes no assertion that truth can be known in its entirety, any more than history must reach a conclusion. The interpreter, on the other hand, is able to look back on a body of thought and discern its validity by means of a "critique," as elaborated above.

The difference between Hegel and Kojève's use of the historical approach and that of present-day historical interpreters is that the latter apply the same historical limitations to themselves that they apply to others. This amounts to a recog-

dition that there is necessarily a contradiction or gap between thought and reality which time cannot erase. History, as man's effort to create his own world, may be conceived of as being developmental or progressive, in the sense that man has direction toward certain goals, such as the creation of a rational society. The present-day interpreter, however, makes no claim that such goals are ever entirely achieved or realized. Such goals indicate past human effort, both theoretical and practical, but make no claim toward being "resolved" or completed in the present. "Truth" is, therefore, incomplete because man and history are incomplete. This is not to say that all thought is equally valid or that it is relative to its time; only that thought may be partial without being false, and what is more important, may have historical significance (for its time and after) that the interpreter can bring out in his own work.

The refinement in historical interpretation since Hegel has not been entirely understood by some of its critics. In particular, arguments have been advanced against certain alleged inconsistencies in Hegel's mode of interpretation as if they apply with equal validity to all historical interpretation. Perhaps the best-known criticism of historical interpretation and of its Hegelian influence has been associated with the writings of Karl Popper. Popper examines the central assumptions of historical thinking in several of his works, but the one which has evoked the greatest interest is his Poverty of Historicism.²⁰ Together with the above criticism of Leo Strauss and that of other eminent²¹ theorists like Isaiah Berlin, Popper advances a strong indictment

of what he calls the major trend in contemporary theory associated with "historicism."

Before it is presented in its own right, it would be useful to examine what the detractors of contemporary historical thinking have said. Karl Popper makes the following statement:

...the very heart of the body of arguments which I propose to call 'historicism' [is that] social science is nothing but history. Not, however, history in the traditional sense of a mere chronicle of historical facts. The kind of history with which historicists wish to identify sociology looks not only backward to the past but also forward to the future. It is the study of operative forces and, above all, of the laws of social development....the only universally valid social laws have been identified as historical laws. They must be laws of process, of change, of development--not the pseudo-laws of apparent constancies or uniformities. According to historicists, sociologists must try to get a general idea of the broad trends in accordance with which social structures change. But besides this, they should try to formulate hypotheses about general trends underlying social development, in order that men may learn to adjust themselves to impending changes by deducing prophecies from these laws....All the thoughts and activities of the historicists aims at interpreting the past, in order to predict the future.²²

The indictment against historicism made by Popper in the above statement, as well as in his amplification of it throughout his influential book, may be summarized as follows: (1) historicism postulates that the proper study of society ("sociology") is possible only within an historical context, and what must be explained is not merely the appearance of social phenomena at any given moment but their change over time; (2) in order to explain such social change, it is necessary to reveal the determinant of such change and formulate its relation to society in its various aspects; and (3), once this formulation is able to identify the the defining principles ("laws") of social change it is then possible--

and desirable--to understand not only how society came to be constituted as it is presently but how it will (not may!) develop in the future.

This argument would presumably apply to all of the major expositors of historicism, according to Popper. In fact, only the first postulate does, insofar as it refers to history and society as constituting an intelligible totality. The argument fails to take into consideration that historical thinking has itself changed, and many of its central assumptions have changed as well. If Hegel--perhaps the pre-eminent expositor of historical thinking in modern times--is examined according to the three assumptions imputed to him by Popper, it will be found that the last two represent a distortion of his philosophy of history. The same is true of Marx. The only thinker to whom Popper's argument does full justice is perhaps the sociologist Karl Mannheim. Borrowing from such writers as Max Weber and Georg Lukács, among others, Mannheim had suggested as early as 1940 the possibility of a science of social engineering or "reconstruction." Mannheim's discussion of "principia media," by which he meant historical laws governing society, does imply the existence of a scientific method capable of revealing the future, as well as the desirability of using this knowledge to direct public policy. Neither Hegel nor Marx ever entertained such an ambitious notion.

Mannheim's historicist argument aside, the central issue that separates Popper's view from that of Hegel and Marx is the question of whether thought can comprehend society and history as a totality. For Popper, the historicist notion that society

and history constitute an intelligible "whole" is erroneous; all one may do is observe the isolated and random facts of immediate experience and construct conjectural statements or hypotheses about

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them. It is of some interest that even natural science is now paying greater attention to the role of "metaphor" or holistic thinking in theory construction, rather than "fact-gathering" as the basis of scientific discovery. Thomas Kuhn's theory of "paradigm" would tend to cast doubt on the validity of Popper's
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own notion or science.

Whatever its status within the natural sciences, however, the empiricist view represented by Popper marks a virtual renunciation of the history of political thought, which has typically--whether in its natural law or more recent historical phase--focused on a type of theory oriented to man and society as a whole. A theory which renounces the claim of constituting the human world in its greatest aspects would be incapable of orienting human understanding or conduct, two of the goals of virtually all political thought.

Finally, Popper's epistemological claim would deny the existential link between theory and the world of politics. The scientist supposedly lies entirely outside the realm he is studying and can only reach verifiable conclusions (or "falsifiable" ones, to use Popper's own terminology) insofar as his hypotheses are detached from the interests of those he is observing. The central problem with this view of theory is whether the scientist can ever understand social and political reality without entering it, and without such dialogue can he ever hope to resolve the prob-

lems that afflict society? On the issue of the theorist's relation to the world, Strauss and Kojève would be united against the empiricist claim of moral detachment as well as its claim of practical utility (while they might disagree over the need to resort to a super-sensory realm in order to arrive at final understanding).

The world which theory seeks to comprehend is, for Kojève, a human world which must be understood on its own terms. Importing a methodology from the natural sciences in order to understand human affairs would be as inappropriate as an attempt to achieve the opposite, that is, to invest nature with human purposes. George Lichtheim, following Kojève's defense of modern historical thinking, sought to defend this approach against misunderstanding as represented by much of Popper's argument, and to extend the range of its meaning for social and political thought.

To be sure, by the time Lichtheim began his theoretical work, the historical approach had already been roundly criticized, by Strauss, Popper and others. Part of the difficulty in defending historical interpretation was to distinguish its authentic characteristics from those it was alleged to purport. Lichtheim was one of the first to point out that its critics, and Popper in particular, had misunderstood what the originators of historical
26
thought had intended. Among the arguments which had been made against it was that it purported to be based on "causation" or "determinism," as has been seen in Popper's second postulate concerning historicism (see above). The argument might turn on an idealist or materialist (meaning economic) version of determinism, in Hegel's and Marx's case, respectively, but what was thought to be

common to both of them was the imputation of causal explanation as the basis of their historical method.

Against this view of historical method, Lichtheim insisted that causation played no direct role in either Hegel's or Marx's method (although, as will be seen later, Marx tended to adopt a deterministic language in his later writings, related to early positivism). The point of departure for both theorists, however, was a view of man as the center of the historical process, in his various relations with the material world, with other human beings, and with the products of these interactions. Thought was itself a product of such interaction, as well as a mediation between men and the world they had created. What was missing from this conception, however, was the notion that thought or matter acted independently. It was precisely the interaction between thought and matter, between subject and object, that made Hegel's and Marx's method dialectical.

Lichtheim referred to the context in which thought was embedded as constituting a "totality," a concept, as has been seen, that distinguishes the empiricist approach from that of historical method, while it does not rest upon causation. The significance of totality is that it allows the interpreter of social and political thought to locate an author in space and time, that is, historically. For Lichtheim, thought had to be understood as part of a "dialectic of being and consciousness." The author's own existence is part of history, meaning the particular history (or situation) of his own time and place.

The third point of confusion imputed to the historical

approach by its critics, in this case Karl Popper, is that it enabled one not only to understand the past but the future as well. Once again, this was not true of either Hegel or Marx. For both, historical knowledge was retrospective and not prospective. It was because the past had been created by human beings that it could be reconstituted in thought, and because it had already occurred it could not be changed in the present. The interpreter might recover the meaning of the past through retrospection, while its precise meaning for the present and future could not be foretold. Just as history is a human creation, so too is the future. The difference is that one may approach the past with an assurance that it will not change, while what is currently happening and what may occur in the future is neither stable nor subject to prediction.

As close as the historical approach may come to "unlocking the future" is in revealing the potentiality of change offered by the past. The fulfillment of such potential rests upon a "post-theoretical practice," however, and not "prediction," as alleged by Popper. The future is simply not subject to prediction, according to the historical approach. As such, what lies ahead is not as much a scientific question as a matter of practical interest. All of this is not to say that the future plays no role in historical thinking, only that it is approached as a matter of practical concern.

It is because history is never complete, according to Lichtheim, that its potential is of importance to the interpreter. The mutability of the present enables thought to play a critical

role in attempting to resolve the problems of the present. In this sense the dialogue of an author with his time and place may reveal a practical intention as to how the outstanding issues of his day may be resolved. Once again, however, a practical intention based on a retrospective view of how the present came to be so constituted does not insure its fulfillment; a practical intention is not a prediction as to the outcome of future events. Rather, it bespeaks an active commitment on the part of the theorist.

The activist or prospective side of historical thought, which makes no claim of scientific verification regarding the future, actually places the theorist in a position of opposition to his own time and place. Insofar as the present reveals a potential for change, the theorist's dialogue with his own milieu becomes critical and suggestive of prospective action. The linkage between historical theory and prospective action is, however, seldom a direct one. In fact, Lichtheim warns against over-emphasizing in this connection the tie between theory and practice. A particular body of thought may be expounded under a given set of circumstances and be entirely neglected or forgotten until later interpreted and applied to an historical situation unintended or unforeseen by its author. In such a case the tie between theory construction and application must be clearly conceived as being actively mediated by "third parties" (if the theorist and his own time and place are taken to be the original relation of being and consciousness). Specific instances of this type of "mediation" are not difficult to find in the history of political thought: in the modern period, for example, Napoleon's influence upon Hegel, Hegel's influence

upon Marx, Marx's influence upon the "Marxists" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In his work as an interpreter of political and social thought Lichtheim did a number of things with the conventional categories of social science that are seldom done. The most radical was to insist that social and political thought be related to two other fields of study, namely history and philosophy. However, by history, Lichtheim meant a great deal more than is normally intended by the conventional historian, who would insist that history be narrowly concerned with the recording (and possible explanation) of past events. The historian typically takes the attitude that "ideas" are to be explained by the events and personalities which surround them. Consider, for example, this characterization of Rousseau, by two notable historians of modern Europe (Robert R. Palmer and Joel Colton):

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a Swiss, a Protestant, and almost of lower-class origin. He never felt at ease in France or in Paris society. Neglected as a child, a runaway at sixteen, he lived for years by odd jobs....He was always the little man, the outsider. In addition his sex life was unsatisfactory; he finally settled down with an uneducated girl named Thérèse Levasseur and with her mother who kept interfering with his affairs....He had no social status, no money, and no sense of money....He was pathetically and painfully maladjusted...possibly he was paranoid.

Rousseau felt, from his own experience, that in society as it existed a good man could not be happy. He therefore attacked society, declaring that it was artificial and corrupt....Maladjusted outsider that he was, he craved a commonwealth in which every person could feel that he belonged.²⁷

According to Lichtheim's approach, such a characterization of a theorist and his work, not to mention one of the modern

period's most important contributors, is entirely one-sided and, at the very least, incomplete. All of the particular facts surrounding Rousseau's "maladjusted" life in Paris may be faithfully recorded and elaborated without "explaining" their relation to Rousseau's literary and philosophical work. For such a connection to be made real or "concrete" in Lichtheim's sense, it would be necessary to investigate Parisian society at the time that Rousseau was writing, to question the extent to which Rousseau's writing reveals more than a particular maladjustment and exposes a general social and political situation. Because Rousseau's intellectual work is embedded in his time and place, to leave the impression that his thought is somehow "determined" and thereby reflective of circumstances leaves out the problem of how his thought becomes meaningful to others, and, in particular, his contribution to the ongoing debate about the changing values and social forces of French society and politics.

The historian's tendency to dismiss ideas as mere by-products of particular circumstances and individual personalities not only neglects the subtle relation of a theorist to his time and place but also misses the potential of ideas (or their popular expression) as an igniting force in altering society and politics. Lichtheim was especially sensitive to the difficulty of ever achieving this transformation, that is, of thought into action, but he nevertheless insisted that this was at the very least one of the "tests" that a particular theory had to overcome in being judged either valid or invalid by the interpreter of thought. One of the paradoxes of thought was that an examination of its genesis

in the mind of an author attempting to understand (and perhaps overcome) his own time and place did not reveal how the author's work would be dealt with by others, most notably his cohorts and successors. Interpretation of intellectual genesis or theory construction and its potential application to action were two separate and distinct phases of interpretation.

The third and final phase of interpretation, according to what Lichtheim called his "historical and critical method," was its verification in historical time. Like Kojève, whose interpretative method Lichtheim affirmed in many important respects,²⁸ verification was not understood to be part of theory construction, but was tied to the critical perspective of historical hindsight. Having viewed the author's work in relation to its immediate social milieu and later in terms of its practical intention(s) to resolve the controversies of its time, the interpreter is then able to assess the author's current legacy. How does such a body of thought stand up in light of the contemporary "situation?" As much as Lichtheim attempted to separate his historical subjects from himself, such investigation was ultimately reflexive. The interpreter's view of his own world would become part of the critical apparatus by which he was able to evaluate the work of others.

As Lichtheim took pains to point out: "The closer we are to an epoch, the more difficult it is to comprehend its essential traits: we know at once too much and too little."²⁹ The irony is that intellectual comprehension may be greater of the past than the present, while the interpreter of the past must

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live in the present. In Lichtheim's case, it is not clear that he always respected the distinction. At times his criticism of the past in light of contemporary experience reveals not simply an uncertainty as to the dimensions of his own world, but a certain despair about it as well. He was more comfortable in a nineteenth-century world that was perhaps more familiar to him than his own contemporary age. The question of Lichtheim's own legacy will be explored in detail in the concluding chapter of this study.

At present, however, it is important to note that the historical approach in its "critical" final phase must bring the past up to date, including the author's view of his own world. In this respect, criticism may reveal as much of the interpreter's point of view (Lichtheim's in this case) as of the historical subject he is investigating. And on this basis, the historical approach as it is employed by its various practitioners becomes a reflexive device for revealing not only the historical subject but the character of the interpretation as well.

The irony associated with Lichtheim's (and Kojève's) retrospective view of knowledge presents a challenging counterpoint to the other types of interpretation that have been surveyed thus far. Retrospection rests mid-way between the type of subjective certainty (Absolute Knowledge) offered by Strauss' notion of dialectic and the type of relativism of conventional historians and empiricists. The past can be verified through historical retrospection, while the future remains open and indeterminate. History discloses no final answers, however much it reveals past

human achievements and future prospects.

On the subject of man's ascertainable knowledge of the world, there could perhaps be no greater contrast than between the absolutist position of Strauss and the historical approach of Lichtheim and Kojève. What constituted the domain of knowledge, and what were its limits, if any? It will be recalled that Kojève's principal objection to the Straussian argument was that the real object of thought was not a supra-sensory world of immutable Ideas but the changing human and material world of history. To both Kojève and Lichtheim, who were atheists, thought could not yield up a divine or transcendent product without divorcing itself from the world of human action, and thereby losing its real object, man himself.

The problem with traditional philosophy, especially philosophy modelled after the ancient Greek conception, was that it made the assumption that it could penetrate all apparent circumstance and change in order to arrive at a final conclusion which was knowledge. The usual object of knowledge was man himself. However, even a subject as widely discussed in the history of political thought as human nature could not be dealt with in an abstract philosophical manner, as political thinkers have done from Plato to Hobbes and beyond. One can certainly admire Plato's elaborate hierarchy of human capabilities and virtues, his doctrine of an immortal soul, and still recognize its place within the historical world of the Greek polis. The same could be said for Hobbes' later effort to erect a new science of man based on Newtonian principles of physical matter. In this, as well, whatever its scientific

underpinnings might suggest, Hobbes' application of the new science to human nature fitted a particular type of society at a particular stage of historical development. Such an interpretation of Hobbes was offered by Professor C. B. Macpherson in his theory of "possessive individualism," and from Lichtheim's comments on Macpherson's theory, it is clear that he readily concurred.³⁰

What is perhaps truest of Lichtheim's interpretive method is that it places him within a distinctively modern frame of reference. As one of Professor Strauss' students has written, "historical thought, in one form or another, is at the root of all modern science."³¹ The adoption of an historical approach meant for Lichtheim the abandonment of all attempts to find truth outside the world that had been wrought by man, whether by means of a theological or abstractly philosophical conception. However, Lichtheim went one step beyond even those whose thought he most admired, especially that of Hegel. For Hegel it was still possible to achieve some final truth, that is, once "history" had been concluded and reason had apprehended itself in the Absolute Idea. In other words, at a determinate point reason was disclosed to human consciousness and found identity in the world.

This grand conception was given up by Lichtheim (although not by Kojève). The result is that, for Lichtheim, reason, or man's apprehension of truth, is forever incomplete, because neither man nor history has a final ending. Both man and the intellectual and material world he creates are aspects of a self-activating totality. The loss of a final purpose, a purpose thought by Hegel to be inherent in history, is for Lichtheim a signal of modernity.

As one recent writer on modernity has stated, what separates modern man from his predecessors is the "dynamism, heterogeneity, and openness of modern life--both as it is and as we should like it to be."³²

For Lichtheim, this new "openness" was the key to a dilemma. The historical method was indeed the only reliable method by which the thought of the past could be understood in its genesis in the mind of the author and his time and place, in its relation to the unfolding of the historical process (to whatever uncertain degree thought could be "realized"). The negative side of the dilemma was that while the historical approach might reveal certain partial truths in its understanding of the past, it was incapable of completing the process of man's progressive self-becoming. Neither divine purpose nor historical destiny could accomplish this.

While being well aware of its limitations, Lichtheim nevertheless was able to indicate how history could be used to understand the thought of the past, and how such an understanding or consciousness created new possibilities--both humanistic and otherwise--for the future. It is perhaps the "openness" of the historical canvas that lends his writing its realistic and skeptical air. To view thought in a state of becoming, always related to the fortunes of those who must live with the uncertain consequences of thought, is the way that Lichtheim tried to understand the past. As such, his adaptation of the historical method may help us to understand the ambiguities of thought where other methods have been far less successful.

What finally stands out in Lichtheim's work is not only his insights into the outstanding thinkers of the past, but the

way in which he arrived at these insights. It is certainly true that he did not choose to dwell on questions of method; his writings on historical method were either appended to his major researches or, as was more often the case, embedded in his work.

The task of the present study will be to illuminate the process whereby Lichtheim's work takes on systematic importance for the political theorist. Lichtheim's importance lies in the use of a particular type of method of interpretation, or what he termed the historical and critical approach, and its application to the

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thought of the past. Lichtheim's approach to interpretation can clarify much of the confusion which permeates discussions of the history of political thought. At any rate, the present effort begins with this in mind.

FOOTNOTES

1

See "Preface to the First Edition" of George H. Sabine and Thomas L. Thorson, A History of Political Theory, 4th ed., (Hindsdale, Ill.: Dryden Press, 1973).

2

See Lichtheim's commentary on the argument over interpretation of Xenophon's Hiero or Tyrannicus between Leo Strauss and Alexandre Kojève in Lichtheim's The Concept of Ideology and Other Essays, (New York: Vintage, 1967), pp. 159-165. On Karl Popper's misguided notions of "historicism," see Lichtheim's A Short History of Socialism, (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp. 292-93.

3

Sheldon Wolin, "Political Theory: Trends and Goals," The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, vol. XII, (New York: Macmillan and The Free Press, 1968), p. 324.

4

Ibid., p. 322.

5

Ibid., p. 322.

6

John Plamenatz, Man and Society, 2 vols., (London: Longmans, 1963), p. xvi.

7

Robert D. Cumming, Human Nature and History, 2 vols., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

8

Apart from Lichtheim's own contribution to this tradition, major works in this field would include that of Alexandre Kojève and Jürgen Habermas. See the following: Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, ed. Allan Bloom, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr., (New York: Basic Books, 1969); and Habermas, Theory and Practice, trans. John Viertel, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

9

See Leo Strauss, On Tyranny, rev. ed., (New York: Free Press, 1963). Also see Allan Bloom's "Introduction" to Kojève, op. cit.

10

Strauss, op. cit., p. 24.

11

Ibid., p. 195.

12

Alexandre Kojève, "Tyranny and Wisdom," in Strauss, op. cit., p. 164.

13

Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1960), p. 51.

14

See Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), chapter 1.

15

For a discussion of Hegel's dialectical method, see Kojève, op. cit., pp. 178 ff. Also, on the German concept of Aufhebung, see Shlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 37.

16

Thomas Kuhn emphasizes the basic procedure by which the natural sciences "progress," that is, by one scientific paradigm replacing another. Taken in this sense, the new paradigm forces the old one out, with the result that the natural sciences exhibit a typically ahistorical character. Despite similarities between Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions and Hegelian dialectic, the significant difference remains that Kuhn's notion of development is based on later theories refuting earlier ones, while Hegel's conception emphasizes how each succeeding breakthrough discloses a more complete understanding of the past, and not a refutation thereof. For Kuhn's important discussion of history as it relates to the natural sciences, see his The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), chapters 11, 13.

17

Kojève, op. cit., passim.

18

Ibid., p. 44.

19

Jürgen Habermas, Theory and Practice, trans. John Viertel, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), p. 136.

20

Karl R. Popper, The Poverty of Historicism, (New York: Harper and Row, 1964). See also by the same author, The Open Society and its Enemies, 2 vols., (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971), passim.

21

For Berlin's criticism of "historical inevitability," which follows Popper's empiricist position, see Berlin's Four Essays on Liberty, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), chapter 2.

22

Popper, The Poverty of Historicism, pp. 45, 50.

23

Karl Mannheim, Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1940), pp. 192 ff.

24

Popper, The Poverty of Historicism, pp. 80-81.

25

Kuhn, op. cit., passim.

26

George Lichtheim, A Short History of Socialism, pp. 292-93.

27

Robert R. Palmer and Joel Colton, A History of the Modern World, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), pp. 296-97.

28

For Lichtheim's favorable impression of Kojève's defense of the historical approach, see Lichtheim's The Concept of Ideology and Other Essays, p. 162.

29

George Lichtheim, Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study, 2nd rev. ed., (New York: Praeger, 1965), p. 203.

30

Lichtheim, The Concept of Ideology and Other Essays, pp. 151 ff.

31

See "Introduction" to Kojève, op. cit., by Professor Allan Bloom, p. xi.

32

Marshall Berman, The Politics of Authenticity, (New York: Atheneum, 1972), p. 318.

See Lichtheim's "Introduction: A Note on Methodology"
to Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study, pp. xiii-xx.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MARXIAN SYNTHESIS

As much as Hegel's thought represented a breakthrough in its discovery of the interrelation between history and theory, so too Marx's adaptation of Hegelian philosophy of history represented, according to Lichtheim, the predominant theoretical contribution to the understanding of nineteenth-century society and politics. It was Lichtheim's contention that one of the greatest barriers to appreciating Marx's importance as a theorist was in no small measure due to his ambiguous role as founder of what was to become the world communist movement. The linkage between Marx's writings and the movement (or movements) he helped found and which continues to play a prominent role practically a century after his death is a mystery that requires careful attention to both what Marx wrote as well as what became of his "intentions." To discover the author's intention one must examine his writings against the historical background of his own time, and discover what became of them as they were interpreted in action, that is, by others attempting to translate those writings into practice. These two processes, the phenomenon of intellectual genesis and that of historical action, may be quite dissimilar, no matter how closely they are linked to an author.

In the case of Marx, the problem of interpreting his thought

and the historical role of his followers is compounded by the fact that his writings, not to mention the contribution of his close associate Friederich Engels, were extremely diverse in subject-matter as well as intention. The first problem, then, is to discover the logical (and historical) connection between Marx's various writings. As Lichtheim has written of this problem: "The contradictions latent in his outlook were fused into a doctrine which Janus-like confronted the beholder whatever his angle of vision."¹

The deceptive quality of Marx's writings can be seen from the variety of interpretations that have been offered since Marx's time. Those interpretations have reflected the commentator's own preoccupations as much as Marx's "intentions." Among social scientists, Marx is often viewed as the harbinger of a new science of society and history;² among philosophers he is often thought of as an exponent, however unorthodox, of traditional philosophic (and religious) ideas and concerns;³ while among political activists (both pro and con), he is often thought of in terms of the revolutionary meaning of his writings, for his own time and theirs.⁴ It is interesting to note that partisanship does not necessarily separate one view from another. There have been Marxists who interpret Marx as a scientist as well as those who see him as a philosopher. Both adherents and critics claim him as a revolutionary, as a scientist, and as a prophet, among other types of interpretation.

One of the chief ways in which it is possible to interpret Marx so widely is by the process of what might be termed literary selection. By carefully culling from Marx's (and Engels') extensive

corpus of writings only those entries which "fit" a particular characterization, it can be shown that Marx was more of "this" type of writer than another. The selection process has usually proceeded along the lines of Marx's own biography, that is, as his interests and concerns changed over time. As a young man, he was presumably interested in different types of questions than as a "mature" writer. One recent interpreter, Louis Althusser, goes so far as to suggest that there was a break (or what Althusser actually calls an "epistemological break") between Marx's youthful writings and mature concerns, that it occurred in 1845, and that, finally, before this time Marx had not exhibited his characteristic "scientific discipline."⁵ On this account, the young Marx is to be dismissed as being pre-Marxian, while his writings of the early 1840's are of significance only for biographical purposes, but not insofar as they shed light on his later works.

The process of literary selection can of course be reversed, arguing that it is only in Marx's earlier writings that he reveals his true intentions, and that what followed was significant in the way that it amplified these early ideas. Typically, for those who argue the primacy of the "early Marx" over the "mature Marx," what is significant is the Hegelian-Feuerbachian origins of Marx's ideas, the theme of human nature as epitomized by alienation, and the critique of philosophical idealism and religion as forms of ideology.⁶

The use of literary selectivity highlights what one editor of Marx's writings defines as the rule in Marx interpretation: "Each period has had its own anthology of Marx and Engels....We

have chosen to emphasize the writings of Marx and Engels on politics and philosophy. For Marx the economist is less important today than Marx the political sociologist and philosopher of history."⁷

The rule here is contemporaneity; that is, what is of significance is that which endures into the present.

The problem or defect in this attitude is that it fails to resolve the central question of interpretation in political theory, which is, how does one arrive at a valid judgment of an author's work. If that judgment is based primarily on the contemporary relevance of an author's work, the answer to the question of validity changes with the historical perspective of each generation of interpretation. Presumably, Marx the economist would be more relevant to the mood of the United States in the late 1970's than would Marx the prophet of alienation and communism, which the above writer highlights as most significant in the late 1950's. The same problem afflicts those who employ, either consciously or without acknowledgement, the device of literary selectivity. It rests on the predilections of the interpreter more than the meaning of the author.

A second problem with the method of literary selectivity is that it assumes that one can fully understand a written document or collection of documents by analyzing its internal logical and linguistic coherence.⁸ As valuable and even indispensable as this method of interpretation is, it does not raise the collateral question of whether a shift in language usage or subject-matter is not part of the writer's own understanding of his time and place, that is, of his historical situation.

In the case of Marx's writings, an understanding of the author's historical situation is particularly significant. As Lichtheim points out in the "Introduction" to his initial investigation of Marx, Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study (1961):

Marx himself was not averse to treating theoretical-constructions functionally, in terms of what they accomplished in the particular age for which they were relevant. Why not follow his example?...in dealing with Marx...his theories emerged in response to developments which he was the first to identify. We cannot discover what he said without considering the problems he set out to solve, and we cannot analyse the problems without judging the validity of his attempted solutions.⁹

To recall what was said earlier by the French philosopher Alexandre Kojève, a dialectical or historical treatment of thought presupposes that an author confronts the controversies and practical (i.e. political) problems of his own time and place with an intention of resolving them. The task of interpretation is to see how adequately the author understands his own time, and, with the aid of historical hindsight, to judge the validity of the author's "attempted solutions," to quote Lichtheim. Lichtheim further argues that validity is a subject that can be established only after the author's time has passed, because the author's work is part of his time and subject to the same uncertainties as those being addressed by the author. Historical awareness of an author's "attempted solutions" arrives only after the dust has settled on the age and problems which the author set out to resolve. In this capacity--as observer beyond the conflict and controversy of the author's own age--the interpreter is able to render a valid judgment concerning an author's work.

Lichtheim's historical approach to the problem of Marx

interpretation provides much needed clarification concerning both the coherence (or lack of it) of Marx's writings, as well as the controversy over what became of his "attmpted solutions," or practical intentions embodied in the various political movements he helped spawn. As has been seen above, there is little agreement on exactly how Marx's diverse writings or intentions are to be interpreted. Where Lichtheim departs from others who are at pains to see a single side to Marx, usually by selecting out of the corpus of Marx's writings only those aspects which "fit" a particular preconception, is in seeing his writings in their totality and as evolving over time. The inconsistencies or discrepancies in an author's work are part of his outlook on his own age, which may exhibit varying degrees of stability, continuity or turbulence.

The place to begin, therefore, in interpreting Marx is with his outlook on the problems of his own time. According to Lichtheim, Marx's life and writings are concerned with three inter-related sets of problems: his relation to Hegelian philosophy and Hegel's legacy in German society and politics; his attitude toward the French Revolution and its impact on nineteenth-century French politics; and, lastly, his preoccupation with the industrial revolution, which came to greatest fruition in England in the later half of the nineteenth century. These three subjects roughly describe the main currents in Marx's writings and coincide with his own life experience, which began in Germany at the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars, shifted to Brussels and Paris at the height of the revolutionary upheavals of 1847-48 and concluded in the relative tranquility of Victorian England.

If the main outline of these three themes is developed, according to Lichtheim's examination, the problem of interpreting Marx's various phases and "intentions" may be resolved. The first theme has to do with Marx's writings of the early 1840's, and its central thread concerns how Marx was able to confront the Hegelian inheritance of his own day. Marx's early literary efforts in this direction are exemplified by his Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (unpublished at the time, except for a short "Introduction"); his critique of the liberal-wing of the Hegel circle of his day (with which he had earlier been associated), The Holy Family; together with a variety of largely unpublished tracts and journalistic articles dealing with Hegelian philosophy and issues of contemporary concern, which includes his now celebrated Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and his article "On the Jewish Question."

What ties these various writings together, according to Lichtheim, is that they indicate Marx's distinctive departure from the dominant philosophical conception of his day, namely Hegelian philosophy. What is especially noteworthy, however, is the degree to which Hegel's influence is retained in Marx's subsequent writings. On this theme, of Hegel's enduring influence on Marx, Lichtheim was perhaps unique, refusing either to see Marx as completely free of Hegel (as, for example, Louis Althusser postulates), nor as a simple successor to Hegel. Marx's real relation to Hegel is perhaps best seen as occupying a middle ground between these two alternative views.

In his writings of the early 1840's Marx is involved in

a criticism of the conservative character of Hegel's philosophy, especially Hegel's contention to have once and for all resolved the historical contradiction between reason and being. It is Hegel's "logic of history" which enables him to chart the progress or evolution of reason over time, that is, through successive philosophical systems and their embodiment in different civilizations. It is, nevertheless, not until the Germanic or modern epoch that reason has achieved its fullest elaboration. This postulate, along with its corollary that the physical world is a reflex of the progress of mind objectified, is the basis of Marx's criticism.

In his early criticism of Hegel, Marx is, of course, heavily indebted to the work of Ludwig Feuerbach. There remains, however, a marked distinction between Marx's adaptation of Feuerbach and Feuerbach himself. The point would not be significant except that it forms the basis of a controversy which in various forms is to have considerable influence in later versions and interpretations of Marxism, most notably those of Engels toward the end of his life, in his version of "dialectical materialism."¹¹ Feuerbach's criticism was directed at Hegel's metaphysical idealism which claimed that the world is the embodiment of spirit, which, in turn, derives from God. Feuerbach inverts this relation between the world and man's relation to God, arguing instead that it is out of man's subjection to nature that he has invented religion and God. Once man reconciles himself to the material world, of which he is a part, religion loses its validity and is exposed as the work of imagination, as a form of "alienation."

Such a remarkable criticism had enormous attraction to

both Marx and Engels, although each interpreted Feuerbach's material-
istic critique of Hegel differently.¹² What is important for present
purposes is that Marx accepted Feuerbach's critique of Hegelian
Idealism as valid (that is, the criticism of the notion that
Spirit or God is responsible for man and his world), although
he did not take any further interest in the subject of religion
and did not accept Feuerbach's conception of man and nature.

Where Marx departed from Feuerbach's criticism of religion
was in the positive content of Feuerbach's critique, which tended
to reconcile man into nature, and had thus distinct Rousseauian-
romantic overtones. Marx accepted the contention that man's real
relation was not to God or Spirit but to nature; however, this
nature depicted an evolution or history as it was changed by
human action, namely labor. In turn, as a result of this constant
interaction between man and the material world (that interaction
being defined as labor), man himself was changed over time. This
historical relation between man and nature is what is meant by
Lichtheim when he speaks of Marx's "anthropological conception of
man," or how he has evolved as a result of different forms of labor
and the social relations in which labor takes place.

It is perhaps paradoxical, but true, that at this point
Hegel's work takes on added significance to Marx, in spite of
Feuerbach. Hegel too had stressed the role of "labor" and how it
contributes to human development, although Marx tended to give it
much greater emphasis. It needs to be noted also that while Hegel
tended to assume in his theory of the modern state that the state
(as the highest embodiment of reason) takes priority over civil

society, Marx's inversion of this relation--giving priority to civil society over the state--retains many of the essential elements of Hegel's theory. Marx, however, sees the state as a form of "alienation," meaning an alien power which man has created over him out of his weakness vis-à-vis nature and its private appropriation by different classes in society. What is different and most interesting here is that Marx's work is concerned almost entirely with the investigation of the mechanics of civil society, to the exclusion of a unified theory of the state, which was Hegel's principal interest.

The essential linkage, however, between Hegel and Marx, according to Lichtheim, remains philosophical. Hegel's method, the dialectic, is retained in spite of Marx's acceptance of Feuerbach's materialistic criticism. In particular, Marx accepts the Hegelian notion that the world is intelligible as an objective totality, that is, it can be apprehended by human investigation and can be known as a whole. He also accepts the idea that there is such a thing as a logic to historical development and knowledge, and that it has as its conclusion the realization of reason and human autonomy. In spite of all of Marx's subsequent investigations into the "real" basis of human existence, in particular his heavily empirical studies in economics, he retained these Hegelian precepts. ¹³

What remains in understanding the first problem that defines Marx's outlook on his own time, namely his relation to Hegel, is to see how he visualized his own historical situation and how it influenced his ideas. Marx's literary and journalistic efforts of the early 1840's were written against a backdrop of enormous

change and even greater anticipation in Europe. Events in France in particular, had ushered in the hope of change to come, not only in France (which remained turbulent following the installation of the July monarchy in 1830) but in Germany as well.

What Lichtheim defines as the "German Question" of this period (with fateful future consequences) revolved around the dual¹⁴ issues of national unification and democratic reform. These misfortunes were reflected in a series of missed opportunities, beginning with the period of governmental reform in 1807 after Prussia's defeat at the hands of Napoleon, and culminating in the abortive revolution of 1848. The "uniqueness of Prussia" rested on a set of circumstances which made it the most likely center of a movement for German unification. Apart from its central geographic location among the various German states, Prussia also possessed a strong military organization, coupled with a singularly modern and efficient state bureaucracy. Through the various political storms of the nineteenth century, these twin pillars of Prussian political life, its military and bureaucracy, grew stronger¹⁵ rather than weaker.

After 1807, the administrative reforms carried out by the Prussian bureaucracy served to promote the economic interests of the Junker class of landholders, while decimating the peasant population by forcing it off the land, and thereby neutralizing its political role as an opposition force. Prussia exhibited a peculiar type of capitalist development, with state intervention playing a larger role than had been the case elsewhere on the Continent, and certainly in Britain. The result was the creation

of a commercial middle class which relied heavily on the state for its economic survival, and to a considerable degree for its political survival as well. In 1848, when one might have expected the German, and more importantly, the Prussian middle class to have exhibited its political independence, as its French counterparts had done on numerous prior occasions, the result was a capitulation to autocratic rule which left Germany's hopes for a liberal solution to the problem of national integration all but dissolved. As Lichtheim states the situation: "National unification, whether grossdeutsch or kleindeutsch (i.e. excluding Austria), could only succeed on an industrial basis, and once the liberal bourgeoisie had made up its mind to back the Prussian solution, the democratic¹⁶ cause was doomed."

Marx's view of the German situation, especially from 1843 onward when he moved to Paris, was influenced by what he considered Germany's lack of political and economic development, at least in comparison with France and England. Germany had not broken with its feudal past, as witnessed by its arrested national growth, and was still predominantly feudal in its agriculture. In his journalistic writings prior to his forced departure from Germany (especially in his Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right and his article "On the Jewish Question") Marx saw himself occupying a position on the left-wing of Germany's nascent democratic movement. His critique of Hegel's political philosophy was presented on the basis of democratic reform of an absolutist state. What he had tried to argue was that Hegel had, typically, inverted the proper relation between subject and object, between state

and citizenry, to reflect his conservative intentions. Instead of the German state obtaining its legitimacy from the consent of the people, Hegel's state possesses an inherent rationality which its citizens are bound to obey in order to be free. At this point, Marx is careful to support the concept of universal, democratic suffrage, or "political emancipation," while holding in abeyance the ultimate goal of "human emancipation." If this all sounds remarkably Hegelian, it nevertheless reflects the fact that Marx was still operating in a German intellectual and political context and had yet to become fully acquainted with French conditions.

Marx's forced departure from Germany in 1843 brought him initially to Paris, where both his outlook on politics and his theoretical work underwent a significant change. While he continued to criticize the legacy of Hegelian philosophy, employing Feuerbachian terminology and argument, he also began to direct his attention to French political developments, with special attention to the significance of the Great Revolution and its impact on nineteenth-century Europe. It is at this point that Lichtheim's second component in the Marxian synthesis takes on added meaning, namely Marx's understanding of the French Revolution of 1789 and its impact on nineteenth-century socialism. Before Marx came to Paris, his politics had only been vaguely radical, that is, in some sense an off-shoot of the democratic forces within Germany (although, as Lichtheim reminds us, such forces were in the extreme minority in Germany at the time, and confined for the most part to young intellectuals and romantic nationalists). As a result of his exposure to the very different political climate of Paris, which

brought him in contact with early socialist writers and radical sects, Marx began to expand his ideas of politics and economics. It is also while in Paris that he began his life-long collaboration with Engels, which was of significance not only during Marx's lifetime but of even greater interest after Marx died in 1883.

The immersion into French politics and socialist thought of the day led Marx back to the event that spelled the beginning of the modern epoch, that is, the French Revolution. His political writings of this period, roughly between the mid-1840's and early 1850's, reflect this concern. It is during this time that his understanding of democracy and socialism take on new meaning. The document which is of greatest importance in this regard, according to Lichtheim, is not surprisingly the Communist Manifesto, for it discloses not only the new political insight gained while in Paris (and later Brussels) but also the immaturity of Marx and Engels' early thinking on socialism and revolution.

Lichtheim is at pains to point out how thoroughly French the document was in political outlook, although it was intended to have its primary effect in Germany. Even by French standards, the document was wildly extravagant, with its optimistic call for "proletarian rule" at a time when a real industrial proletariat hardly existed at all in Paris, and was of even lesser significance in Vienna and Berlin. The document must be read against Marx and Engels' understanding of the French Revolution in order for it to take on meaning.

In particular, the Great Revolution indicated the victory of the middle class in its conquest of political power. However,

the Revolution, before it had run its course with the ascendancy of Napoleon, had seen different phases, all of which disclosed portents of the conflicts which were to surface again in nineteenth-century French politics. According to Lichtheim's interpretation of the Manifesto, the phase which signaled the beginning of modern socialism's struggle to achieve power was that of the Jacobins in 1793-94, and the subsequent abortive rebellion of the Babouvists in 1796. These two events provided the historical guidelines for Marx's thinking on what was about to happen in 1848. For someone trained to discern a logic of historical development, such an analysis seemed entirely plausible.¹⁷

Before 1848 it was possible to believe that the democratic forces in Europe were in some sense united in their opposition to autocratic rule. What the Jacobins represented in the French Revolution was a popular rising of the vast majority in France against the monarchy, especially the combined efforts of peasants, the urban middle class, and urban artisans and laborers. To the young Marx, armed with Hegel's logic of history, this popular movement contained within it the seeds of a new social order, which even its initial leaders could not foresee. The middle class, which had articulated the ideals of the Revolution, was not able to resolve them in actuality, which in turn called for a more radical solution. The struggle in 1848 would contain two decisive moments, beginning with a moderate phase in which the middle class could be expected to gain the ascendancy, to be followed by a second phase in which the "working class" would capture political power in order to complete the social transformation.

If this all sounded fanciful enough, it was predicated on an assumption, later considerably modified, concerning the nature and duration of the bourgeois epoch. Marx had yet to conduct an in-depth research into political economy (apart from a polemical rejoinder to Proudhon), and it appeared to him and Engels in 1847 that the bourgeois epoch had already reached its apogee and was in a period of decline. The evidences of it were seemingly apparent in the mass poverty of the "hungry 40's" in France and elsewhere in Europe. With the aid of historical hindsight, it can now be seen that what Marx mistook for the evident decline of bourgeois society was in fact the very real human suffering and social dislocation created by the new capitalist order. As Lichtheim states it:

...to justify the implicit assumption that European capitalism in 1847 was already outmoded and ripe for socialisation...was to mistake the birth-pangs of the new order for its death-throes--a misunderstanding only possible in an age in which the memory of the French Revolution had accustomed people to expect the imminent collapse of the existing social order.¹⁸

In 1847, however, when the Manifesto was actually drafted, the historical situation looked rather different than it would to Marx ten years later. The explosive social forces unleashed by early capitalist development (or what Marx was later to call "the primitive accumulation of capital") seemed ready to seize power if given the opportunity'. The manner in which this seizure of power was to take place raises a second assumption that is crucial to understanding Marx's early thinking on revolution. While the political tone of the Manifesto is imbued with the expectation that the current upheaval will reflect the events

of 1789, what distinguishes the present situation from the past is the advent of historical consciousness on the part of the various classes and parties contending for power. In 1789, this development could occur without conscious direction or, as it were, behind the backs of the participants; in 1847-48, however, the party which is destined to be victorious will have a "theoretical" advantage, that is, "of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions and ultimate general results of the proletarian movement" (to quote the Manifesto).

This second assumption, which bears on the significance of the Manifesto at the time it was drawn up and with even greater importance afterwards, concerns the nature of communist rule in its direction of the working class. The formulation of this idea represents a meeting point between Marx's Hegelian inheritance and his absorption with French revolutionary politics of the late 1840's. In particular, what he postulates in the Manifesto is an alliance between a knowledgeable strata of revolutionary intellectuals and a social class which is on the verge of "making history."

The theoretical groundwork for this idea had already been laid in 1843-44 when Marx was involved in a critique of Hegel's contemplative attitude toward philosophy and politics. It is at this juncture that Marx (in his so-called "Theses on Feuerbach") formulates the theory-practice problem, which--in spite of all the changes in his position over the years--was to remain at the very core of his theory.

The key element in this early formulation of theory's

relation to politics was Marx's departure from the Hegelian notion that philosophy has only to reflect upon or contemplate the world as it is in order to know what ought to be, or, in Hegel's phrase (from his Preface to Philosophy of Right): "what is rational is real and what is real is rational." Hegel had been convinced that by his time the task of philosophy was complete, that is, to contemplate a world made rational. Marx drew the opposite conclusion, meaning that reality was still irrational and, therefore, the task of philosophy was to "go out into the world" in order to make it rational, that is, by changing it. In this project, however, philosophy could not proceed in an "idealistic" mode--by holding up an ideal against which society would be measured and to which, through exhortation or even rational dialogue, it might be expected to have to conform (as in Platonism). In Marx's conception, philosophy would require an ally or historical agency capable of realizing its aims of rationality and human emancipation. This ally is, of course, the working class. The union of theory and practice, developed in Marx's critique of Hegel and Feuerbach, represents, paradoxically, the abolition of philosophy (or contemplative thought) by means of its practical realization.

What the union of theory and practice represented in the Manifesto was an alliance between those in possession of a theoretical consciousness of the logic of history on the one hand, and its progressive historical agent, the proletariat, on the other. In this regard the Manifesto speaks of the need to create or form such a class, meaning that until workers were themselves conscious of their historical role they were incapable of acting

as a class. It is in this sense that Marx can claim that the communists have no interests separate from that of the working class, because communist consciousness has as its object the fulfillment of the proletariat's historical mission, namely universal human emancipation, or communism.

By 1850, and following the failure to achieve even the first phase of the revolution proclaimed in the Manifesto, Marx had become even less assured that the proletariat was in a viable position to carry forward the revolution. The situation after 1848 was if anything more desperate than what had preceded it. The bourgeois parties had capitulated to the feudal autocratic interests in Germany, and in France the position of the urban laborers and artisans was even more isolated than it had been before. Out of this adversity Marx fashioned a "vanguard" conception of communist rule which went far beyond anything that had been even intimated in the Manifesto.

The two phrases which perhaps best symbolize Marx's early flirtation with conspiratorial and elitist theories of revolution are "dictatorship of the proletariat" and "permanent revolution,"²¹ both of which first appear in early 1850. At this historical moment Marx was at a turning point in his attitude toward revolution: if there was to be further waves of revolutionary struggle, and Marx seems to have held out this expectation, it was clear to him that the parties of the left would have to establish an independent power base rather than bolster the interests of the middle class, as the left had done before. Furthermore, to fight for a democratic republic alongside the middle class would only constitute

a tactical alliance, which would be a prelude to a proletarian seizure of power. As soon as the bourgeois republic had been achieved, the left would intensify its campaign against the bourgeoisie, thus promoting a second revolution, which would remain in permanence until the last vestige of bourgeois social and economic power had been overcome and the new social order secured.

What distinguished Marx's far-reaching revolutionary program of early 1850 from even the Manifesto was the suggestion that the revolution clearly would have to be made over the heads of all the parties and factions involved in the projected struggle. The urban workers were in disarray, especially in Paris where they had been all but destroyed during the "June days" insurrection of 1848, while the parties of the left in Germany were deeply divided. In the document which goes the furthest in spelling out this program, Marx and Engels' Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League (March 1850), the authors even point out that the forces of the left still think of themselves as fighting for democracy, that is, as part of the middle-class movement for political equality. Therefore, the task of the Communists must be to dislodge the workers, forcefully if necessary, from such an alliance, in order that they might proclaim their own interests and objectives. Toward that end, it was thought essential that the Communists act in secret, actively infiltrating local organizations, and where useful, even engaging in terroristic acts.

The Address represents the highwater point of Marx and Engels' early enthusiasm for revolution. As Lichtheim points out, the document was to become the hallmark of Leninist strategy

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and tactics after 1917. At the time it was drafted, however, the document fitted the mental attitude (if not the actual circumstances) of the revolutionary circle that Marx and Engels were allied with, namely the Communist League. This radical sect kept alive the unfulfilled dreams and aspirations of the Great Revolution, and through its spiritual leader, Auguste Blanqui, set out to realize them, no matter how remotely they resembled reality. As Lichtheim comments:

...the League was not merely a secret society--that was something it had in common with half the revolutionary movements of its time....It was the repository of the communist dream in its original messianic form. Those who joined it had by that very fact broken with the existing world and committed themselves to aims not realisable as long as society was organized into classes, held together by the state, and synonymous with the nation. The new vision not merely invalidated these traditional concepts: it declared them to be superfluous and on the point of being superseded by the proletarian revolution, which would usher in a society without classes, without exploitation, and--most remarkably of all--without national affiliations.²⁴

If one steps back for a moment to assess the lasting significance of the second array of problems Marx set out to solve in his writings of the late 1840's and early 1850's, namely the inheritance of the French Revolution in nineteenth-century European politics, three assumptions seem to have been made which were not borne out by the events of 1848 and their aftermath. The first had to do with the nature and duration of the bourgeois epoch. The turbulence and social unrest of the 1840's were not the result of capitalism's decline, but, to the contrary, were the after-shock to the initial inroads of the capitalist economic order upon feudal agriculture and mercantile trade. In similar fashion, the second assumption made by Marx and Engels was that

the social unrest growing out of this situation could be exploited for socialist and/or communist purposes, if only a conscious vanguard was able to organize and direct the most radical elements in the struggle, namely the nascent working class. This second conception neglected the fact, which was soon to be acknowledged by Marx, that the working class was only in the initial stages of its formation--given the still primitive state of industrial development--and that a truly revolutionary working class would require its own organization (which was to be provided by the labor movement) before it could act on its own behalf.

The third misguided assumption, according to Lichtheim's characterization of this period, concerns the nature of the communist vision of the future. Given the wretched conditions of early capitalist development, the anticipation of a society without material want, class antagonism, or national rivalry had the character of a biblical prophecy more than that of a genuine, let alone concrete, political program. Theory had regressed into theology at certain points in the Manifesto. The rather utopian goals of communism were the last remnants of Marx's early fascination with Feuerbach and Hegel, at least as far as their abstract interest in human alienation and emancipation were concerned. From here on, such political goals were spoken of in more limited measured terms and usually in an historical context, that is, with concern for what was politically feasible, given the level of material development. (One might compare the goals of communism in the Manifesto with the far more sober ones expressed in Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program, written twenty-eight years later).

Having grasped the weaknesses of Marx's theoretical and political position in 1850, the point remains, following Lichtheim's historical and critical method, to trace the formation of Marx's thought during the third and final phase of its evolution, namely in his encounter with British classical economics and the industrial revolution. It should be kept in mind, however, that his earlier concerns with Hegel and the French Revolution were never entirely abandoned. For what led Marx to his later "mature" study of political economy was in part due to Hegel's concern with civil society (although in a form quite different from that of the British economists), and in spite of all else, Marx was to retain in his economic studies the essential theory of history derived from Hegel. As for the significance of the French Revolution and the apocalyptic vision of social change which Marx drew from it, the same essential thrust was to surface once again in Marx's later writings, this time following the debacle of the Paris Commune in 1871. In viewing Marx's writings in their totality, Lichtheim is careful to point out that the phases in Marx's life and thought were each marked by a new emphasis or departure but not by a simple rupture or radical "break," as other interpreters have suggested.

As an illustration of such a transition, it would be useful at this point to examine Marx's departure from the revolutionary doctrine of 1848-50 to his later concern with political economy, as well as with other types of political objectives. The abortive revolutions of 1848, against which the Manifesto was written, signaled a new era in European politics. This was the last time that the democratic forces would unite. Lichtheim goes so far as to suggest that the revolution of 1848-49 represented "the dis-

integration of European democracy"--by which he meant the end of the Jacobin era which had united the middle class, the peasantry, and urban workers since the days of the French Revolution. After 1848 the last vestiges of feudal agriculture had been destroyed, with the effect of turning large numbers of peasants off the land, while enabling others to become small land-holders. In either case, the peasants turned conservative and most certainly against the interests of the emerging urban working class. In like fashion, after 1848 the middle class became increasingly apprehensive of "republicanism" in any form and sought refuge in the so-called constitutional regimes which took power in the aftermath of the revolutionary turmoil. This left the workers isolated and on their own. Democracy was not to be placed on the agenda in Europe until after the national question had been decided in Germany, and the issue of class conflict had subsided in France, after 1871. Ironically, perhaps, the struggle for democratic reform was to be led not by the liberals, who had for the most part abandoned the democratic cause after 1848, but by the working class.

At the time that these changes were taking shape, that is, in the aftermath of the 1848-49 revolution, Marx was still affiliated with the Communist League, with its apocalyptic vision of the future and its Blanquist strategy for seizing power in the name of "proletarian dictatorship." Lichtheim comments at one point that it was characteristic of Marx's "somber realism that the moment he grasped [the new] situation he resolutely severed the remaining links which bound his group to the dying democratic cause."²⁵ The process of disengagement from the League, however, with its conspiratorial strategy and tactics was not to become

apparent until September of 1850, ironically, just six months after Marx and Engels had completed their draft of the Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League. While the Address is remembered as Marx's most extreme statement of Jacobin-Blanquist principles, six months later he was to write the following to his German associates:

While we say to the workers: you have fifteen or twenty or fifty years of war and civil war to go through, not just to alter the existing circumstances, but to change yourselves and make yourselves fit for political power--you on the contrary say: we must obtain power at once.... While we draw attention to the undeveloped state of the German proletariat, you outrageously flatter the national sentiments and social prejudices of the German artisan....Just as the democrats made a sacred entity of the word 'people' so do you with the word 'proletariat'.... 26

This statement marks the first glimmer of doubt that the radical transformation was any longer possible along the lines suggested in the Manifesto. Marx had only recently argued that the peasantry had defected from the ranks of the democratic forces, in his journal articles later entitled Class Struggles in France, and it is equally clear from his writings of 1850 that he had only a cynical regard for the middle class as a potential ally in any possible future revolutionary situation. Therefore, the working class would have to rely on its own auspices for whatever gains that could be made. The Jacobin concept of a popular uprising which would sweep the proletariat (in whatever form) to power was obsolete by late 1850, so far as Marx was concerned.

This did not mean, however, that revolution was no longer on the agenda. It only meant that by 1850 Marx had disposed of the feasibility of a minority seizure of power in the name of the

working class. The type of revolution which Marx visualized after 1850 was one which would depend upon the political maturity of the working class, along with the economic maturity of the industrial system which had given rise to such a class. Only when the economic system had developed to the point where it could go no further would class conflict (let alone class struggle) be appropriate as a prelude to the proletariat's capture of political power. It was this radically revised theory of revolution (which almost seemed to resemble an evolutionary process) that Marx adapted as part of his "mature" thinking on history and social change in his celebrated "Preface" to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy
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published in 1859.

Lichtheim goes so far as to suggest that these two contradictory visions of revolution are embedded in the outlook of the two authors of the Manifesto in 1847-48. Such a discrepancy would not be worth pursuing except that it discloses the roots of a controversy which, on a practical level, was to divide subsequent generations of Marxists. The hallmark of Marx's early Jacobin-Blanquist vision of revolution, enshrined in both the Manifesto and the Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League is its faith in the capacity of human beings to change their circumstances (and themselves in the process) through a deliberate act of will. In this regard, the revolution is less dependent on "objective" conditions than it is upon conscious, willful effort. Lichtheim argues that this "voluntaristic" view of social change is Marx's early contribution to the theory of revolution, based on his early notion of theory and practice and his association

and friendship with Blanqui.

Other sections of the Manifesto, in particular, seem to have been the exclusive work of Engels. These sections disclose a very different attitude on the subject of history and social change. The emphasis which Engels gives the document is of an historical process which operates in a seemingly autonomous or naturalistic fashion, especially in terms of the development of technology. In the sections of the Manifesto dealing with the vast transformation wrought by the bourgeoisie in its mastery over nature, there is ample evidence of Engels' optimistic vision of "progress" and even an air of "inevitability" about the coming communist transformation. It is as if the process is larger than human capacity to deter or alter its course.

The "deterministic" attitude which Engels contributes to his collaboration with Marx in the Manifesto, and which was to become the dominant motif of his work after Marx died in 1883, had its origins in Engels' early exposure to the industrial revolution in England. Whereas the French Revolution and Hegelian philosophy had been prime motives for Marx's early thinking on revolution, Engels' motivation arose from more mundane considerations. He had witnessed first-hand the economic transformation brought about by early industrialism, a phenomenon which on the Continent (and certainly in France) was still in its infancy. Engels' attitude could only be described as ambivalent on the subject of British economic development. His own study of living conditions among the working population, which was conducted before he began his association with Marx, was clear in its denunciation

of the underside of the new economic order. However, this attitude was arrayed against an equally strong conception of the material progress brought about by industrialism, with all its attendant human suffering. In the end, it is Engels' fascination with the material and technological progress of Victorian England that is the most compelling feature of the new epoch.

At the time that the Manifesto was drafted the discrepancy between Marx's concentration upon human agency (by way of class conflict and class-consciousness) and Engels' fascination with materialism and technological progress only appeared in embryo. It was not until after Marx had abandoned his hopes of an early and perhaps pre-emptive communist seizure of power that he took up his serious economic investigation. Significantly, by this time (1850) he was already living in England, where Engels had begun his intellectual work. The comparison between Engels' early outlook on bourgeois society and Marx's "mature" writings of the 1850's and 1860's is rather deceptive, however. What amounts to a significant shift in Marx's life and theoretical pursuits is the clear importance which he now attaches to economics, and specifically the economic system taking shape in England. If France is the "model" or chrysalis of the new order in Europe before 1850, England takes its place in Marx's mind from that time forward.

At this point in the presentation of the third and final phase of Marx's theoretical development, a controversy which has been alluded to several times before must be clarified. The position has already been taken that the various elements involved

in the Marxian synthesis represent, in Lichtheim's phrase, a "totality" of over-lapping and inter-related parts. These aspects can be viewed as constituting "moments" in the evolution of a doctrine which only took on concrete meaning over time. The "errors" in the earlier work of the authors were adjusted in response to their experience--that is, to the changing circumstances and times they were part of--in order to maintain the validity of their doctrine. It is in this sense that Marx's writings of the 1850's and 60's represent a "mature" point of view. These later writings do not invalidate his earlier work because they are built upon these same foundations and incorporate what could be learned from earlier mistakes. Furthermore, the conditions which gave rise to the earlier visions of imminent revolution, for example, might reappear later and bring on a similar theoretical response. Therefore, the claim that Marx's work is to be defined by a single element or moment in its evolution is a distortion, at least when seen against the framework of totality that Lichtheim incorporates as an interpretive device.

In approaching Marx's later writings in terms of the totality of his work, what is most important is that he is building upon certain elements in his (and Engels') thinking which were already present at earlier stages of his theoretical development. His economic writings, and Capital in particular, represent an enlargement and refinement of notions which can be traced to his earliest work. If this is the case, as Lichtheim argues, it will not do to claim Marx as an "economist" or an empirical scientist, in the fashion of nineteenth-century positivism. The argument

is complicated by the fact that in spite of their close relationship and joint-collaboration, Marx and Engels departed significantly on matters of fundamental importance, especially concerning scientific method.

Since Engels was to become the editor of much of Marx's later work (including the last two volumes of Capital) as well as Marx's most authoritative spokesman after his death, the matter of Engels' interpretation of Marxism is crucial to an understanding of how the doctrine changed over time. As has been seen, Lichtheim traces the divergence of interest and intention between the two men back to their earliest collaborative efforts (such as the Manifesto). Given Engels' early interest in the material basis of modern society and his clear admiration for modern science, it is tempting to conclude that what Marx wrote in his economic studies reflected a similar concern. To be sure, there is evidence to conclude that by the 1850's and 60's Marx had given up his earlier humanistic conception of historical development in favor of a descriptive account of the workings of capitalist economic production. One can read Capital with this point of view and come away with the impression that, like Engels' own materialism, Marx is describing a process which is larger than the human beings who comprise it and with a momentum of its own. This is the "deterministic" side of Marxian doctrine which has already been encountered in Engels' outlook as early as the Manifesto.

This deterministic view of Marx's economic writings neglects, however, several important differences between Marx's point of view and that of his associate and later successor. The economic system

which Marx is addressing in Capital is the outcome of an historical development. Its properties and underlying tendencies (or "laws") are approached as historical phenomena, that is, as evolving out of more primitive forms of production under historically specific conditions. What is deceptive about the way that Marx analyzes the evolution of the capitalist mode of production in Western Europe is that he very often adopts the scientific language of his day, which is that of early positivism. It is as if he is studying social phenomena in terms of a natural development, thus adopting the dominant model of science drawn from physics and biology. Engels was later to complete this false impression by claiming that Marx's contribution to the understanding of history represented the same type of scientific breakthrough as that of Darwin's investigation into nature. From this point, it was only one step further to proclaiming Marxism to be a universal theory of man and nature, as Engels was to declare in his later writings on "dialectics."

For the moment, however, what is important is how Marx arrived at his "mature" standpoint of the 1850's and 60's, despite false impressions which he may have helped to create and which were later compounded by his associate. Lichtheim maintains that Marx's economic theory stands within the tradition of classical political economy, and that he is perhaps the last and greatest of its practitioners.³⁰ Without going into all of the technical detail of Marx's economic analysis, it is necessary to understand what Lichtheim means by this characterization. Marx's economic investigation begins with the same type of assumptions as that

of the English economists of Marx's own day. While the work of such philosophers and early economists as John Locke and Adam Smith are important in establishing the tradition of political economy (including some of its most important principles, such as the "labor theory of value"), the English economist whose work is clearly of greatest importance for Marx is David Ricardo. Marx proceeds in his own analysis to take over many of the central ideas of these writers, "transforming" their various contributions in the process.

The point of departure of the classical school is the question of how wealth is generated and distributed in society as a whole. This "macro" or grand approach distinguishes the early economists from most of their twentieth-century successors, whose vision is more strictly limited to temporal concerns, such as the determination of prices.³¹ What made the British economists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries attractive to Marx was the fact that they had uncovered (in a "disguised" form) the "real" basis of modern society, that is, by investigating the manner in which its material development had taken place. This was a subject which the Germans and French had only begun to treat, as witness, for example, by Hegel's still primitive understanding of political economy in Philosophy of Right. This was to be expected insofar as the British were most familiar with the process which had brought about the modern transformation, namely the industrial revolution.

The problem with the various investigations conducted by the classical economists was that they presented a view of

industrial development which, however accurate in description, disguised how the process had begun and how it might further develop. The outlook of the classical economists was tied to the historical epoch which had just dawned in Europe, namely that of the bourgeoisie. As Lichtheim expresses their mental vision:

What lent an 'ideological' quality to their theorizing was...that they believed themselves to be stating general truths about human nature when in fact they were describing one particular phase of societal evolution: the genesis of bourgeois society. This did not invalidate the truth of their observations, nor did it diminish the importance which these new modes of reasoning possessed in enabling people to understand their environment. The point was rather that in struggling with the theoretical and practical problems of individualism, they were imprisoned within the mental categories of a particular social order, an order founded upon the market economy. At the same time, however, in reflecting upon it they were also laying bare its 'internal contradictions.'³²

The British economist who came closest to disclosing the fundamental contradiction which Marx was later to elaborate on in his own economic investigation was David Ricardo. Ricardo had developed the "labor theory of value" far beyond the diffuse references it had received previously in Locke and Smith. What appeared in Ricardo's Principles of Political Economy to be the implicit contradiction in the economic order was the unearned income derived from landownership as opposed to the productive activity of capital. It was from the productivity of capital that value or wealth originates, and since the landowner does not contribute to this growth, his share is unearned and therefore not subject to government protection. The curious circumlocution in Ricardo's analysis is that he attributes the value derived from the labor of workers to others who happen to own the means of production. Ricardo's analysis represented an advance

over his predecessors to the extent that he recognized the existence of a new class of laborers who were devoid of property and also were thereby entirely dependent upon physical labor for their survival. The point is, however, that these laborers were only entitled to the value of the necessities required to maintain them as such. It was to the owner of productive capital that the remainder of the value of labor naturally accrued.

It did not require much greater insight than that which Ricardo had himself provided to recognize that the prime contradiction implicit in the new economic order was between those who owned the means of production and those who sold their labor as a means of survival. Furthermore, if wealth was generated by labor, on what basis could the greatest part of the value of labor be appropriated by others who happened to be owners of property? One possible answer to the question which Ricardo's analysis raised was provided by his successors, many of whom derived an early socialist doctrine on the basis of the workers' claim to the total product of their labor, rather than simply the cost of subsistence, as maintained by the founder.

Marx's response to the Ricardian dilemma of how wealth or value was to be distributed, and to take the analysis one step further, of how to reconcile the conflicting claims of property owners and workers was to redefine the argument along historical lines. Behind the accepted categories of labor, capital, and private property was an historical development which the classical economists had either neglected or had sought to explain with abstract metaphors, such as a presumed "state of nature"

or with allusions to the myth of Robinson Crusoe. The private appropriation of value had its historical origins in the forcible separation of workers from the means of production. This had first occurred on the land, when private property had invaded the feudal rights of the peasantry. It later occurred in the urban centers of Europe when trained craftsmen and artisans were replaced by early mechanized production. Far from being the universal and accepted form of economic intercourse, capitalism had its origins in what Marx referred to as the "primitive accumulation of capital."³³

Having placed the basic categories of economic analysis in an historical context, the problem remained of how to reconcile the opposing interests of capital and labor. Marx did not subscribe to the proposition of the Ricardian socialists (and anarchists) that the hidden transfer of value from labor to capital amounted to a "theft" which could only be remedied by a more equitable system of economic distribution. This unpaid transfer of value amounted to an exploitation of labor which was essential to the growth of the productive forces. Without carrying Marx's analysis to its fullest elaboration, which is not necessary for present purposes, it is sufficient to remark that Marx foresaw an immanent contradiction built into the way in which the capitalist economic system reproduced itself. The rate of exploitation of labor, or surplus value, was bound to decline given the growth in the material productive forces (constant capital) and the diminution in the level of value-creating labor (variable capital). The result of this tendency was likely to be economic crises of

increasing severity, which would not be overcome until the system of private property was replaced by a new system of social ownership of the means of production.

Having said this much of Marx's value theory and the implications he saw for it, what remains of greater significance perhaps is the way in which he was able to combine different aspects of thought into a new and more inclusive conception. Whether the labor theory could be verified or not, and this subject has been argued over since Capital made its initial appearance, Marx's economic work represented a synthesis of sociology and economics which no other writer of the time had been able to produce. As Lichtheim maintains, the British economists had been, for the most part, oblivious to the fact that behind their categories of economic analysis there stood a very real conflict between social classes. Furthermore, they lacked the historical vision, which Marx had acquired from his background in Hegelian philosophy and his studies of French history, to see that the new market economy represented a radical departure in social organization and that it possessed implications for politics which were bound to change the foundations of society. As Lichtheim expresses the significance of Marx's vision:

...his economic doctrine [implicitly] meant welding into a whole sociology and economics, both conceived historically. Technical economic analysis entered into the synthesis as an indispensable element, no more. The basic conception of an immanent economic process whose logic transforms bourgeois society into something else, retains its significance even in the absence of proof that the process is regulated by the operation of the 'law of value' under the particular conditions created by capitalism: conditions which for Marx were characterized by the failure of the participants to perceive the essentially social nature of their actions.³⁴

The mature statement of the new synthesis of history, sociology and economics is normally referred to as Marx's so-called materialist conception of history. This idea makes its first appearance in Marx's published work in his celebrated "Preface" to Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy in 1859. It is also given greater elaboration in Marx's unpublished first draft of Capital, or what is now referred to as The Grundrisse (1857-58). Lichtheim actually relies more heavily upon the earlier and more complete formulation of Marx's materialist conception in order to document Hegel's residual influence on the "mature" Marx, as well as to indicate that historical "progress" for Marx was conceived not in deterministic or strictly empirical terms but as an adjunct to his philosophical anthropology. His mature theory of history postulated "progress" as bound up with man's self-creation, or with the unfolding of his full potentialities.³⁵ What is clear, from The Grundrisse especially, is that during the decade of the 1850's Marx's view of bourgeois society and of historical development took on new dimensions. The revolution which Marx had foreseen in 1848 was now looked upon as intimately bound up with the vagaries of capitalist development, which was now conceived along the lines of the industrial revolution in England.

On the political horizon, what had taken the place of Marx's Jacobin vision of 1848 was the early formation of the labor movement in Europe. This was the vehicle to which Marx was to ally himself in the last years of his life. With the single exception of his polemical account of the barbarism accompanying

the collapse of the Paris Commune in 1871, Marx's vision of the road to socialism was to follow the fortunes of the labor movement.

The document which spells out Marx's attitude to the labor movement, that is, his Inaugural Address to the Working Men's International Association, was written in 1864, and in the years to follow represented what Lichtheim characterizes as the "Charter of Social-Democracy."³⁶ At the time it was written the Inaugural Address was meant to fuse together two very different labor movements into what was to be known as the First International. The British labor movement, represented by the Trades Union Council, was beginning to embrace the idea of full parliamentary democracy as the necessary goal of the labor movement. At the same time, Marx made it clear in his Inaugural Address that it was not enough for workers to have the right to vote without having a political voice of their own. The democratic cause was to be approached as the road to labor's conquest of political power. This was to be the program of Social-Democratic parties roughly a generation later.

The French labor movement of the early 1860's faced rather different odds. Trade unionism was all but illegal under the Second Empire of Bonaparte III, and the primary goal of the nascent labor movement was to win the right to organize. This occurred to a limited extent in 1864 when labor reforms went into effect. The real obstacle in France to acceptance of the First International was over whether or not labor should participate in politics at all, or what was called the issue of "abstentionism."

The French spokesman with the greatest following among labor leaders, Proudhon, had traditionally counselled against political participation, which he thought of as a "ruse" to deflect attention away from labor's strictly economic concerns. Nevertheless, the language which Marx inserted into the Inaugural Address proved acceptable to French labor leaders. Lichtheim points out that the document represented a supreme tactical victory on Marx's part in bringing two rather dissonant labor movements together under a
37
common banner.

The point should not be lost that with his draft of the Inaugural Address in 1864 Marx had come full circle on the issue of democracy and socialism ("communism" was no longer spoken of as the explicit goal of the working class). Where Marx had formerly only regarded democracy as a form of class rule, he now envisioned the fight for universal suffrage as a key element in the worker's hope for social and economic progress. Furthermore, the vanguard idea of a minority seizure of power along the lines of the old Blanquist conception had given way to the realization that the labor movement was the only legitimate indicator and representative of the strength of the working class. The decade of the 1850's had apparently taught Marx that the economic struggles of workers, such as over winning acceptance of the ten-hour working day (in 1847), were the real bases for political maturity in the conflicts which lie ahead.

If the lessons which had been learned by the 1860's were correct, the experience of the Paris Commune proved to be the great exception. The uneasy alliance represented by the First

International was not to survive the Paris uprising of March to May 1871. The dissonant elements which made up the French left were to come to the fore in the brief experiment in direct democracy represented by the Commune. Before one can assay the immediate aftermath and later significance of this explosive episode, it is necessary to analyze the various groups which comprised the Commune.

The leadership of the Paris uprising, brought on by the defeat of the French forces of Bonaparte III at the hands of the Prussians, was predominantly Proudhonist in character. It will be recalled that the particular brand of socialism espoused by Proudhon (which was otherwise known as anarchism) placed no great stock in the First International's goal of a democratic republic, through which the working class might hope to achieve power. The Proudhonists thought of themselves as "co-operativists" against the "collectivism" represented by the state. Their goal was to create a decentralized or "federated" republic in which local producer autonomy would be preserved and the centralized power of the state all but abolished.

As this vision was translated into practice during the experience of the Commune, it brought together the same coalition of forces which had fought in previous French revolutionary uprisings, namely what has been described as the Jacobin radicals of 1793 and later 1848. Added to the radical democrats of artisans, laborers, and middle-class republicans were the remnants of the Blanquist revolutionaries who had survived the bloody massacre of the "June days" in Paris some twenty-three

years earlier. To this element, the Commune represented the dictatorship of Paris over the rest of France, a goal which Auguste Blanqui had unsuccessfully fought for dating back to the days of the Communist League. In the midst of these radical sects and conspiratorial elements, the remaining labor leaders who were members of the First International found themselves submerged if not altogether outnumbered.

It is therefore ironic that the definitive statement on the Commune was to have been the work of Marx, who had been one of the principal architects of the First International. As Lichtheim makes abundantly clear, Marx's attitude toward the Commune was no simple matter. The circumstances of the time were such that the leaders of the International were being accused of perpetrating the uprising and of being, therefore, responsible for the massacre of the Communards which ensued. This was in spite of the fact that the International had virtually no role to play in either sanctioning the uprising or in its short administration. The objective, as it appeared to the members of the International, was not to abandon the cause of the French insurrection, however ill-conceived, nor to accept responsibility for the brutality of the National Guard which had acted on behalf of the monarchist-clerical majority within the National Assembly, meeting at Versailles.

It was against this background that Marx wrote what Lichtheim calls "the greatest of his political pamphlets," The Civil War in France.³⁸ Barely seven years after the drafting of the Inaugural Address, Marx was to provide a very different vision of the workers'

movement in his tract dedicated to the memory of the Commune. What is perhaps most remarkable about the document, as Lichtheim points out, is that it could be read as either a prop for the revolutionary activities of the insurrectionists or as an endorsement of the democratic strategy of the International. Either way, the document was to take on canonical status for succeeding generations of Communists and Social Democrats.

Part of the ambiguity built into the document was that it characterized the Commune as "the glorious harbinger of a new society" in spite of the fact that the Commune represented the same type of atavism which had occurred and been defeated in the past. Marx succeeded in the pamphlet in creating a certain "mythology" about what had actually taken place in Paris in 1871. The participants in the Commune were portrayed as belonging to the working class, while at the same time the character of the Commune's political organization was celebrated as an example of democratic-socialism in practice. This representation was deceptive on both counts: the membership of the Commune was drawn by and large from precisely those sections of the working population that had always been Proudhon's strongest supporters, namely independent artisans and craftsmen working in small shops--not the industrial proletariat which Marx identified as the historical agency of revolution--while the type of democratic political organization practiced in the Commune was of a strictly local character with no larger concern for capturing political power at the national level. While it is clear that Marx had little sympathy for the "federalist" program of the Proudhonists (who were now led for the most part

by Proudhon's heir apparent, Mikhail Bakunin) and even less sympathy for the Blanquists with their nostrums of a dictatorship of Paris over the rest of France, he nevertheless had succeeded in creating the impression that the Commune represented at least a symbolic victory for the proletariat and a portent of the future. Years later when the passions and indignation over the savagry carried out by the National Guard (in which an estimated 20,000 Communards lost their lives!) had subsided, Marx's opinion of the value of the Commune had changed. Lichtheim quotes the following from a letter of Marx's written in February, 1881:

...a socialist government does not come into power unless conditions are so developed that it can immediately take the necessary measures for intimidating the mass of the bourgeoisie sufficiently to gain time--the first desideratum--for permanent action.

Perhaps you will refer me to the Paris Commune, but apart from the fact that this was merely the rising of a city under exceptional conditions, the majority of the Commune was in no way socialist, nor could it be. With a modicum of common-sense, however, it could have reached a compromise with Versailles useful to the whole people--the only thing that could be attained at the time. The appropriation of the Bank of France alone would have been enough to put a rapid end to the rodomontades of the Versailles crowd, etc.⁴⁰

By the time Marx had reached this sobering conclusion regarding the fate of the Commune, the labor movement in both France and England had stabilized, reflecting the relative tranquility of the 1870's. The Commune was the last time that the working class in France would attempt a pre-mature solution to the problems posed by democracy and industrialism. The Jacobin strategy of a mass uprising which would usher in a socialist or communist epoch was finally put to rest.

What this situation spelled for the evolution of Marxist doctrine

was a return to the standpoint represented by the Inaugural Address of 1864. The Commune and its aftermath had destroyed the First International, and in its place the labor movement in Western Europe remained divided. In spite of the divisions between Anarchists and Democratic-Socialists, which were to persist on the Continent until the founding of the Second International in 1889, the predominant attitude on the part of labor leaders in Western Europe was one of "reformism." This policy was very much in keeping with Marx's attitude of 1864 and set the stage for the steady growth of the labor movement during the 1880's and 90's. When labor was once again to form a new international movement by the last decade of the century, the dramatic shift would be reflected not so much in ideology as in geography. By 1890 the German labor movement had become the most powerful in Europe. Here too, for reasons which will be elaborated later, the policy of "reformism" would be especially significant.

If for the moment, however, one looks back on the manner in which Marx's thinking had evolved between the early 1840's and the end of his life in 1883, several features stand out, according to Lichtheim's approach to the Marxian synthesis. Marx's early criticism of Hegelian philosophy was to remain fundamental to his understanding of history as the progressive unfolding of man's mastery of nature and himself. If reason and history were no longer conceived of as predicates of mind and thought, they nevertheless provided the bases for rational insight into how the world and man might be changed. This philosophical vision was to take on concrete manifestations when it was applied by Marx to the his-

tory of the French Revolution. The doctrine of revolution elaborated between 1848 and 1850 represented Marx's early attempt at resolving on a practical basis the controversies of his day. As such, the "union of theory and practice" was to fail the "test⁴¹ of reality in 1848," to quote Lichtheim's argument.

The failure of the early doctrine of revolution was to lead to an additional adjustment in Marx's thinking. It is after 1850 that Marx undertakes his systematic investigation of bourgeois society, especially in terms of the industrial revolution and its historical formation. The result of this adjustment is that Marx is able to redefine the manner in which society and history is evolving. It is perhaps ironic, but because of Marx's economic investigation, the process of social change is clarified while the exact goal of social evolution becomes less distinct. The utopianism of the Manifesto gives way to the more realistic and cautious vision of Capital. Furthermore, as Marx's "mature" writings of the 1850's and 60's are interpreted by Engels and others, the early vision of human emancipation drops off entirely and is replaced by a deterministic doctrine which inhibits practical intervention in the historical process.

Finally, Marx's political legacy is divided between two movements which trace their ancestry to his various writings and activities. The Manifesto, the Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League, and his remarks on the Paris Commune all point on the direction of the Russian Revolution and the world communist movement. His involvement with the formation of the First International and his subsequent writings on the labor move-

ment, as well as his mature account of historical materialism, point in the direction of an evolutionary path to democratic-socialism in Western Europe and North America. The dilemma as to which of these approaches is the proper one in the twentieth century poses the problem which is next to be considered.

FOOTNOTES

1

George Lichtheim, Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study, 2nd ed., (New York: Praeger, 1965), p. 123.

2

See for example the following: Joseph A. Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, 3rd ed., (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); Irving M. Zeitlin, Marxism: A Re-Examination, (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand, 1967); Karl Korsch, Karl Marx, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1938); Louis Althusser, For Marx, trans. Ben Brewster, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969).

3

See for example the following: Sidney Hook, From Hegel to Marx, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1976); Robert Tucker, Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Albert Camus, The Rebel, trans. Anthony Bower, (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), pp. 188-226; Jean-Paul Sartre, "Materialism and Revolution," in Literary and Philosophical Essays, trans. Annette Michelson, (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 198-256; and by implication, see Leo Strauss' interpretation of "historicism" in Natural Right and History, (Chicago, Ill.: Chicago University Press, 1971), pp. 1-34.

4

The adoption of Marx's writings as a blueprint for political action is usually attributed to "the Marxists," as well as to others who try to interpret Marx's intentions in order to defeat his followers. The point is that both groups claim to be adherents or detractors on the basis of their reading of his doctrine.

5

Cf. Althusser, op. cit., chapter 1.

6

See for example the following: Georg Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, trans. Rodney Livingstone, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971); Karl Korsch, Marxism and Philosophy, trans. Fred Halliday, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970); Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, 2nd ed., (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969); Daniel Bell, "The Alienation Debate," in Revisionism, ed. Leopold Labedz, (New York: Praeger, 1962), pp. 195-211.

7

Lewis S. Feuer, ed., Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Philosophy and History, (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1959), p. xx.

8

Two significant examples of this type of interpretation in recent literature are the following: Bertell Ollman, Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society, 2nd ed., (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976); and Shlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

9

Lichtheim, op. cit., pp. xiv, xviii (emphasis added). In addition to the brief statement on "Methodology" included in his 1961 book-length study, Lichtheim wrote an earlier article on the same problem, entitled "Marxist Doctrine in Perspective" (published in 1958), along with another treatment of methodology entitled "On the Interpretation of Marx's Thought" (published in 1967). These two articles are reprinted in Lichtheim's From Hegel to Marx, (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), pp. 63-92.

10

Lichtheim, Marxism, pp. 30, 35; also see Lichtheim, A Short History of Socialism, (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 66.

11

Marxism, pp. 18-19.

12

Ibid., p. 14ff.

13

Ibid., pp. 35, 39-40.

14

Ibid., p. 66.

15

Ibid., p. 69.

16

Ibid., p. 82.

17

Ibid., p. 89.

18

Ibid., p. 58.

19

Ibid., p. 54.

20

Ibid., p. 54.

21

Lichtheim, Marxism in Modern France, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 7 n.

22

Marxism, p. 124.

23

Ibid., p. 124.

24

Ibid., p. 123.

25

Ibid., p. 83.

26

Ibid., p. 126.

27

Ibid., pp. 128-29. Also, see Marxism in Modern France, pp. 125-129.

28

Marxism, pp. 58-61.

29

Ibid., p. 258.

30

Ibid., p. 175.

31

Ibid., p. 174.

32

Lichtheim, The Origins of Socialism, (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 200.

33

Marxism, p. 157ff.

34

Marxism, p. 175.

35

George Lichtheim, "Marx and the 'Asiatic Mode of Production,'" in Karl Marx, ed. Tom Bottomore, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 165.

36

Marxism, p. 103.

37

Ibid., p. 100ff.

38

Ibid., p. 105.

39

Ibid., p. 119.

40

Ibid., p. 121.

41

Ibid., p. 63.

CHAPTER THREE

THE AMBIGUOUS INHERITANCE: SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND COMMUNISM

The effort has been thus far to analyze, according to Lichtheim's interpretative approach, the intellectual genesis of Marxism. In doing so, the focus of attention has been restricted necessarily to Marx and Engel's most influential writings, and especially to the evolution of their thinking over an extended period of time (roughly between the mid-1840's to the early 1880's). It has been argued that Marxism is best understood as a synthesis of ideas that took shape over time and in response to the changing problems and issues of the author's lives. However, a second essential dimension in the interpretation of Marxism, beyond that of intellectual genesis, must contend with what happened to the "intentions" of Marx and Engels. For Marxism refers not simply to a set of ideas but to a movement of political actors to change the world. The present task is, therefore, to depict the consequences of thought once it has been adopted as a prescription for action.

That thought may be spoken of as having "action consequences" requires an assumption that is one of Lichtheim's principal methodological innovations. To recall Kojève's notion of "dialectic, all thought involves a type of dialogue between the writer

and his or her own time. However, the dialogue is an active one in which the author is bound to attempt a solution to the outstanding issues of his particular historical moment, and at this point his thought takes on concrete political meaning. Needless to say, most theoretical "solutions" do not succeed at the political level, perhaps because they lack a human agency capable of carrying them out, or because they simply fail to attract the attention of any significant segment of the political community. The point remains, for Kojève as well as for Lichtheim, that all social and political thought contains such a practical intention on the part of the author.

In the case of Marxism it would seem that there would be little difficulty in locating such an intention, it being largely taken for granted that the authors were bent on changing their world, by radical or revolutionary means if necessary. This common-sense view is not of much help, however, in clarifying the variety of practical intentions that one finds in Marx and Engels' writings. It has already been indicated that their views of the state of society and politics changed during the course of their careers, and with each different historical configuration there came another political orientation. At one time, the historical situation tended to point toward a democratic solution, at another toward a revolutionary overthrow of the ruling classes on the part of the working class, and still later toward a gradual movement in which democratic-socialism was to be triumphant.

It is to the last of these "intentions" that Marxism was to be identified in the final quarter of the nineteenth century.

The early concern with simple democratic reform and later with Jacobin-Blanquist revolution were to recede into the background and in their place a strategy of moderate, democratic agitation for socialist change (especially in the areas of labor and welfare reform) was to become the cornerstone of European Marxism. The architect of this program was initially Engels, following the moderate tone set by Marx's Inaugural Address of 1864. In spite of the influence which Marx's publication of Capital in 1867 was to have upon a younger generation of radical intellectuals, by the mid-1870's and thereafter until the time of his death in 1895, Engels was to be the chief interpreter of Marxian doctrine to the labor movement and its burgeoning membership.

By the mid-1870's Marxism, or the synthesis of social, economic, and political elements comprising its theoretical core, had taken shape. The task was to transform these critical factors into a coherent program of action suited to the circumstances of the European labor movement of this period. Several key features of this new situation were seemingly apparent to Marx at the time of his death, although it was left to Engels to spell them out clearly.

The new situation facing European labor was defined by several important considerations. The first, as Lichtheim describes, has to do with the new structure of industrialism in Europe by the 1870's and 80's. The social strife and disruption of the 1830's and 40's had now given way to a new industrial system. As Lichtheim explains, the industrial revolution had been "ab-

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sorbed" in Western Europe. What this meant is that the type of class struggle associated with early industrialism had been superseded by conflicts which were mediated by labor negotiation and agitation. Gradual improvement in working and living conditions replaced the apocalyptic vision of revolution associated with an earlier generation of industrial conflict, which as often as not was aimed at destroying the newly-implemented industrial system as it was at improving the lot of labor.

All of this was indeed consistent with Marx's program in the Inaugural Address. However, the importance of the labor movement's place in the new industrial system was confirmed by the results of the last apocalyptic revolt of the working classes in Western Europe, namely the struggle over the Paris Commune. As suggested earlier, the Commune occupied an ambivalent place in Marx's outlook: the Commune was to be defended in the short-run as a heroic symbol of socialism and working-class solidarity, but in the end it was to serve as no more than a reminder of a strategy which had not worked in the past and could not succeed in the future. Clearly, the Commune occupied a watershed in Marx and Engels' thinking over the future development of socialism.

The immediate effect of the Commune and its aftermath were to sever the ties which had formerly bound the two strongest members of the First International. Thereafter, British Labor leaders were to abandon Marxism as a practical guide and adopt a "laborist" strategy of gradual economic and social reform coupled with a political program that brought labor into an alliance with the governing Liberal Party. By 1875 the Liberal-Labor coalition had

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already taken shape, and Marxism had become only an embarrassing
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reminder of the folly associated with the Commune.

As for the French, the Commune spelled the decline of anarchism, at least in its original Proudhonist-Blanquist form. What was to take its place was a type of working-class militancy which aimed at greater worker control and autonomy within the industrial system, or what by the 1880's was called syndicalism.

The second key element in the new situation which took shape in the 1870's and 80's was the rise of the German labor movement. Under the direction of the Social Democratic Party, German labor became the strongest and most disciplined exponent of socialism in Europe. The acceleration of industrialism in Wilhelminian Germany during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was combined with the particularly repressive attitude of the authorities (typified by Bismarck's anti-Socialist campaign of the 1880's) to create a large and unusually unified labor movement. By 1891 the S.P.D. (or German Social Democratic Party) had finally achieved legitimacy with the lifting of the legal sanctions against it and emerged as one of Germany's largest political parties. The real strength of the S.P.D. was, however, severely compromised by the discriminatory voting arrangement in Prussia, which guaranteed the traditional Junker gentry and military elite an effective monopoly of political power. As Lichtheim explains, the real test of the S.P.D. was over whether or not the Prussian constitution could be democratized and the power of the ruling elite broken. This situation, of course, represented the legacy of past failures to achieve reform, dating back to the capitulation of the liberals

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in 1848.

At the time, however, it was not clear whether such "reform" of the Prussian constitution (which was only more undemocratic than those of other German states) could be achieved through strictly legal, electoral means. The cloud which hung over the fortunes of the S.P.D. was whether or not its electoral gains would lead at some point to a real democratic suffrage in Germany. So much did the democratic issue weigh upon the S.P.D. that it could be said with considerable justification, according to Lichtheim, that for the S.P.D. the struggle for democracy was thought to be tantamount to the achievement of socialism. At any rate, its greatest energies and expectations rested with first obtaining a democratic suffrage and only afterward worrying about socialism. The question of whether the ruling elite would relinquish its power through democratic pressure from below (that is, without a revolution)⁴ was not clearly addressed by the S.P.D.

The third element of the situation confronting Marxists of the 1870's and 80's concerned the possibilities of averting a new outbreak of war between the European major powers, especially between the Germans and French. Long-standing hostilities, such as over German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871, were aggravated by an unprecedented build-up of military strength on both sides, as well as by the increasing competition among the European powers for territorial and trade acquisitions in Africa and Asia. Such rivalry and competition drew the French into a military alliance with Russia, which served to increase the insecurity and apprehension of the Germans. The portentous issue for Socialists

was whether or not such national rivalries would equally divide European labor. Clearly, the nation-state system was entering a new era of instability and danger, and the Socialists represented one of the barriers to war in such an atmosphere.

As Lichtheim points out, it was largely out of such international concern that the leaders of the major European Socialist parties, along with other radicals, came together in Paris in 1889⁵ to form a new organization. Convened on the centenary of the Great Revolution, the opening conference of the Second International had little in common with its distant ancestor. While Jacobinism still had a following among French radicals, the major delegations attending the conference were devoted to gradual improvement in the lot of labor, and not to a re-enactment of the bloodletting which had already occurred. The future seemed to reveal a peaceful path toward socialism, if--and this was a major qualification--a new European war could be averted. Furthermore, in contrast to the First International, the new International was avowedly socialist in its doctrinal make-up, and, with exceptions, oriented toward Marxism as an operational formula. How these two phenomena, European Socialism (especially represented by the Germans and French) on the one hand, and Marxism as a theoretical and practical guide on the other, came together is crucial to understanding how each was to influence the other during the quarter-century of the Second International's existence.

The circumstances leading up to the formation of the Second International--namely, (1) recognition of labor's place in the new industrial order; (2) the emergence of the German labor

movement and Social Democratic Party as the largest and most influential organizational force in Europe; and (3) growing apprehension over a new European war--all contributed to a new interpretation of Marxian doctrine. Lichtheim characterizes this adjustment in Marx and Engels' thinking beginning in the mid-1870's as "orthodox Marxism." The groundwork for these changes was established by Engels over the last twenty years of his life (between 1875 and 1895), along with the contributions of his close associate and principal S.P.D. theoretician, Karl Kautsky. Between the two of them, Marxism was to take on the trappings of a new "world view."

In order to understand the shift in meaning which Engels' work of the mid-1870's and after was to bring about, it is necessary to recall what Marxism had represented in its formative period. While the subject-matter of Marx's thinking had changed on several occasions from Hegelian philosophy to Ricardian economics and much else, what held these various interests together was a distinctive method or approach. The approach had crystallized in Marx's thinking as early as 1843-44 in his writings on Feurbach and Hegel. Lichtheim describes the method as "critical theory," or Marx's particular adaptation of the dialectic from German Idealism. Essential to its meaning for Marx was the proposition that thought had as its purpose the unmasking of human reality (which lay hidden from intelligibility by false conceptions or "ideologies") in a form which would enable human beings to liberate themselves from the restraints which surrounded them. The objective of human liberation, however, was only possible through action which was mediated or

guided by thought. Left unto itself, it was assumed that thought was insufficient to realize its objective of human freedom: action was its necessary corollary.

In place of this early conception of "theory and practice," Engels was to define Marxism as a science of materialism and historical inevitability. The human transformation which Marx saw foreshadowed in the French Revolution was to become a natural phenomenon embedded in the structure of matter itself. Engels' systematic reformulation of Marxian doctrine occurred first in a polemical rejoinder to the German philosopher Eugene Dühring (1875-77), quickly became the most widely accepted version of what Marxism stood for in its broadest application, overshadowing in public importance even Capital (which had just been translated into French and had not yet been made available in English).⁷

At the time it was written, Anti-Dühring was not intended to be more than a "refutation" of Dühring's own version of socialism. The result on the other hand of Engels' pamphlet was to provide a scientific foundation for Marx and Engels' work that went far beyond any discussion which had occurred in the past. As has been seen, Marx's economic investigations of the late 1850's and 60's had already raised certain questions concerning his attitude toward positivist science, with its penchant for discovering "iron laws" of development and its naturalistic conception of man and society. Lichtheim maintains that Marx never formulated a consistent position on the relation between science and philosophy, such as that suggested by Engels in the 1870's and 80's. In particular, Engels' adoption of the notion that change

is rooted in the structure of matter, that is, in nature as well as in man--had the effect of severing once and for all the connection between theory and practice. Theory merely disclosed the truth of an on-going, natural process, which required no conscious direction on the part of human beings (who were themselves part of this process). As Lichtheim comments on Engels' far-reaching conclusions concerning nature: "...Marx wisely left nature (other than human nature) alone. Engels ventured where Marx had feared to tread, and the outcome was dialectical materialism: an incubus⁸ which has not ceased to weigh heavily upon his followers...."

As far as it can be discerned, Marx's position on the relation between man and nature and the related issue of human freedom versus determinism had been one which looked upon the natural world not as a realm apart from man--with its own laws and properties--but as part of man's material existence. Furthermore, whatever patterns of development that could be discovered from investigation of the material world disclosed the historical process of man's self-becoming. On the issue of Marx's and Engels' discrepant views of man's relation to nature, Lichtheim expresses the following:

Where the youthful Marx had envisioned a unique historical occurrence which enables mankind to comprehend history as its own creative act, Engels presents an evolutionary pattern which in the nature of things can never come to an end, and hence cannot yield up any definite meaning. History as a comprehended totality can 'come to itself' by coming to a climax. Nature is immortal almost by definition, and its study--as Engels never tires of stressing--discloses no finality....To assimilate the historical process to that of nature means doing away with the idea of a decisive historical act that reveals the meaning of history.⁹

At still another point, Lichtheim clarifies what Marx's approach had intended and what became of it in Engels' later reformulation:

When the dialectic is properly understood it is seen to presuppose situations in which conscious activity realises a possibility grounded in the nature of things--in other words, historical situations. In such cases human action may be said to synthesise the antithetical elements by 'negating' a definite obstacle to a chosen goal. To extend this possibility to the realm of inanimate matter is to read an element of purposive striving into the structure of reality: in other words, to revert to romanticism.¹⁰

What Lichtheim is pointing out is that by the 1870's and 80's Engels had reverted to a type of outlook that invested nature with rational purpose, such that what occurred independent of human volition could be justified as part of the evolutionary process. Even if Engels had discarded the notion, emphasized by Hegel, that nature and man had a determinate end (with the final identity of the real and the rational), what he retained from Hegel's thinking was the notion of a determinism rooted in an ontology of nature. Whether based on Hegel's pan-logism or Engels' dialectical materialism, the dialectic of man's relation to the world was swallowed up in an all-encompassing system that left human volition incapable of changing the world.

Engels' equation of Marxian Socialism in its orthodox form with scientific or dialectical materialism was further elaborated in Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy, which he published in 1888. The main points of his thinking had already been established in Anti-Dühring. What was added was the supposed philosophical inheritance of Marxian doctrine, in

particular its linkage with eighteenth-century French materialism and German Idealism. By this time Marx was dead and could not be expected to assent to Engels' philosophical elaborations (as he had apparently done to Anti-Dühring). In Ludwig Feuerbach Engels establishes several notions which take on added significance because of their role in the thinking of younger generations of Socialists, chief among them the idea of consciousness as an imperfect reflection of the evolutionary process of nature. The strict subordination of consciousness, as of all "super-structural forms," to so-called objective forces was to become a cardinal feature of the emerging Socialist outlook of the late nineteenth century.

The foregoing discussion of Engels' philosophical writings of the 1870's and 80's forms the theoretical background for the transformation of Marxian thinking into the status of a mass movement, namely its role as the animating principle adopted by the major European Socialist parties of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is clear from Lichtheim's retrospective view of how this process occurred that major mistakes were made by Engels in his zealous efforts to promote Marxism as the official expression of the European Socialist movement. Before these errors can be adequately dealt with, however, it is necessary to ask why Engelsian dialectical or scientific materialism was adopted by the major Socialist parties of Europe.

Following Lichtheim's methodological starting point, what function did these ideas perform in the context of their time? More particularly, why were they accepted and what historical need did they

meet?

It is well to remember that between the intellectual genesis of a major theory such as Marxism and its proliferation as a mass movement the task of "mediation" is essential. For this purpose, as Kojève has suggested, a particular type of intellectual may be required, that is, one capable of translating the abstraction of theory into the practical language and requirements of the moment. In this regard, Engels appears to have performed such a role, at least insofar as the Socialist party leaders and leaders of European labor were concerned. In order to accomplish this task, Engels supplied a type of interpretation congenial to the social and political circumstances of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe. While his "orthodox" version of Marxism was to come under attack (or at least certain tenets and practices which derived from his orthodoxy) later on, Engels' innovations proved to be the dominant view of the Socialist movement for the quarter century of the Second International (1889-1914).

Lichtheim points to several factors which made Engelsian materialism popular among Socialists of the period. First of all, it provided a degree of certitude and authoritative rigor that attracted a quasi-religious devotion on the part of its followers. It is significant that the Socialist movement arose at a time when religion was itself coming under considerable strain, not least from the pressures of Socialism, but also as a result of rapid industrialization and urbanization. (The failures of Socialist parties to attract a mass electorate among French and German peasants may be significant in this regard, insofar as traditional

religious parties remained dominant among such groups). Engelsian materialism may be viewed in this sense as a secularized faith, operating as a surrogate religion for those disaffected by the impact of industrialism, with its disruption of traditional life
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patterns.

In addition, what gave Engels' late work, especially the popular extract from Anti-Düring, Socialism: Scientific and Utopian, its special appeal was the inevitability with which he patterned his argument. Every scientific discovery and technological breakthrough was looked upon as confirmation of the coming of socialism. By analogy, it was argued that scientific advance was part of man's understanding of the universal laws of nature, which in the political realm meant the inevitable victory of socialism. It did not matter that such scientific advances (as in chemistry and physics) were allied to theories and procedures that had nothing to do with Marxism; it was enough that man's mastery over nature would insure his eventual mastery over society and history, nature
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and history being inextricably linked.

An additional feature which made Engelsian materialism popular had to do with its affinity with what Lichtheim calls
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"the typical assumptions of contemporary civilization." Among them the idea of "progress" was taken in its broadest sense by Socialists, to the extent that popular notions of evolution drawn from French positivism and Darwinian natural science seemed to bolster Engels' optimistic claims for the future. Engels even makes use of Darwinian theory of natural selection in his argument against Dühring positing natural selection as simply another form of the

struggle for existence which goes on in society as well as in nature, only by means of social classes rather than species. What is perhaps fatal to such notions, apart from the respectability which they tended to give Marxian thinking at the time, is the singularly optimistic conclusions Socialists drew from the "typical assumption" of progress. In such an atmosphere the idea that history might be derailed by an irrationalist movement, and that race or nationality might be substituted for class in the "struggle for existence" hardly seemed plausible or likely.

The point remains, however, that Engels succeeded in capturing a mood which was shared in by the majority of Socialists at the time. This was particularly true in Germany, where due to the unique circumstances of Wilhelminian rule the Socialists found themselves isolated and for a period of time during the 1880's officially persecuted as well. By the time the S.P.D. was granted legitimacy in 1891 it had grown to a size that commanded the respect of all other Socialist parties in Europe and North America. What is more, its leadership had the official blessing of Engels, who had had a part in its founding in 1885 as well as in drawing up its first legal charter, or what was called the Erfurt Program of 1891. Together with Kautsky, Engels gave the document and the Party it helped to launch the distinction of being the strongest and most authoritative voice of Socialism in Europe. It is doubtful, as Lichtheim suggests, that Marx would have embraced the German movement as Engels gave every indication of doing, at least toward the end of his life. The likelihood is that Marx would have been reluctant to endorse such a movement, which

he felt was no more capable of providing leadership in Europe¹⁴
than the German middle class had been in 1848.

For its part, the party platform that was drawn up at Erfurt in 1891 served as the "model" or example of what Marxian Socialism represented by the turn of the century. As such it was entirely consistent with the orthodox point of view established by Engels in his writings of the 1870's and 80's. The heart of the document consisted of a synthesis of two fundamental but potentially conflicting principles; gradualist tactics coupled with an ultimately revolutionary prospectus. The test of these two principles as well as of the movement they held together was not to come until 1914, but at the time they were drawn up gradualism did not seem to conflict with revolution. Gradualism was indeed the prevailing assumption of the labor movement in Europe, and nowhere more so than in Germany. As for revolution, the prospect was spoken of only in imprecise and guarded terms. At virtually no time did the leadership of the S.P.D. attempt to spell out where gradualist tactics would leave off and a revolutionary strategy begin, nor of precisely how socialism might be achieved. The closest approximation that the leadership made in defining the road to socialism was through democratization of the German constitution (especially in Prussia). This would presumably be the prelude to a new working-class majoritarian rule and hence the basis for a new socialist order.

Having placed Engels' singular contribution to Marxian thinking of the 1870's and 80's in the context of its time, the question of how well Engels had performed his task of intellectual

"mediation" remains. In other words, how well did Engels' orthodox Marxism serve the Socialist movement which had coalesced in the late 1880's around the Second International? The answer provided by Lichtheim is deceptively simple, at least at one level. The clear intention of the Second International was to cement the two largest European Socialist movements together in an effort to avert a new war. The goal of attaining socialism was made dependent on maintaining peace between the French and Germans, thereby avoiding the possibility that the national issue might once again create vertical divisions among European workers. That this Socialist alliance broke down along precisely such national lines in 1914 is clear evidence of the failure of the Second International, at least insofar as maintaining the peace is concerned.

By this time, however, Engels had been dead for nearly twenty years. Therefore, Engels' legacy is more difficult to assess. He had been successful in ways that perhaps Marx would not have been, that is, in defining Marxian doctrine in terms that were particularly suitable to the Germans, who were to become the key element in the new International. As suggested earlier, Marx had always had grave doubts about his homeland as a base for leadership, with its pre-modern political institutions and its lack of what Lichtheim calls a "revolutionary tradition" (such as was clearly present in France). Such doubt about the maturity and ultimately the reliability of the Germans to work toward a radical revision of Germany's ancient institutions and values did not trouble Engels. Perhaps part of the reason may be explained in his "Preface" to

the 1895 edition of Marx's Class Struggles in France, written just before Engels' death. Like his German colleagues, Engels goes a long way toward repudiating altogether Marxism's revolutionary past (which had been Marx's clear intention in his journalistic writings of the early 1850's) and endorsing the peaceful, long-term approach to the capture of political power by the Socialists.

Whether his political intentions were as pacific as his German colleagues wanted or not, Engels did make significant accommodations to their "gradualist" sympathies and seemingly approved of the prospect that Germany could be democratized without a violent struggle (although, it should be mentioned that the above "Preface" by Engels was radical enough that the S.P.D. found it necessary to delete certain passages relating to insurrection, in order to make Engels point of view as unobjectionable to a German audience as possible¹⁵). However one chooses to interpret Engels' political legacy vis-à-vis the S.P.D. which he helped found, there is absolutely no doubt about his philosophical legacy. His adoption of a reformist political strategy may well have been tactical (after all, Marx had done the same as early as 1864 in his involvement with British and French labor leaders at the time of the founding of the First International), but his deterministic doctrine of the 1870's and 80's was to have profound influence upon all Socialists for generations to come.

It was perhaps unintentional on his part, but Engels' philosophical writings had the practical effect of repudiating the idea of revolution. That he was seemingly unaware of this

paradox is evident in his speech at Marx's gravesite. The content of Engels' classic remembrance to his life-long friend reveals a glaring inconsistency. Marx was praised as the founder of a new science of society and history--equal to that of Darwin's breakthrough in natural science--while at the same time Engels claimed that his real legacy was as a revolutionary. The science that Engels refers to is by now his own familiar blend of positivism and materialism; the revolutionary heritage that he alludes to belongs to the period of the 1848 revolutions and their aftermath, which in Marx's mind were intimately connected with the fulfillment of the promise of the Great Revolution.

The real failure on Engels' part to mediate between Marx's and his own efforts of a lifetime and the burgeoning Socialist movement of the 1880's and 90's relates to the long-term effects of his philosophical tutelage and supervision, whatever the benefits might have been of his deterministic doctrine in winning converts to the Socialist movement. The doctrine obtained an unquestioned status in Germany, in particular, under the guidance of Kautsky, while the revolutionary side of the Marxian inheritance was either dismissed as an obsolescent reminder of 1848 and later the Commune or was thought of in the imaginary terms of a biblical prophecy. Revolution was something that had almost a "foreign" ring to German ears, more appealing to French Socialists perhaps, but completely "unrealistic" as far as the S.P.D. was concerned.

The significant feature in Lichtheim's account of the Engels legacy is that Engels imparted to the early Socialists a "faith" in the future which ultimately did not hold up. Cer-

tainly Engels could not have foreseen all the events which were to lead up to the cataclysm of 1914; the point is that neither his vision nor that of his S.P.D. colleagues prepared the way for such enormous contingencies. After Engels' death in 1895, the greatest priority of the Socialists was in increasing their electoral percentages, despite the fact that the voting arrangement in Prussia was entirely rigged against them. The large, more vexing questions, such as over use of the mass strike as a weapon to achieve suffrage reform, were pushed into the background (in spite of efforts by S.P.D. radicals--lead by Rosa Luxemburg--to take more forceful action).

The end result of Engels' mediation of Marxian theory and Socialist practice was to pattern Marxian thinking into what Lichtheim terms an "integrative ideology":

Within a movement so constituted [as German Social-Democracy in particular and the Second International in general], Marxism functioned as an integrative ideology, not as a theory of action. It was invoked to explain why the labor movement had to lead a separate existence within bourgeois society.... The paradoxical result was to establish a nominally socialist subculture within the official aristocratic-bourgeois civilization. Marxism thus equipped the workers' movement with an ideology that was both a defensive armature and a 'false consciousness.' The ideology immunized the workers to conservative or liberal ideas and to that extent articulated a kind of corporate political awareness. At the same time it en- 17 abled the movement to settle down within the existing system.

It is important to recognize in the above statement that Lichtheim is defining "integrative ideology" in a specialized sense. Marxism functioned as such in that it did not challenge the social and political environment in which it was operating. Its basically non-critical relation to bourgeois society, coupled with its insulation of the working class vis-à-vis bourgeois

society, is what Lichtheim means by the remark that Marxism ceased to be a "theory of action." In other words, by "action" Lichtheim means a practice directed at changing the environment in which it takes place (as well as the actor himself), rather than by accomodating itself to that environment. The orthodox Marxism bequeathed to Socialists by Engels was such an integrative ideology. It had lost the ability to change its environment, as Marx's critical theory of the 1840's had clearly intended, and the practices which stemmed from this sterile attitude were consequently conservative in character.

The discrepancy between a nominally revolutionary doctrine and its conservative application to reality had been evident as early as in the case of the Erfurt Program in 1891, with its synthesis of gradualist tactics and revolutionary professions. As time went on, the synthesis began to come apart. The earliest indication of an impending split between conservatives, moderates, and radicals occurred at the turn of the century in the debate over what became known as "revisionism." Before the dust had settled over the controversies that had been raised in this dispute (which went on for over ten years), virtually the entire foundation of Marxian orthodoxy had been at least challenged if not shaken. The central character in the drama, Eduard Bernstein, had been a leading S.P.D. theoretician and close confidant of Engels (who had left the scene only a few years prior to the beginning of the debate), and Bernstein's publication in 1899 of his remarkable observations concerning the present-day relevance and viability of Marxism's basic assumptions created an immediate stir among

S.P.D. officials, and to a lesser extent within the Second International.

As Lichtheim points out again and again, one cannot make sense of the various shifts or adjustments in Marxian doctrine simply on the basis of partisanship among the disputants; the controversy over the relevancy of Marxian orthodoxy at the turn of the century went beyond mere conflicts of interest and was to

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have repercussions later on. That ideas often contribute their fair share to the outcome of conflicts of interest is an assumption that is basic to Lichtheim's historical approach; ideas may not be simply "explained away" or dismissed as "epiphenomena".

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of various interests or even social classes.

In the case of the revisionist debate, what was at stake was nothing less than the adequacy of Marxian doctrine (in its Engels-Kautsky, orthodox interpretation) to explain the "facts" of modern industrial society as well as the future direction of the Socialist movement. Bernstein's attachment to the "immediate facts" of the current historical situation led him to the conclusion that society was not now nor was it likely to be in the future divided into the type of conflictual class structure that Marx had foreseen in his writings (especially in his posthumously-published third volume of Capital, 1894). Rather, class tensions were abating and there was even evidence of an amelioration in the material condition of the working class. In view of this "new" situation, it appeared to Bernstein that continued emphasis upon so-called "iron-clad laws of history" which declared the inevitability of class conflict and ultimately of revolution was

unjustified.

In place of this orthodox point of view, Bernstein argued for the adoption of a radically different one. Borrowing from the ethics of the Kantian revival among German academics and liberals (which had been underway since the 1870's), Bernstein claimed that the construction of socialism was a matter of free choice and persuasion, to be achieved through the democratic process and not by means of class conflict and revolution. Socialism was thus transformed from an inevitability into a morally-desirable goal.
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It is perhaps not surprising that this vast diagnosis and treatment had been arrived at by a man who had spent the last twenty years of his life in England and not Germany. What Bernstein seemed to be suggesting was that the type of historical development taking place in Britain, especially with the alliance of the Liberal Party and the labor movement, was the appropriate model for the German S.P.D. to follow. In fact, his eclectic doctrine seemed to have more in common with the positivism and progressive liberalism of the emerging Fabian Society than it did with German Socialism.
21 Tied to this outlook was also the hopeful expectation that Germany might be democratized in similar fashion to what was then taking place in Britain.

The reception of orthodox Marxists within and without the German S.P.D. to this theoretical and practical challenge was equally strong if not predictable. As suggested earlier by Lichtheim, orthodox Marxism had developed into a type of integrative ideology which sought to defend both its own doctrinal pronounce-

ments and its membership against the kind of "outside" attack represented by Bernstein's criticism. The rigidity built into the orthodox Marxist attitude could not be stretched to include Bernstein's point of view. Even if some of his factual observations were valid (and even they were contested), his Idealist assumptions about freedom and subjective ethical judgment clashed directly with what Marxism had come to represent by the turn of the century. Worst of all was the assumption built into Bernstein's analysis that the type of political freedom being enacted in England offered a practicable goal in Wilhelminian Germany, that is, without a violent overthrow of the military elite.

Whatever the short-comings of the so-called revisionists and their orthodox opponents, it would be a mistake to under-value the quality of the argument that was carried out on both sides. It is clear to Lichtheim that the revisionist episode raised decisive moral and political issues that went beyond their immediate significance to the Socialist movement. At stake were the outstanding questions of the day: whether Marxian Socialism possessed an ethics, or whether its materialism was purely descriptive and therefore precluded the possibility of choice; whether liberalism could be adapted for use by Socialists; and whether revolution was an inevitable precursor of socialism or could be avoided altogether.

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While the revisionist controversy was played out among Party theoreticians at one level, its immediate political significance was not lost on conservative labor leaders and workers. For them, the outcome of the revisionist debate was to confirm

their reformist attitudes and strengthen their position within the S.P.D. This was a rather ironic result of Bernstein's advocacy, inasmuch as Bernstein himself had never renounced the need to work for change, nor had he counseled for a policy directed at preserving the status quo. Nonetheless, for reasons having to do with its deep-seated conservative attitude, German labor by and large embraced Bernstein's pronouncements as an effective argument for putting immediate economic reform ahead of political action. The resulting medley of interests and viewpoints was to place Bernstein at the head of German Socialism's most right-wing, opportunistic elements--a partnership in which Bernstein never felt
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entirely comfortable.

For their part in the debate, the defenders of Marxian orthodoxy (Kautsky, chief among them) did not emerge entirely unscathed either. However awkwardly Bernstein may have stated his case, he had raised certain underlying problems with the Marxian conception handed down by Engels. There was no way of reconciling the rigidly deterministic materialism of Engels with the notion of a doctrine which sought to promote revolution. Either the revolution was itself preordained by the "laws of history," or it was the product of human agency. Kautsky's vain attempts at
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reconciling the issue of determinism and freedom were unconvincing. The philosophical dispute had the effect of forcing those sympathetic to revisionism to the extreme side of Idealism and those allied to the orthodox viewpoint to the side of rigid materialism. In both cases, what had been lost from the original Marxian conception was the notion that in particular historical situations material

and ideal factors combine in such a way as to make revolutions possible. This was after all the real meaning of "the union of theory and practice."

It would be tempting at this point to dismiss such abstractions as the debate over freedom and determinism or Idealism and Materialism as a misnomer, that is, something which contributes almost nothing to an understanding of the revisionist controversy and its time and place. This is, however, precisely the naive point of view which Lichtheim is attempting to avoid. The philosophical dispute was, according to Lichtheim, at the very heart of the problems faced by German Socialism at the turn of the century and thereafter. Unfortunately, both sides were to adopt a position on science and historical evolution that did not coincide with the larger requirements of the time. Lichtheim indicates that despite their outstanding differences, revisionists and orthodox Marxists were expressing an optimistic view of future progress consistent with nineteenth-century positivistic science. What is tragic is that nowhere in their arguments did Socialists appeal to a younger generation of Germans who were weary of just such deterministic or scientific doctrines. Had the argument been framed in such a way that it brought young people and the German middle class in particular into its purview, German Socialism might have been able to transcend its status as a sub-culture within German society. For this to have occurred the revisionist debate would have had to have made inroads into German academic life. As it turned out, German academics and intellectuals viewed Socialism and its internal debates with detachment at best. The favor was returned by Socialists who looked upon middle-class

intellectuals with distrust and, perhaps in some cases, a degree of envy. As a consequence of this mutual suspicion, the protective wall between the middle class and the working class was to remain. When the relative tranquility of the early 1900's finally gave way to crisis, the middle class, closely followed by the working class, was to respond not to the call of "Scientific Socialism" but to ardent nationalism and imperialism.

This brief synopsis, however, avoids another side of the debate which was to emerge at first very slowly within European Socialism at the turn of the century. Looked at from still another angle, what the disputants in the revisionist debate seemed to share was an optimistic view of the future, one in which the prospect of revolution played no role at all, or was reduced to an extremely low order of priority. Such a view was especially prominent among German Socialists. In fact, as Lichtheim points out, outside of the German context, the revisionist debate generated a wide variety of responses. To the French, whose theoretical absorption of Marxism was weak at best, the revisionist debate was never a major issue. On the other hand, to particular Socialist movements in Central Europe--such as in Austria--as well as in Eastern Europe, the reformist attitude expressed by Bernstein appeared especially flawed and inappropriate. It is among the Austrian and Russian Socialists that Marxism is given a renewed radical or revolutionary interpretation, beginning with the revisionist debate at the turn of the century and continuing up to the First World War.

The impetus behind the revival of interest in revolution among Austrian and East European Marxists had to do with the par-

particular circumstances facing Socialist movements in these countries. Unlike the Germans and French, the Austrians and East Europeans enjoyed no political rights, nor was there even a semblance of parliamentary democracy (as in Germany) to offer the prospect of a peaceful transition to Socialism. As stated by Lichtheim:

"reformism was strongest where liberal democracy was firmly established, while radicalism possessed a mass following where the labor movement was confronted with authoritarian regimes."²⁵

The complete absence of democratic institutions in countries where autocratic rule persisted into the twentieth century thus promoted a radical response on the part of Socialists.

It should be remembered that all such national differences between Western, Central, and Eastern European Socialists were largely submerged within the cooperative arrangement set up by the Second International, that is, until 1914. Even so, on contentious issues faced by European Socialism, the break-down among Socialists was usually between those who followed the right-wing of German labor ostensibly lead by Bernstein, the moderates lead by Kautsky, and the radicals lead by the East Europeans. After 1914, the split between these competing groups was to surface in open hostility, while for the moment relations remained cordial.

One of the issues which foreshadowed the impending crisis of 1914 and the political alignment which was to emerge from it was the controversy over imperialism and war. In this instance the radicals took the lead in pointing out the danger of imperialism as well as in counseling greater militancy on the part of Socialists. It is important to recognize here that as far as Marx and Engels'

writings are concerned, the subject of imperialism figured in only indirectly at best. Marx had recorded as early as the Manifesto the international character of capitalism as an economic system, as well as of its oppression of native peoples under colonialism. This, however, was very different from the type of economic expansion which had begun as early as the 1870's. As close as one could directly associate the new expansionism with Marxian doctrine was in its relation to Marx's fragmentary writings on economic concentration and the "falling rate of profit" in volume three of Capital,²⁶ edited by Engels and released just before his death.

It was therefore from Marx's economic theory--and not Engels' later philosophical writings--that a younger generation of Marxists drew inspiration in the analysis of imperialism. In this discussion the radicals played a leading role, beginning with the works of two members of what Lichtheim refers to as the "Austro-Marxist school," namely Otto Bauer and Rudolf Hilferding.²⁷ Bauer's and Hilferding's work on imperialism was later amplified by the German-Polish theoretician Rosa Luxemburg, and given its final version by the two architects of the Russian Revolution, Leon Trotsky and V. I. Lenin. Before taking up the considerable role of the latter two, the earlier work of Bauer, Hilferding, and Luxemburg is of importance.

The most compelling feature of the analysis provided by Bauer and Hilferding (in 1907 and 1910, respectively) was the manner in which each was able to incorporate the major economic trends of the current period into Marx's earlier forecast of capitalist concentration and economic crisis. Kautsky had earlier in 1902

recognized the growth of protectionism and great power national rivalry as tendencies implicit in the present structure of capitalism, but without the analytical skill and precision of the two
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Austrians. Bauer's rather lengthy analysis put the issue of capitalist growth and expansion into the larger context of how the system was carried forward by internal contradictions relating to the uneven rate of profitability in different sectors of the economy, and the likelihood of depression. The result was to force the weaker sectors into finding "safe" markets abroad for their surplus goods, thereby making the state responsible for the security of such markets. As this arrangement (called "dumping") was combined with restrictive import barriers (protectionism) at home, the political outcome was to create greater rivalry between the major European powers.

The corollary to Bauer's analysis of imperialism (itself tied to a larger understanding of the development of nationalism in Eastern Europe) was its consequences for Socialism and the labor movement. In a remarkably candid appraisal, Bauer acknowledged that imperialist policies might in the short-run be beneficial to working-class interests, especially in terms of averting depression and unemployment. The long-range disadvantages, however, would likely out-weigh such temporary benefits, that is, when one computed the full social cost of implementing escalating military budgets, as well as the increasing degree of domestic repression brought on by nationalism. Bauer concluded that the "mature," long-range interest of labor would lead it to oppose imperialist policies. The thought did not occur to Bauer that the discrepancy

between short-term and long-term working-class interests might require a political party which could subordinate temporary benefits to long-range goals.²⁹ Such thinking, however, belonged to another radical; but this is to anticipate Lenin's conception of the role of the party in revolution.

As for the other major contribution to the Austro-Marxist position, the account of imperialism provided by Bauer was further enhanced three years later by the commanding work of Rudolf Hilferding, himself a trained economist. It is unnecessary to go through all of the refinements in Hilferding's analysis of capitalism and imperialism. It is sufficient to note that Hilferding's explanation brought out the manner in which cartelization in industry and greater control over investment policy in banking had altered the process of capitalist accumulation and expansion. Such "rationalization" of the capitalist economic mechanism did not, however, eliminate the likelihood of contradictions. Rather, rationalization remained incomplete under the domination of cartels, only making crises more disruptive and likely than they had been before.³⁰

It is a measure of the independence and scholarship of the Austro-Marxist school that neither Bauer nor Hilferding found it necessary to buttress their arguments with the sort of historical inevitability so often employed by orthodox Marxists. What the two authors were pointing out was the way in which mature capitalism attempted to avert economic crisis by means of imperial expansion abroad and protectionism at home. Furthermore, the Bauer-Hilferding conception of imperialism stopped short of claiming that such

efforts would fail altogether, resulting in a complete breakdown of the capitalist system. As far as they were willing to go was in arguing that imperialism was only a partial cure for the economic ills of capitalism and that such expansionism had the unintended effect of increasing political tensions between imperialist nations and thus the risk of war. It followed that mature capitalism had out-grown the capabilities of the nation-state and that Socialism--as a superior form of international organization--was a rational requirement of the present situation. They did not, however, argue that Socialism was either an historical inevitability or that it was politically assured, as Bauer had pointed out in his discussion of the possible benefits of imperialism for the working class.

After 1910 and the publication of Hilferding's findings, the discussion of imperialism shifted to the question of whether or not capitalism could continue in its present imperialist phase indefinitely. This had at least been implied by Bauer and Hilferding. Another answer to the likely duration of capitalism and imperialism was provided by Rosa Luxemburg in 1913. ³¹ Arguing that imperial expansion was geographically limited to those parts of the non-capitalist world which had not been overtaken by Western penetration, she concluded that this process had an absolute limit and that its breakdown was an "historical certainty." Once having exhausted all other parts of the globe, the capitalist system would have no safety valve to prevent its own demise.

Luxemburg sought to link her argument on the breakdown of capitalism to volume II of Marx's Capital. Here she met with considerable criticism from those who claimed that she had misread

Marx's fragmentary writings on a supposed "break-down thesis."³²
Whether or not she had properly interpreted Marx's intention in Volume II (the point is apparently not clear, according to Licht-heim), she did raise the possibility--on at least logical grounds--that imperialism signaled the final crisis or breakdown of capitalism and that it was ripe for expropriation.

This was indeed the message that Lenin drew from Luxemburg's breakdown thesis, although in the process he rather conveniently altered how she had arrived at her conclusions. In fact, it is fair to say that Lenin succeeded in pilfering from the work of many of his intellectual predecessors in order to arrive at his own findings on imperialism in 1916 (including the earliest breakthrough in 1902 of the non-Marxist British economist J. A. Hobson). Lenin's argument in 1916 was therefore familiar to Socialists who had absorbed the earlier work of Bauer, Hilferding, and Luxemburg. What gave the document its distinction was the political skill with which the author drove home his case, namely that imperialism was the final stage of capitalist development and that all the evidence pointed to this conclusion.

Lenin thus avoided the difficulty of relating his own work to that of Capital, preferring instead to take over the various arguments which his predecessors had deduced from Marx's economic theory (such as the declining rate of profitability). He then used this logical structure as a prop upon which to heap
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whatever facts seemed to fit the case. Where Bauer and Hilferding had been careful to indicate that imperialism was only the most recent incidence of capitalism's development, Lenin stretched this

finding to mean that it was "the highest stage of capitalism," and that it could develop no further. The point had been made: given Lenin's revolutionary political intention, the analysis of capitalism and imperialism naturally followed. That revolution was the imminent solution to the problem of imperialism was a conclusion that even a radical like Rosa Luxemburg had not entertained.

But then with Lenin, one encounters a very different aspect of the Marxian inheritance, different even from that of the Austro-Marxist radicals and other East Europeans like Luxemburg. For while it is true that the East Europeans as a whole tended to be more radical in the political outlook, and less inclined therefore to accept the reformist notion that Socialism would arrive peacefully, they were also sufficiently orthodox to base their political expectations on what they deemed the "objective" situation required. Lenin, on the other hand, departed from the radicals in his presumption that revolution was the cardinal principle of the Marxian world view, and that all else was subordinate to it.

Lenin's revolutionary prospectus, along with that of Trotsky, disclose a decisive shift in the evolution of Marxism. The open split between Lenin and the orthodox Marxism associated with Kautsky had to await the events of 1914, but even before then there was ample evidence that Russian Marxism represented a different type of development from that of the Second International. Lenin's role simply accentuated such differences. This was for a time obscured by the fact that Lenin had considered himself a strong supporter of Kautsky, especially in Kautsky's dispute with

the revisionist wing of his own party, as well as an admirer of Kautsky's deterministic approach to Marxian doctrine. Evidence of the break between Western Socialism and its Russian counterpart had occurred as early as 1902, when the Russian movement, under Lenin's instigation, split into opposing majority and minority factions over the issue of party membership. The larger issue went beyond membership to the matter of the party's relation to the labor movement, as well as its relation to all other classes in society.

The significant point in Lichtheim's depiction of Lenin's role in the development of Russian Socialism and its impact upon Marxism is the remarkable flexibility and political ingenuity of Lenin. Unless this is kept in mind, it is virtually impossible to understand how Lenin's position developed. In this case, "events" were to play a considerable role in the evolution of Lenin's political and theoretical outlook. As circumstances changed, so did Lenin's thinking.

The link which establishes Lenin's inheritance to Marxian doctrine is his ability to discern a pattern or "logic" to the changes occurring around him. As Marx had tried in 1847-48 to envision a process which would bring the French Revolution to its full maturity--ending in a new, more radical (communist) phase--so Lenin too brought this "logical" perspective to the events of his own time and place. To be sure, he shared the attitude of other East European radicals that any hopes of a peaceful, democratic transition to socialism were a delusion. Lichtheim points out that as early as the turn of the century, East European radicals fully

expected that a wave of revolutionary unrest might put an end to the antiquated empires of Eastern Europe (especially in Austria-Hungary and Russia). The question was over what role the Socialists might play in such a revolution.

For Lenin, the situation facing Russia at the turn of the century resembled that of Germany in 1848 in Marx's thinking. The difference between them is that what made Germany so unattractive to Marx as a likely forerunner of revolution in Europe--namely, its social, economic and political backwardness--made the empires of Eastern Europe look especially promising to Lenin a half-century later. Looked at in a slightly different light, the position of Russia at the turn of the century might resemble that of France in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In either case, the link between these two situations had been provided by Marx's revolutionary thinking during the short period between 1847-48 and 1850. The Manifesto in particular serves to establish the connection between Marx and Lenin, as well as between the French
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and Russian Revolutions.

The event which ignited thinking about the revolutionary potential of Eastern Europe was the Russian uprising of 1905. In this connection, it appeared to most European Socialists, including radicals like Luxemburg, that the 1905 cataclysm foreshadowed the eventual disintegration of the Tsarist empire and the future advancement of capitalism in Russia. Beyond this, the Russian situation took on only symbolic importance as an example of increasing militancy for the Socialist movement. Russia was, after all, too backward to serve as any substantial harbinger

of change that could be applied reliably to the West.

This view was, however, not shared in by a relative handful of Russian radicals led by Trotsky. As early as 1904, a close associate, A. L. Parvus, had arrived at the idea that capitalism was entering a period of international crisis and that such disruptions were likely to have their greatest effect not in the developed states of Western Europe but in the relatively backward empires of the East. Furthermore, such turbulence would not be restricted to the East, because breakdowns in one area of the capitalist system would reverberate throughout the entire system, making the more advanced areas similarly vulnerable to disruption and possible revolution.

Parvus' initial thinking in 1904 was later adopted by Trotsky as part of his conception of "permanent revolution." Several points should be kept in mind in considering this conception. First, the Parvus-Trotsky conception of 1904 antedated anything that Lenin had to say on the subject by at least ten years; that is, it was arrived at independently, at a time when Trotsky was (at least nominally) a Menshevik and not even allied with Lenin's Bolsheviks. Secondly, the idea that events in Russia could affect the stability of more economically advanced regions was a view which separated East European radicals from even their greatest admirers in the West. As much as Western Socialists applauded the portent of the 1905 Russian uprising, what it represented to them was the East catching-up with the modern world, as well as the alleviation of a potential threat to Western progress, which Russia had represented since the time of Marx. (In

Marx's own thinking the East had always been synonymous with barbarism).

The third point concerns the relation of the Parvus-Trotsky conception to the Marxian inheritance. In common with the basic approach adopted by Lenin, Trotsky and Parvus' early thinking from 1904 onward symbolized a revival of the revolutionary core of the Marxian inheritance, specifically its Jacobin-Blanquist phase of 1847-48 to the early 1850's. The element contributed by Trotsky and his associate was in fact borrowed from Marx's journalistic writings of the early 1850's, namely the term "permanent revolution," which had appeared in Marx's Class Struggles in France (1850). This phrase and its revolutionary implications were shortly thereafter abandoned by Marx when he became convinced that the revolutionary situation of the late 1840's had passed. A half-century later, however, the doctrine of revolution came alive again--this time in the thinking of the Russian radicals and other East Europeans.

As for Trotsky's adaptation of Marx, the apocalyptic vision of 1848 was retained, but with important modifications. Whether this thinking on revolution was couched in terms of the doctrine of "permanent revolution" or the so-called "law of uneven development," the essentials related to the manner in which revolution was likely to occur first in the weakest link of the capitalist system, and once underway, would spread to the more developed areas. Therefore, backwardness offered an advantage in the exploitation of a revolutionary situation, and revolution was now conceived in terms of a world-wide phenomenon. It will be recalled that as

originally understood by Marx, "permanent revolution" referred to how the revolutionary process might be extended from an initial phase of middle-class hegemony to include a second, higher stage in which the working class could be expected to wrest power from the middle class. This original idea had only to do with "telescoping" the class struggles of the bourgeoisie and proletariat (both conceived in Hegelian terms as inter-related "moments" in the development of history) into the same revolutionary situation. Trotsky's innovation was to envision not only how different phases of the revolution might be combined, but also how this process, once underway in a single country, would be consolidated among all other capitalist nations. To put the matter in slightly more contemporary terms, the focus of Marx's early doctrine of revolution had been in terms of the process of "vertical" consolidation of working-class power at the national level. Trotsky's vision went beyond this by positing a "horizontal" consolidation at the world level as well.

As ambitious as this project seemed when it was originally conceived (around the time of the 1905 Russian outbreak), it was still consistent with Marx's sweeping analysis of mid-nineteenth-century French politics as the fulfillment of the promise of the French Revolution. The element which departed most significantly from Marx's original conception of 1848-50 was the idea that "backwardness" offered an advantage in providing the spark that would ignite the revolutionary process. Marx had misjudged the maturity of capitalist development in the case of Western Europe in 1848. What he took in 1848 to be an economic system that had reached its

apogee in terms of historical development was in fact only the initial evidences of capitalism, that is, as the new capitalist economic order consolidated its power over feudalism. By 1905, the lesson had been grasped by Marx's Russian progeny: namely that the peasantry and its propertyless allies in the factories and workshops of the urban centers were most capable of acting in a revolutionary situation at a time when the industrial revolution had not yet been absorbed, as it had been in the case of Western Europe at the turn of the century. Therefore, the initial phase of capitalist development--which had been historically the most disruptive of life-patterns in the countryside and the emerging urban centers--provided the most suitable environment for revolution. The revolutionary task became one of intervening at a time before capitalism had consolidated its hold on the nation, that is, before the bourgeois revolution had succeeded in creating democratic political institutions and eradicating the remnants of feudal
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privilege.

The lesson of backwardness took on even greater meaning and clarity in the thinking of Lenin around the turn of the century. Trotsky's internationalism--which he never departed from, even after his ouster from power in the early 1930's--was complemented by Lenin's own theory of imperialism and its relation to internal Russian development. Unlike Trotsky and other city-bred radicals, Lenin had as early as the 1890's indicated considerable interest in the prospect of the Russian peasantry as a viable agency of revolution. His populist origins enabled him to envision the "progressive" aspect of this most conservative social class,

which Marxists had for generations either disregarded as an obsolete remnant of feudalism or actively disdained as a last bastion of reaction (as Marx had recorded in his Eighteenth Brumaire).³⁶

Lenin's breakthrough in adapting the Jacobin-Blanquist element of the Marxian inheritance for Russian purposes is revealed most evidently in two documents written in 1902 and 1905 respectively, namely What Is to Be Done? and Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution. That this breakthrough represents one of the few instances in which theory and practice came together decisively in the history of Marxism makes it of obvious significance, according to Lichtheim.³⁷ In interpreting Lenin's "mediation" between theory and practice it is necessary to keep in mind how this process actually evolved and what its consequences were after the fact. According to Lichtheim, there is a large discrepancy between Lenin's mediatory role and the later "ideology" built up around this breakthrough, namely Leninism. For the moment, it is advisable to begin with Lenin's early theoretical prospectus of 1902-1905.

As early as the 1890's Lenin had recognized the special advantages that backwardness might provide in fomenting revolution. His doctrine of revolution took shape at the turn of the century around two notions that had originally been credited to Marx, that is, the idea of a revolutionary vanguard party and the need for a temporary dictatorship. Both ideas received greater emphasis and direction in Lenin's thinking. The vanguard idea--which went as far back as the Manifesto--was a concomitant of the backwardness of the proletariat. The difference in Lenin's case

was that he was willing to make an admission which other Marxists had refused to make: the working class (in the advanced capitalist sectors, as well as the more backward regions) was incapable of making the revolution. It had always been the intellectuals--who were not workers themselves but were middle-class--who had acted to advance the revolution. Left unto their own auspices, workers were incapable of achieving that totality of vision necessary to advance their interests in a revolutionary situation. Workers and the trade union movement which represented them, were interested typically in incremental, piecemeal change, and not in revolution.

The implications of Lenin's "realistic" assessment of working-class "false consciousness" and the need for a more comprehensive vision of the historical situation made a vanguard or elite party a necessity. It should be noted that nothing in Marx's original vanguard conception made such a strict separation between party and class either necessary or desirable. Lenin's vanguard concept assured that the direction of the Socialist movement could not be left to workers, but was to be the sole responsibility of the political leadership; Marx's notion in the Manifesto embodied simply the expectation that the party be composed of the most class-conscious elements of the proletariat, and not a stratum set apart from it.

Beyond this enlargement of Marx's original vanguard concept, Lenin made use of Marx's early Blanquist preoccupation with conspiratorial party organization and tactics. It will be recalled that in 1850 Marx had been concerned with precisely such

problems as how to advance the interests of the working class in a revolutionary situation. In his Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League Marx spelled out how the political leadership would have to manipulate events, at times against the apparent will of its own allies, the proletariat, in order to realize the goal of revolution. The paradox in this early Jacobin formulation was that the party would have to operate in an atmosphere in which both the proletariat as well as the bourgeoisie were viewed as obstacles to revolution. Only after the working class had been radicalized by the intervention of the Communist leadership would real power revert to the proletariat.

The situation Marx was pointing to in his Address of 1850 was analogous to that which Lenin was to wrestle with just over a half-century later in his Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution, namely, how the anticipated democratic revolution was to be transformed into a socialist one. In 1905 Lenin stopped short of adopting Trotsky's "permanent revolution" strategy, which would have meant that the democratic or bourgeois revolution was to be "telescoped" at the earliest opportunity into a proletarian seizure of power. However, as Lenin presented the "democratic revolution," it took on a rather ambiguous character.

Like Marx a half-century earlier, Lenin had little faith that the middle class would be capable of disposing of the monarchy. In fact, Lenin assumed that the tsarist regime had become an indispensable prop that the Russian bourgeoisie could ill-afford to be without. This being the case, it would be necessary for the

revolutionary forces to put maximum pressure on the middle class in order to put an end to the monarchy. The ambiguous side of this situation was in the way Lenin envisioned a "democratic dictatorship" of revolutionary workers and peasants which would combine to overthrow the tsarist regime without even the participation of the bourgeoisie. The question that was intentionally left unanswered by Lenin was whether after having disposed of the monarchy the revolutionary alliance of workers and peasants would dispose of the middle class as well, and seize power for themselves, thereby fulfilling Trotsky's "permanent revolution" prophecy. Lenin stopped short of saying that such a preemptive seizure of power should be attempted. For the time being, he was willing to follow the conventional (Menshevik!) line that a decent interval of economic development under bourgeois auspices was a necessary precondition of socialism, and that the bourgeoisie would be essential to this advancement.

A deeper ambiguity--beyond that of the uncertain role of the middle class--was embedded in Lenin's formulation of the "democratic dictatorship" in 1905. Lenin's conception of democracy was perhaps left intentionally vague, but it melded well with the tradition of Russian populism. In Lenin's mind, populism had the liability of being not only backward looking and essentially petty-bourgeois (looking to a future in which property would be equally divided) but a strictly agrarian form of revolt. Its appeal was therefore limited entirely to the peasantry. How then was the working class to have a role in the democratic movement? In typical fashion, Lenin opted for the Jacobin conception of radi-

cal democracy in which all classes would unite in order to overthrow the monarchy. What the Jacobin conception left out--and this was vital to Lenin's chances for carrying out an eventual socialist revolution--was how the revolutions in the countryside and cities would be combined.

The answer, as Lichtheim suggests, is provided by Lenin's conception of the party in a revolutionary situation. What had eventually destroyed the original Jacobins in the French Revolution was their inability to reconcile the interests of the peasantry with that of the radical democrats in the cities. Once the land question had been dealt with in the countryside, the peasantry turned against their former allies in the urban centers, and the revolution ran its course with the installation of a new conservative regime. Lenin sought to insure that this would not happen in the Russian situation. Unlike the Jacobins--who were in fact no more than a "political club" of radical democrats--the "Jacobins" in the Russian situation were to be "professional revolutionaries," or a well-disciplined nucleus of cadres capable of controlling the social forces unleashed in a revolutionary situation.

Furthermore, Lenin had stumbled upon the solution to a problem which had forever frustrated radicals, that is, how to satisfy the conflicting demands of urban workers and peasants, without antagonizing either. The revolutionary party was to be itself classless, not subordinate to either workers or peasants. Although nominally tied to the interests of the workers as the most advanced element in society, the revolutionary party was to be above the "spontaneous" desires of workers. As the highest

embodiment of the revolution, the party placed itself above all social classes, and therefore could be said to constitute a "third force" capable of managing the tensions between workers and peasants, between town and countryside.³⁸

It is precisely the vanguard conception of the revolutionary party which makes Lenin's ambiguous formulation of the "democratic dictatorship" comprehensible. As Lichtheim explains, this is because Lenin draws together two traditions which no one before had had the foresight to reconcile, let alone, on a higher level:

It was in fact a highly original fusion of the Populist and Marxist vision; and just because it combined elements of both, it proved politically superior to either. In the crisis of 1917 Lenin was able to organize a seizure of power which no democrat could pardon, but which in terms of his own definition of 'democracy' was quite legitimate: its purpose after all was to promote the democratic dictatorship of the toiling masses in town and country over the exploiters (among whom he now included the capitalist class in general). The fact that this was actually feasible in Russia because the country was still relatively backward--in other words, its economy was still to a large extent bureaucratically controlled--lifted the programme out of the realm of utopia into that of practical politics. Even so, 1917 was probably the last date for the premature socialisation of a semi-developed Russia. A few more years of industrial development (and avoidance of war!) would have undermined the entire basis of Bolshevik strategy....

In Lenin's view, the seizure of power was needed to consolidate the revolution, the democratic dictatorship representing both the peasants and the urban workers, just as the Jacobin dictatorship was supposed to have done.... Since two different social classes were involved, a political force standing above or outside them was needed to hold the alliance together, if the 'democratic dictatorship' was not to come apart immediately.³⁹

As previously indicated, this mature standpoint--in which the democratic dictatorship would telescope both the bourgeois and socialist phases of the revolution--was not fully elaborated in Lenin's thinking of 1905 when he wrote Two Tactics. It was enough that by 1917 he was able to combine the elements of his

previous revolutionary strategy (and that of Trotsky, who had originally conceived the idea of a "permanent revolution" beginning with the collapse of Tsarist Russia) into a coherent program of action. It goes without saying that for theory and practice to have coincided as they did in Lenin's leadership of the Russian Revolution, a great many other factors had to have been at work as well.

As Lichtheim suggests, had the process of industrialization been further along in Russia, it might have been impossible to dislodge the Russian bourgeoisie so easily (not to mention the inept leadership of Kerensky!). The decisive factor, however, was the horror of the First World War, which enabled Lenin to exploit the need to end the killing on the Eastern front, as well as satisfy the peasants' land-hunger. This step the Provisional Government was unwilling to take, which gave the Bolsheviks their opportunity. The point remains that by 1917 Lenin and Trotsky could claim in some sense to have foreseen the events which transpired, and could legitimately claim that their earlier thinking along these lines had prepared the way for what actions were to be taken. If 1905 was, as Lichtheim suggests, the appropriate dress rehearsal for what was to happen in 1917, Lenin and Trotsky were by now prepared.

The significance of the Bolshevik victory in 1917 for the evolution of Marxian doctrine is for Lichtheim an immense paradox and a tragedy of untold proportion. It is for this reason that it is necessary that Lenin's actual mediatory role in the events of 1905 and 1917 be separated from the consequences of the "October Revolution." As much as Marxism had been in one form or another

distorted from its original meaning--by Engels in his "orthodox Marxism," by Social Democrats like Kautsky and Bernstein, among others--the greatest distortion resulted from the meaning which Lenin and his followers were to attach to Marxism. Marxism was now the official "ideology" of not simply a political movement but of a successful revolution, and what is more, a new regime.

In this way, the success of the Bolsheviks gave Marxism the imprint of the Russian Revolution, from which it has never entirely been able to extricate itself. Marxism was interpreted by Lenin after 1917 and even more so by his followers as the "real" explanation for the success of the Communists. In particular Lenin's adaptation of the Marxian inheritance, his revival of the Jacobin-Blanquist element of the original Marxian synthesis--was now made to appear as the only valid interpretation of Marxism. Leninism as the theory and practice of Communism was to be the exclusive meaning of Marxism in the twentieth century. That the success of the Bolsheviks had been a fortuitous circumstance, that their "October Revolution" had been a minority seizure of power and not a "proletarian dictatorship," was submerged by the new Leninist ideology of the Soviet regime.

In the enormous "rush" which accompanied the Bolshevik seizure of power, it was difficult if not impossible to detect what had actually occurred. To Western Socialists and Bolsheviks alike there was a brief period of anticipation that the Bolshevik breakthrough might be repeated throughout Eastern and Central Europe, exactly as Trotsky had prophesied in his doctrine of "permanent revolution." This was made plausible by the fact that

the antiquated Austro-Hungarian Empire had fallen, as had the Imperial German government of William II. Interim Socialist governments moved into the breach in both instances, which gave the appearance of the beginning of a new order taking shape from East to West.

The early victories of the Socialists in Hungary and elsewhere in Eastern Europe were turned back easily once the "White" forces were able to regroup (forcing, among many others, a young, newly-converted Communist intellectual named Georg Lukács to flee Hungary for refuge in Austria). The situation in Germany remained inconclusive for at least four years, until it became obvious that the Socialist government which had inaugurated the Weimar Republic in 1918-19 was about to lose its own Parliamentary majority. The position of the Socialist government was made even worse when in March, 1921, the radical wing of the German Socialists--now called the Spartacist League--organized an uprising in several German states which the new government put down with extreme repression. According to Lichtheim, 1923 was probably the last time that those sympathetic to the Bolshevik Revolution might have succeeded in
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Germany.

With the realization that what had occurred in Russia at the end of World War One was in fact a "unique" event, and not the harbinger of world revolution, several conclusions became apparent. The first was that the Bolshevik victory had been as much the creature of Lenin's particular skill at exploiting a revolutionary situation as it was dependent upon a so-called "logic of history." In spite of the Bolshevik manufacture of the "pro-

letarian dictatorship" myth of the "October Revolution," which made the Bolshevik victory appear at least nominally democratic (in the populist sense of an alliance of the vast majority of workers and peasants), the Revolution brought into power a political party of the type that Lenin had described intensively in 1902 in his organizational pamphlet What Is to be Done? The minority character of the new regime was revealed even more clearly after 1921 with the ruthless suppression of the Kronstadt Rebellion.

A second realization resulting from the aftermath of World War One was that the new Soviet regime could not expect any immediate aid from the West, and that the new government was not only isolated but vulnerable to attack from unfriendly capitalist states. It had been Trotsky's thinking from early on that revolution in a backward country would require substantial economic and political help from the more advanced West if such a revolution were to succeed. By the early 1920's it became apparent that the Bolsheviks could not rely upon the West, that the revolutionary tide following World War One had subsided, and that socialism would have to be built in "one country." Now the logic of backwardness, which Trotsky had constructed and Lenin had taken over later on, came back to haunt the architects of the new regime. The industrialization process would require a "second revolution," and it would be one perhaps even more difficult to win than the original which had consolidated Bolshevik power, because it would be clearly a "revolution from above." The totalitarian reconstruction of Russian society would be the "cost" of building socialism in a backward country.

The third conclusion which followed from the new situation facing the Bolsheviks and other Western Socialists in the early 1920's was the undeniable division of Marxism into competing and rival movements. This division had been evidenced with the breakdown of the Second International in 1914 and the outbreak of the War. But it now took on deeper and more obvious meaning. The Marxian inheritance had in fact always been ambiguous. If one chose to interpret Marxism as a doctrine of revolution--even revolution led by a vanguard party--there were clearly Jacobin-Blanquist elements embedded in Marx's writings of the late 1840's and early 1850's that one might appeal to (not to mention Marx's later revolutionary pamphlet dedicated to the Paris Commune, The Civil War In France). If, on the other hand, one chose to emphasize the democratic elements embodied in Marx's championing of the Western labor movement, there were his writings of the 1860's and afterward.

As these competing elements were interpreted in practice by succeeding generations of Marxists, it became apparent that one appealed to an "Eastern" interpretation of Marxism as the doctrine of revolutionary communism in backward (and colonial) countries, while the other element appealed to a Western version of Marxism as the doctrine of the democratic labor movement. What the Russian Communists never understood was that the Bolshevik "model" of revolution could not be repeated in the West, because the great majority of workers there would not accept Leninist principles of party organization, or specifically, party dictation over the labor movement. A democratic labor movement would not submit to minority

rule. This discrepancy between Russian expectations and Western Social-Democratic traditions is still in evidence in the two Western European countries where Communists and Democratic Socialists compete for power, that is, France and Italy. (It may also help to explain the dilemma of Western Communists trying to participate in Western governments, or most recently the controversy surrounding "Eurocommunism.")

The final conclusion that could be drawn from the aftermath of the Bolshevik victory and the end of World War One was the moribund status that Marxism was to occupy as either a valid theory or practice. The culmination of the Leninist phase of the Russian Revolution into Stalinism is for Lichtheim the final evidence, if any more was needed, that Russian Communism had nothing to do with what Marx or Engels had ever intended. Even if one stretched the meaning of Marx's revolutionary doctrine in the Manifesto to its furthest limits, it never envisaged more than the need for a temporary or "interim" period of dictatorship (as dangerous as even this might be). That this theoretical element could be used to justify the creation of a monolithic party-state which would rule at times by terror while at other times through benevolence was a mockery of anything that Marx or Engels had to say about communism.

As for the status of Marxism outside the Soviet Union and its influence, the theory functioned not as the repository of a movement as much as an intellectual force, or tradition. While important as a method of economic and philosophical analysis--which derives in part from the pioneering work of earlier Austro-

Marxists like Hilferding as well as other forerunners--Western Marxism never recovered its impetus as a political movement. This absence limited the effectiveness of the Marxian inheritance in the West, in as much as it was originally intended as the theory and practice of a movement, and not simply a new methodology.

The last topic--the survival of Marxism as an intellectual tradition with limited effectiveness--provides the final subject for discussion in the present study, namely, what is left, according to Lichtheim, of Marxism, and what it may have to tell us about the present and future.

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FOOTNOTES

- 1
George Lichtheim, Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study, 2nd ed., (New York: Praeger, 1965), pp. 207-8
- 2
George Lichtheim, A Short History of Socialism, (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 178.
- 3
Ibid., p. 233.
- 4
Ibid., pp. 231 ff.
- 5
Ibid., pp. 233 ff.
- 6
Ibid., pp. 234-35; Marxism, op. cit., pp. 234 ff, pp. 246 ff.
- 7
Marxism, op. cit., pp. 241, 246; Short History, cf. pp. 188, 192-93 on the difficult reception of Capital before an audience of British socialists as late as the mid 1880's.
- 8
Marxism, op. cit., p. 247.
- 9
Ibid., p. 251.
- 10
Ibid., p. 254.
- 11
Ibid., pp. 253-54.
- 12
Ibid., p. 255.
- 13
Ibid., pp. 248-49.
- 14
Short History, op. cit., p. 227.

15

Marxism, op. cit., p. 230.

16

Ibid., p. 237n.

17

Short History, op. cit., pp. 234-35.

18

See Lichtheim's remarks, for example, in Marxism, p. 246, and pp. 294-95, 299.

19

Ibid.

20

Marxism, op. cit., pp. 289 ff.

21

Ibid., p. 299.

22

Ibid., p. 300.

23

Ibid., pp. 284-85.

24

Ibid., pp. 298-99.

25

Short History, op. cit., p. 235.

26

Marxism, pp. 312-13.

27

Ibid., pp. 303 ff.

28

Ibid., p. 277.

29

Ibid., p. 310.

30

Ibid., p. 311.

31

See Lichtheim's discussion of Luxemburg's The Accumulation of Capital in Marxism, pp. 319 ff.

32

Ibid., p. 320.

33

Ibid., pp. 313, 322; See also, Lichtheim, Imperialism, (New York: Praeger, 1971), pp. 105 ff.

34

Marxism, op. cit., p. 349.

35

Ibid., p. 343.

36

Ibid., p. 334.

37

Ibid., p. 344.

38

Ibid., p. 348.

39

Ibid., pp. 345, 347.

40

Lichtheim, Europe in the Twentieth Century, (New York: Praeger, 1972), pp. 137 ff.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION: HISTORY AND THEORY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY--GEORGE LICHTHEIM'S INTELLECTUAL LEGACY AND BEYOND

It is perhaps apparent by now that Lichtheim's major interest in political theory was concerned with the evolution and consequences of nineteenth-century social and political thought. It is likewise clear that for him Marxism represented the principal theoretical contribution of its time. This view, however debatable it might be in and of itself, is made extremely ironic by the fact that it was arrived at at a time when the theory had exhausted itself in the twentieth century, according to Lichtheim. Furthermore, it is only in historical hindsight that Marx's nineteenth-century investigations and political agitation take on such great meaning and importance; it is well to remember that for the greater part of his life Marx's work went largely unnoticed. It is only by looking back on his work that Lichtheim feels he is competent to evaluate it, and it is only after Marx's thought has been tested in practice that it can be fully comprehended. The irony, which may be central to Lichtheim's interpretive approach, is that Marxism's real importance to nineteenth-century society and history is apparent only after the fact, and only after its practical consequences have come to a conclusion in the twentieth

century. In this sense, Lichtheim is in the privileged position of being able to make final pronouncements upon Marxism while at the same time issuing its obituary.

That the nineteenth-century Marxian inheritance had been destroyed by precisely those circles that described themselves as Marxists was a point of view that Lichtheim shared with a handful of twentieth-century writers. Perhaps the first to come to this conclusion was the German Marxist philosopher Karl Korsch. Korsch was among the first to subject Marxian theory to an "internal critique," which in certain respects prefigures Lichtheim's own efforts of a generation later. The earliest and most celebrated of Korsch's interpretations of Marxism was written in 1923 under the title of Marxism and Philosophy. Written at a time when Korsch was still a Marxist, and what is more important, still a Communist, Marxism and Philosophy offered a critical examination of the changes in Marxian doctrine from its inception to the present. The finding which raised greatest suspicion among orthodox Marxists was Korsch's claim that Marx's original synthesis of theory and practice had been distorted by Engels' scientific materialism, and that Engels' singular contributions had reduced Marxism's practical effectiveness. Perhaps the most damning evidence which Korsch was able to offer, apart from the extremely high level of erudition in which the argument was made, had to do with the approach that Korsch adopted.

It was as if Marxism had been for the first time turned in against itself. Marxism as a tool of political and intellectual debate had been employed up to that time to "unmask" the

deceptions and conceits of bourgeois philosophy, science and politics. What Korsch indicated was that the identical method might be used just as appropriately, and with the same devastating results, to indicate the deceptions of nominally-Marxist movements as well. To be sure, such internal debate had occurred before--at the turn of the century in the revisionist debate, and shortly thereafter in the split between Lenin and the Menshevik faction of the Russian Socialist Party--but the difference in Korsch's case was that he had appropriated a fundamentally Marxist approach to criticize the evolution and current direction of Socialism and Communism. The message was clear: something had gone wrong with Marx's efforts to create a theory which would serve to ignite the working class into a movement for human emancipation. It could no longer, by 1923, be claimed that Marxism was suffering a momentary setback, at least in the West; what was at stake was the very survival of the original thread that Marx had captured in the mid-nineteenth century.

In 1923 Korsch stopped short of proclaiming Marxism to be moribund. On the contrary, the intention of Marxism and Philosophy was to revive the philosophical core of the doctrine in an effort to bring new life into the fortunes of Marxian Socialism. Of special interest was the emphasis which Korsch, a trained academic philosopher, attached to the Hegelian roots of Marx's thought, in particular to Marx's early efforts at bridging the gap between Hegel's "objective idealism" and Feuerbach's materialism. The so-called objective world in which human action is embedded is at least in part the product of human cog-

nition and thought. Having said as much, the problem of changing the world is bound up with the culture which sustains human existence. To take for granted that ideas change in mechanical juxtaposition to physical changes is to neglect the very "real" part that culture plays in human existence. The corollary of Korsch's philosophical criticism of Engelsian or (what has been termed) orthodox Marxism is the key role that Korsch assigns to the educative role of the party vis-à-vis the working class. The party must equip itself to combat not only the erroneous ideas which the working class has assimilated from bourgeois civilization, but also the "ideologies" which previous generations of Socialists have created for themselves.¹

The importance which Korsch attached to "superstructure" and thought forms in general raised an issue which had been all but submerged since Marx's early explorations into classical German philosophy. As such, it signaled a new direction for Marxian theory, at least in the West. At the same time that Korsch was reviving the Hegelian element in the Marxian synthesis (which he then employed to interpret and criticize what Marxism had evolved into in the twentieth century), a Hungarian Marxist philosopher, who had himself just recently escaped the counter-revolution in his homeland, was involved in precisely the same sort of task. Georg Lukács published in 1923 his own conclusions regarding the state of Marxian thinking, namely History and Class Consciousness. Lukács' work was even more elaborate and technical than that of Korsch. The intentions of both authors were, however, at least consistent if not identical. Lukács went so far as to whole-

heartedly embrace Leninist principles of party organization and revolutionary tactics (which Korsch had not done!), but where the two philosophers were in complete agreement was in the appropriate method of Marxian analysis and interpretation.

The method in question derived from Marx's initial philosophical writings. It is a matter of considerable wonder that at the time Korsch and Lukács published their findings in Marxian theory, the most exceptional pieces of Marx's early work, including the 1844 Manuscripts, The German Ideology, as well as the later first draft of Capital (the Grundrisse, written in 1857) had not even been discovered. Yet what both men concluded was that Marx's original intention departed significantly from that of his life-long companion, Engels, and that by "dialectic" Marx had never sanctioned the type of one-sided materialism that Engels had appended to their work in the 1870's and 80's. The proper rendering of Marxist method avoided the dualism of an ontology based either on materialism or idealism; rather, subjective awareness is as much responsible for the appearance of the objective world as the objective world is responsible for determining human awareness. To invest either subject or object with power for determining the other violates the essential meaning of dialectic, as understood by Marx.

This philosophical breakthrough (or "recovery," in the sense of reconstituting the original nineteenth-century method employed by Marx) is decisive for Lichtheim's own work. He is, as he states on numerous occasions, an inheritor of this Hegelian-
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Marxist tradition of theorizing. Korsch and Lukács, along with

the Italian Communist leader and philosopher Antonio Gramsci, were among the first to revive the Hegelian inheritance of the Marxian synthesis. It is from these writers, together with the various members of the "Frankfurt School" of the early 1930's in Germany that Lichtheim draws his own method of interpretation and criticism. And it is from them, especially Korsch and Lukács, that the ironies of Lichtheim's own political position emerge. It is for this reason that it bears some importance to inquire into the environment of the 1920's and 30's in order to arrive at an understanding of Lichtheim's own intellectual motivations.

The particular effort on Lichtheim's part that perhaps brings this milieu into clearest focus is his interpretation of Georg Lukács. It is apparent from Lichtheim's earlier writings that he regards Lukács as one of the few Marxist intellectuals of distinction to have remained within the Communist movement. In 1961 he claimed that along with Gramsci, Lukács was "the only other original thinker the Communist movement had produced since 1917."³ Lukács' "uniqueness" is further established by the fact that according to Lichtheim, he was the only intellectual of substance within the Communist movement to survive the Stalinist onslaught (at considerable cost to his intellectual integrity), Gramsci having died in 1937 while still imprisoned by the Italian Fascists, and before the nature of Stalinism had been revealed to the outside world. Therefore, as far as Lichtheim is concerned, Lukács occupies a unique position within both post-War Marxist environments, that of Western Marxism and Russian Communism. That it was necessary for Lukács to "stretch" himself beyond

recognition on numerous occasions in order to accomodate both camps--or, what is more likely, to sacrifice one side of himself in order to maintain his standing within the other--is perhaps the hallmark of Lukács' long intellectual career.

The side of Lukács that is most important for Lichtheim, and from which he derives many of his own theoretical insights, is that of Lukács' attachment to Hegelian philosophy, or what Lichtheim views as the Marxist inheritance in its original Hegelian form (especially apparent in Marx's early criticism of Hegel and the German idealist heritage). It was this aspect of Marxism that Lukács succeeded in recapturing in his own early collection of polemical and philosophical essays published in 1923 under the title, History and Class Consciousness. The basic outlook of this early work is by now familiar, inasmuch as it has been discussed in terms of its theoretical significance vis-à-vis the parallel contribution of Karl Korsch. What is of concern here is how Lukács arrived at this synthesis of Marx and Hegel, or rather, the genesis of this connection in Lukács' thinking of the early 1920's. How Lukács arrived at this standpoint, and what factors influenced his thinking, will hopefully help to reveal Lichtheim's own position.

The meeting point between these two men, Lukács and Lichtheim, is hardly arbitrary. Even a cursory examination of Lichtheim's brief intellectual biography of Lukács, written in the late 1960's, reveals such a striking ambivalence on Lichtheim's part as to his subject, that a deeper examination is necessary to make the work comprehensible. On the one hand, Lukács' early

exploration into Marxian theory, specifically History and Class Consciousness, is praised as a remarkable contribution to the Western (or "Central European") understanding of Marxism, while, otherwise, Lukács' reputation as a literary critic and scholar is denegated in what might be charitably described as the most scathing terms. Such animus on Lichtheim's part must be viewed reflexively; what generated such an attack on a Communist philosopher and critic, at the time still living and on the fringe of scholarly respectability in the West (Lichtheim's expressed intention was to introduce this writer to an Anglo-American audience that had yet to receive the major part of his work) may reveal as much about the interpreter as it does his subject.

What ostensibly attracts Lichtheim to Lukács is a shared intellectual tradition, which, in spite of political differences, is rooted in Central Europe and comes together in Hegelian philosophy. Lichtheim makes much of the proposition that this kind of thinking is typically opaque to an English-speaking audience, in that it is bound up with traditional metaphysics and not subject to empirical methods of investigation. One of Lichtheim's operating assumptions is that the British and the Americans see the world almost always in empirical terms, which is fundamentally different from that the metaphysical orientation common to much
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of the Central European tradition.

The difference between these two perspectives is perhaps epitomized by the concept of "totality," which plays a central role in both Lukács' and Lichtheim's writings. Originating in Hegelian philosophy, the term presumes that the world can be

known in its inner-most nature through careful investigation of its evolution over time. Knowledge is therefore "objective" and all-encompassing. The empirical approach, which derives in part from Hume, begins with the opposite assumption, that is, that the world is not knowable in its essentials, and that all that investigation discloses is the appearance of a world whose very existence may even be doubted.

These two epistemological systems were very much in competition with each other at the turn of the century, especially in the mental universe of Georg Lukács and his Central European contemporaries. While the full implications of the empirical position had not been entirely elaborated, its skeptical attitude was represented by the value-relativism of the Neo-Kantian school in Germany. Kant's epistemological presumption that natural science follows empirical rules and procedures distinct from that of humanistic science was the basis for an understanding of man, society, and history that could make no absolute knowledge claims concerning the validity of ethical questions. As much as the practitioners of Neo-Kantian social or humanistic science (Geisteswissenschaft) could know of the human world was through the systematic understanding (Verstehen) of the different cultural systems that constitute human values. As expressed by Wilhelm Dilthey and later by Max Weber, such understanding could not reconstitute a theory of knowledge which would guide ethical judgment or be of universal significance. The neo-Kantian revival achieved perhaps a middle position between the discredited metaphysics of traditional philosophy and theology and the strict

empiricism of the natural sciences. "Facts" might be placed into cultural wholes, but each cultural system was relative to its particular time and place. The human world as a totality of knowledge and ethics had been broken.

Lukács' formal training in philosophy was within this Central European tradition of humanistic science. This training, however, did not satisfy a deep yearning on his part for a more integrative approach, one which might offer a younger generation the hope of achieving absolute certainty and ethical direction in a changing and increasingly perilous world. Lichtheim quotes the following passage from the beginning of Lukács' The Theory of the Novel, written in 1914-15:

Blessed are the times when the firmament is a road map whose contours mark the way to be followed and whose paths are illuminated by the stars....The world is wide and yet resembles one's own abode, for the fire burning in the soul is consubstantial with the stars....'Philosophy is really nostalgia,' says Novalis, the desire to be at home everywhere.' Hence philosophy as a form of existence [Lebensform]...is always symptomatic of a rift between the interior and the exterior, a sign of the essential difference [Wesensverschiedenheit] of the ego and the world, the incongruity of the soul and the deed.⁵

The feeling of spiritual desolation expressed in those lines might have stood for the disillusionment of a generation of intellectuals confronted by a world that did not resemble reason or did not offer the hope of practical solutions. Against this impenetrable reality, the intellectual might retreat into a world of private meaning and value, or withdraw further into an attitude of contempt for the meaninglessness around him. Lukács had himself begun his literary career in this uncertain direction, as a member of the Stefan George circle of young poets

although his spiritual yearning took on new direction with the outbreak of the War, and three years later, with the success of the Bolsheviks in Russia.⁶

The point of this intellectual excursion into Lukács' formative period is that it brings out a compelling theme in Lichtheim's work: the discontent with what might be termed "non-objectivist" (or subjectivist) modes of thought which make limited claims of knowledge of the world, or that claim neutrality on issues of moral and political concern. While separated from Lukács by a generation, the younger Lichtheim was confronted by a social and political world every bit as confusing and seemingly irrational as the decaying empire of Wilhelminian Germany; in Lichtheim's early adulthood, the sudden hope and gradual disillusionment of the Weimar period run parallel with that of Lukács' earlier experience. The profound question facing the intellectual living in the midst of such crisis and uncertainty is how such a reality is to be faced; in other words, what is a thinking person to do? One answer is to escape into a private, privileged world of inner experience, such as Lukács' early involvement with aesthetics. But this is, for an objectivist like Lichtheim, to escape the pressures of the crumbling world around you. Another answer is to condemn the stupidity of the world as an inevitability, such as in the nihilism of some of Nietzsche's writings. A third escape route is provided by the claim of scientific objectivity, as if one can be and should be value-free and disinterested about the collapse of one's own social and political world. Clearly, from Lichtheim's view, these intellectual decisions--and they are

all moral and political decisions as well, including that of disinterested science--are inadequate.

The solution arrived at initially by Lukács, as a result of the inescapable horror of World War One, was to return to an involvement with the world around him, and to accept the intellectual and moral obligation of trying to comprehend this contradictory reality in its essential meaning. At this point Hegelian philosophy provides the inspiration and the urgency for a rational solution to the problems of a seemingly incoherent world. To be sure, it is not the contemplative side of Hegel's legacy that appeals to Lukács, but the search for an objective, rational solution to the turmoil of the present historical situation, and one in which thought must yield a practical solution to the problems of men. It is to the "Left Hegelianism" of the Marxist inheritance that Lukács finds hope amidst the desperation of World War One and its aftermath.

That Lukács should have returned to the existentialist core of the young Marx, who for all his criticism of Hegel had retained the notion that history has objective meaning--precisely because it reveals the pre-conscious existence of man--that one should not be surprised at the remarkable appeal of Hegelian-Marxism to Lukács. For both men, thought had become a mode of existence if not of survival. It is this aspect of History and Class Consciousness, as might be compared with Marx's early writings, that gives the document its peculiar mix of philosophical argument and Promethian hope. Through a comprehension of himself as the identical subject and object of history, man is able to transform

himself and the world he has created into an obedient servant of reason, that is, of man delivered from an alienated existence.

What especially attracted the attention of Western intellectuals, and especially those familiar with the Hegelian heritage, was the way in which Lukács was able to dispel the neo-positivist claim that facts had to be separated from values and interests. Lukács' effort was in part directed at refuting the then popular notion of a value-free social science, which--on Lukács' account--provided no more than a rationalization (or "reification") for an otherwise alienated social existence. Without penetrating the "facts" to discover the objective potential for a transformation of the social order as presently constituted, the social scientist was led necessarily to conclude that the social order was an ineluctable fact.

On the opposite side of the dispute over science, Lukács succeeded in demolishing the inverted Hegelianism of Engels, which had invested nature and history with rational properties that originated actually in man. The effect of Lukács' stunning collection of essays was to infuse strong support for Marxism among a disheartened generation of radical intellectuals, especially among a German-speaking audience. As Lichtheim records this response:

...it was precisely this rejection of the fact-value dichotomy that made Lukács important for an entire generation of Central European intellectuals who had outgrown the optimistic outlook of the pre-1914 era, disliked the romantic irrationalism of the Right, and had no faith in the quasi-mystical socialist utopianism of such writers as Ernst Bloch. They found in Lukács' work of 1923 what no other theorist was able to provide: a Marxist analysis which stuck to the facts and yet did not renounce the Hegelian inheritance in the name of

'science'....he raised the debate [over philosophy and science] to a level where a Hegelianized version of Marxism was for the first time taken seriously by significant numbers of Central European intellectuals. What they here encountered was their own tradition, purged of its idealist blinkers and given a radical twist that made it a serious competitor for the attention of an intelligentsia recently disoriented by the dissolution of liberalism and the decay of religious faith.⁷

It is difficult to see how Lichtheim could not have been similarly captivated by Lukács' Hegelian-Marxism, given the similarities between his own outlook and that of Lukács. On excellent authority, it is reported that by the early 1930's Lichtheim had become thoroughly familiar with the writings of Lukács and Karl Korsch, the principal expositors of Hegelian-Marxism at the time.⁸ Why then is Lukács denounced in such visceral terms by Lichtheim? This is at least one of the ambiguities embedded in Lichtheim's biography of Lukács, and one which may provide a revealing glimpse of Lichtheim's own orientation. The denunciation of Lukács is, first of all, not as a philosopher, as the above favorable impression of History and Class Consciousness makes clear. Rather, Lukács is condemned for his political role following the publication of History and Class Consciousness, which Lichtheim calls "the most brilliant and influential of his writings."⁹

The political role Lukács chose for himself was as a member and spokesman for the Communist Party (apparently in December of 1918). At the time of the publication of History and Class Consciousness he was still sufficiently uninitiated to write a book that was for the most part independently conceived and therefore did not conform to any strict political "line." The reception to the book, as previously indicated, varied according to the

audience that received it. A substantial number of German-speaking intellectuals were highly enthusiastic, even in the Leninist overtones that Lukács had injected into the political orientation of the book (as contrasted to its more philosophical side), as has just been seen. The book received a highly negative evaluation, however, in official Communist circles, even including a censure from Lenin's closest heirs--Bukharin and Zinoviev--who regarded the book as a typical example of what the master had previously termed "left-wing communism, an infantile disorder." 10
The work of Karl Korsch was received in similar terms.

On two subsequent occasions Lukács was once again to defy party orthodoxy in order to speak out on issues of dire concern to Communists and Socialists alike. The first was in 1928 when Lukács published his by now famous "Blum Theses" on the desirability of a united front with Socialists and progressive democrats 11 in order to combat the greater threat of Fascism. By this time the Third International, under Moscow's tutelage, had already given up this strategy in favor of one which identified bourgeois democracy as the prime enemy rather than Fascism. The upshot of the affair was that Lukács, who had taken "Blum" as his Hungarian Party name, was forced to recant his Theses or face expulsion from the Party. He chose the former, although claimed later in life that his "self-criticism" had been "tactical" and not based on sincere conviction. Such was Lukács' fate within the Communist movement during the thirties and forties, up until 1956, when he once again entered political life as a Culture Minister under the brief Nagy government, only to retreat into silence when that govern-

ment fell. It was an astonishing record that could hardly inspire confidence in the independence of Communist intellectuals, despite Lukács' various attempts to mediate his own politics with that of the Party.

Perhaps the most decisive moment in Lichtheim's own life (and that of civilization by any standards) was the slow and agonizing drift toward Nazism during the late years of the Weimar Republic. What Lichtheim has to say on this account, which colors much of his attitude toward Lukács' eventual political role, is therefore of great importance. A recital of the events of this period is unnecessary: it is enough to record that what had been a brief moment of great intellectual and political exploration for the generation coming of age during the 1920's in Germany (which included George Lichtheim, a Leftist, and a Jew) came to an abrupt end just fifteen years after the founding of the Republic. The depths of the horror which were to follow could not have been anticipated in 1933, but the "Nazi Revolution" marked those of its victims who were fortunate enough to leave Germany for the rest of their lives. For Lichtheim, who emigrated in 1933 after less than a year of higher education at Heidelberg, the lessons of "the German catastrophe" (as he later referred to it) are perhaps¹² more important than even the actual events.

The diagnosis of Fascism, the search for its roots, is of course a familiar theme. Lichtheim's approach to the problem departs from most of the scholarship in this area because it is written from the standpoint of what might have happened, given the historical possibilities of the situation that ultimately gave

rise to Fascism in Germany. Once again, this attitude is reflexive because it brings the author back to the crisis of his own time, and to the various actors who were responsible for shaping these events.

If Fascism was at one level a "German problem"--that is, rooted in the unique character or cultural predisposition of German nationalism (and Lichtheim feels that such "ideal" factors play a role in history, as in this case, with the failure of the eighteenth-century German Enlightenment to prepare the way for modern forms of social and political life, which is to say, for liberal-democracy),¹³ then the responsibility for it must be located within the unique constellation of factors that made it possible. Even a diffuse variable such as German culture cannot be taken as a self-activating totality--although this is the type of explanation that might be offered by German idealist metaphysics. Lichtheim points instead to the particular formation of German intellectual life, whose focus of attention was typically "above" the mundane problems of the world, but was able with little difficulty to become the bulwark of reaction when the situation required it. While it is certainly true that German culture possessed a varied tradition, including one capable of nurturing a democratic and modern culture, it is also true that this aspect was not the dominant tendency, according to Lichtheim.¹⁴

That something as seemingly ephemeral as a cultural tradition should be considered as a key to the outcome of the Weimar situation is an indication of Lichtheim's own Hegelian origins. If ideas do not determine events, intellectuals may nevertheless

play a prominent part. In the Weimar situation, their role was considerable. Given the proper definition, the progressive and humanistic side of German culture might have saved the Republic and the world from the disaster which was to follow. The situation came to a head, with at least a conceivable choice for intellectuals to play. As Lichtheim depicts this fateful arrangement:

The decisive battle had to be fought out on the level of conscious choice between the two basic currents within German culture: rationalism and humanism on the one hand, irrationalism and barbarism on the other. In political terms the intelligentsia had to be converted. But this could never be achieved by dinning propaganda into its reluctant ears. The conversion had to be genuine, and it had to start from the awareness of a common purpose: the restoration of Germany's classical tradition before it was overwhelmed by the romantic flood and the latter's final catastrophic outcome: the 'barbarization of antiquity' by Nietzsche and his Fascist progeny.¹⁵

Whether Nietzsche bears intellectual responsibility for the Fascist onslaught as Lichtheim claims (the more balanced view of recent scholars is that Nietzsche's writings do not disclose such an intention, however suggestive they may be in certain respects), the point remains that for the Weimar Republic to have moved forward rather than continue its slide into Fascism, several obstacles on the Left would have had to have been overcome. First, according to Lichtheim, the mythology of dialectical materialism would have had to give way to a truly dialectical approach, such as argued by Lukács. By the 1920's, the orthodox Marxism of Engels had become a rather transparent ideology to everyone but those brought up on it. If Marxism as an "integrative ideology" could have given way to a genuinely theoretical view of man and history, its appeal might have transcended the status of a subculture within German society. The argument could have been

carried to the educated middle class, especially those located within the ranks of the German educational establishment, instead of abandoning this influential stratum to Fascism. The point here is not merely of historical concern, because, as will be seen later, the socialist movement under conditions of mature industrialism requires that the traditional aspirations of the industrial workers be reconciled with the interests of white collar workers as well, if democratic socialism is to have a broad enough base to be viable. To define class in the traditional Marxist sense is to refuse to acknowledge a current social structure that no longer resembles that of the early industrial revolution.

Secondly, it would have been necessary for those able to bridge the gap between Marxism and the German aristocratic-bourgeois tradition to have acted independently of Russian influence. If dialectical materialism had become by the late 1920's a myth that held back the assimilation of socialist thinking in the West, a second equally dangerous myth was that which surrounded the authority of the Bolshevik Revolution. Lukács is the obvious target of this hypothetical reconsideration of the Weimar situation. In Lichtheim's view, Lukács was in a unique position to recognize what had taken place in Russia, and furthermore, where Leninism departed from the Western Marxist tradition. The essay on party organization in History and Class Consciousness had the obvious intention of reconciling Lukács' critique of orthodox Marxism with that of Leninism, while at the same time making Lenin the legitimate heir to the Marxist tradition. That these two objectives were not logically possible did not keep Lukács from attempt-

ing them.

Lukács had already devoted great effort to developing the hypothesis that orthodox Marxism (as interpreted by Engels and Kautsky among others) had mistaken a process of natural evolution for an historical one, and one in which human agency was essential to the attainment of the socialist objective. Without an adequate consciousness of how this process operated in its totality, the historical agent--in this case, the proletariat--might miss its opportunity of achieving an historical breakthrough. Lukács refers to such an opportunity as an "objective possibility," that is, an opportunity to act that is rooted in the existential situation that one faces in life. Although seemingly contradictory, an objective possibility brings together the unfolding of the historical process with the subjective awareness of the actors themselves as to how that process might be directed toward human fulfillment. Because history (like man) does not possess a predetermined goal, but only a hidden potential which is based on man's prior social and material development, the attainment of the goal (or its non-attainment!) must rest on human responsibility.

Part of the significance of Lukács' formulation of objective possibility was the recognition of "contingency" in the historical process (something all but eliminated as "pre-scientific" in the orthodox view of Marxism). If things did not have to happen, if mistakes did occur, if the revolution did not have to happen, who or what would take responsibility for seeing to it that the revolution did take place? The answer for Marx, who at least in his earlier work seemed to recognize always the political signifi-

cance of doing the right thing at the right moment, rested on an amalgam of social and political forces poised and ready to act when the situation warranted it. The social component was made up of the most advanced class in the existing social structure, while the political element comprised those most knowledgeable and able to exercise leadership in a revolutionary situation (namely, a political party).

Lukács, at this point, joins Lenin in his departure from Marx's early theory of revolution by proclaiming the necessity that the working class be subordinated to the political party, in this case, the Communist Party. The party becomes the possessor of true consciousness, incapable of doing wrong, while the element of contingency is explained as a by-product of the false-consciousness of the proletariat, as well as of other classes in society. The riddle to history has been answered--history (or "pre-history") having come to a conclusion--and the Communist Party, having apprehended the real goal of history, is able to direct the unanointed in their progress along the path to fulfillment. That a philosopher should have "reasoned" through such a justification in order to arrive at the age-old reality of dictatorship is perhaps appropriate. Nevertheless, that Lukács should have been attracted to Leninism, and at least give nominal support to Stalinism, is for Lichtheim a horrible betrayal: theory (and a great thinker) extinguishing itself in the cause of political barbarism.

The practical effect of Lukács' affiliation with the Communist Party during the years following the War and later on after his censure by the Russians was to remove him from any posi-

tion of independence. Had he pursued his thinking along the lines suggested by his philosophical critique of positivist science, he and others like him might have established lines of agreement with educated Germans, and the academic establishment in particular. Lichtheim observes that it was among such groups that resentment against the Republic was greatest and a radical alternative from the far-Right most welcome:

The dominant ideology [of German national culture]--a compound of reactionary romanticism, aggressive militarism, worship of power, and irrational hatred of anything Western, liberal, humanist, cosmopolitan, or 'Jewish'--had its stronghold in the schools and universities. Whereas in France the teaching profession, from top to bottom, was predominantly on the 'left' and could be won over to a humanist form of socialism, in Germany the schoolteachers formed the shock troops of nationalism and reaction. All this was perfectly obvious to anyone who had his eyes open....It was a commonplace among the small but influential Jewish community which in the 1920's represented what was left of German liberalism, after the bulk of its troops had defected to the Nationalists.¹⁶

Of the Social Democrats and their perception of the growing strength of the reactionary tide under Weimar, Lichtheim reports:

It was plain to the Social Democrats and accounts in part for the despairing obstinacy with which they clung to the crumbling fabric of the Republic they had brought to birth in 1918. The fact that they had botched the job--and in the process had lost their hold over the minority of genuinely radical workers and intellectuals--did not invalidate their perception that they were perched on top of a volcano. The Weimar Republic was not merely unpopular (after 1920 it could not even count on a reliable parliamentary majority): its mere existence evoked furious rage in the breasts of the military, most of the students, a majority of the teaching profession in the schools and universities, much of the peasantry, and the bulk of the provincial middle class. The twin pillars of the original Weimar coalition--Social Democracy and the Catholic Church--possessed no standing in the eyes of the Army, the landed gentry, or the Protestant upper class. The Social Democrats had only the trade unions to fall back on, and the Catholics--as Hitler's easy triumph in 1933 was to demonstrate--were only too ready to abandon the sinking ship and rally to an authoritarian regime.¹⁷

This poignant recollection on Lichtheim's part of the seemingly

impossible situation faced by Weimar liberals and radicals alike expresses how precarious the Republic's very existence had become by the late 20's and 30's. Support had dwindled to a precious handful. It may seem strange that Lichtheim does not mention the obvious economic pressures which were working to bring down Weimar: the ruinous inflation, which virtually wiped out the savings of the middle class, and the massive unemployment affecting all classes, not to mention the increasing concentration of economic ownership in heavy industry. ¹⁸ These factors could only have made matters worse for the Republic, but taken together, the economic decline of Weimar does not explain the Hitler phenomenon. This was precisely what was wrong with the Communist analysis of the Fascist threat, before and after 1933.

What the German Communists had concluded by the late twenties, with the "help" of their Russian guardians, was that the Weimar Republic was merely a façade for the domination of monopoly capital, that in fact, bourgeois democracy was no more than a corrupt form of capitalist domination, and that whatever would take the place of the Republic would inevitably hasten the revolution in Germany. The decision to abandon the Republic was final proof, if any was needed, that the Communists--whose electoral strength was increasing as parties of the center lost support--had at least one thing in common with their arch-enemy on the Right: a hatred for democratic institutions and a belief that only a violent solution would end the problems of the Republic. As many have observed, by the late twenties the resentment and despair on the Left was not unlike that of the appeal of the Right.

In Lichtheim's view the strategy of Communist capitulation

to the Right in hopes that a brief period of Fascist rule would contribute to a new revolutionary situation was flawed on at least two counts. First of all, the German working class was not revolutionary.¹⁹ This had been proven on numerous earlier occasions, including the abortive uprising in 1919 which led to the murder of Rosa Luxemburg, when the forces of the Left had resorted to armed struggle. Faith in spontaneous or even "directed" mass violence was a hold-over from the pre-industrial age when a Jacobin solution to poverty and dislocation seemed possible. Both Luxemburg and Lenin failed to appreciate, according to Lichtheim, that the day of mass uprisings (which had largely been a peasant affair in the first place) were part of the legacy of backwardness that was not likely to be re-enacted in the more advanced West. What is more, the working class in Germany had been the strongest supporter of the democratic reform that had finally been achieved in the Weimar Constitution (however inadequate it had proven to be otherwise), and was not likely to abandon these institutions in an act of revolutionary violence.

The second great error the Communists committed was in underestimating the power of the state under dictatorial control. This, too, was a legacy of nineteenth-century orthodox Marxism, which had traditionally denigrated the state as a secondary instrument of repression in relation to the "real" power exercised by capital over labor. Even after the Nazi state consolidated its power over German society (accompanied by the murder and imprisonment of the German Left), the Communists (and other independent²⁰ Marxists) clung to the faith that the Nazi's were only a veiled

disguise for monopoly capital and imperialism. It seemed inconceivable that a new type of political organization capable of the domination of society had replaced the traditional bourgeois state.

The Marxist writers who were closest to the breakthrough necessary to comprehend the dimensions of the new bureaucratic and totalitarian state (in the case of Fascism) were Gramsci and to a lesser extent Lukács. For reasons that had to do perhaps more with party loyalty than intellectual conviction, Lukács continued to speak of Fascism as a capitalist disorder, and the Fascist state as its last refuge. This was perhaps "forced" on his part because of the kind of pressure he was under after 1923 (brought on by the publication of his heretical book, History and Class Consciousness)--and later on, after 1928, and the publication of his "Blum Theses"--to conform to the Moscow line in his political work, and the "encouragement" he received to write on politically less-sensitive subjects (hence Lukács' reversion to literary criticism, which he had done before his involvement with Marxism). That Lukács might not have been taken unaware of the impending Fascist threat is revealed in the non-deterministic, that is, dialectical character of his writing in politics, including his so-called "Blum Theses." Also, having himself witnessed the full fury of the counter-revolution in his homeland made him more sensitive to the Fascist threat throughout Europe. After 1928, however, he did not depart from Party orthodoxy on the character of this new political phenomenon, and continued to insist that it was class-bound and a terminal condition of capitalism. It is even suggested by one recent study that Lukács' later, thoroughgoing Stalinist phase was a psychological reflex triggered by

guilt for having been in any sense an idealist during the twenties. Idealism and subjectivism were linked in retrospect by Lukács to the irrationalism of the Fascist phenomenon itself, and it was therefore necessary to purge any such thinking from his later work in order to atone for past sins.

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From an entirely different vantage point, even less favorable to free expression than Lukács' self-imposed censorship, the Italian Communist leader and philosopher Antonio Gramsci was able to explain the character of the Fascist threat. Imprisoned by the Italian Fascists soon after they took power in the twenties, Gramsci nevertheless succeeded, against all odds, in distilling from his political experience and philosophical training the phenomenon of the twentieth-century totalitarian party and state. Through the neo-Hegelian influence of such thinkers as Croce, Gramsci drew a picture of modern twentieth-century politics that placed greater emphasis on moral and political reconstruction than simply the economic requirements of socialism. The task of the "modern prince" (who was to be an intellectual with working-class origins) was to instruct society and the masses in the requirements of the new age and prepare them for the struggles which lie ahead.

22

Together with Lukács, Gramsci had discovered that the "superstructure" of ideas and culture was the vital source of political action, and that if one followed this suggestion, the level of material development of society was less important in the determination of revolution than the moral and political development of a people. Furthermore, the political integument that held society together had less to do with actual force than with the moral

authority exercised by the ruling class upon the lower classes. The real basis of legitimacy of the modern state was neither strictly economic nor bound up with the threat of violence, but was based on the imposition of moral and ethical principles by the ruling class, or what Gramsci called its hegemony over society.

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In the writings of this hunchbacked, imprisoned political leader Marxism had travelled a long way from its orthodox nineteenth-century origins as a theory of "scientific socialism." What Korsch, Lukács, and finally Gramsci had injected into Marxian thinking was the moral and philosophical outlook of the younger Marx, who had been inspired by Hegel's philosophy of history and by his dialectical approach to the problem of being and consciousness. That the above three thinkers should have returned to the searching, impassioned, and intensely political aspect of the early Marxian inheritance is consistent with the dire situation that socialists in the West found themselves facing in the twenties and thirties. It may be an axiom that when history or events approach a "crisis" situation--when events are "closing in" rather than following a supposed predictable course--the philosophical roots of political thinking take precedence over pious pronouncements of dogma or political orthodoxy. A premonition of the Fascist onslaught seems to have been at work in Korsch's and Lukács' thinking, as was the reality of Italian Fascism in Gramsci's life and writings.

The tragedy is that at least in the case of German Fascism, the Communists had either given in to a grim pessimism that some form of right-wing authoritarianism was inevitable by the early-30's, or was even a desirable alternative to the indirection and vacilla-

tion of the Republic. Comforted by their Moscow colleagues, the German Communists looked upon Fascism as only an interim solution and one which would inevitably bring on a violent worker reaction. When it did not, when it led instead to the decimation of those radicals who had ruefully acquiesced in the Nazi takeover, all that was left was the autopsy of what had gone wrong. The over-all effect was to confirm the hypothesis that the revolution in Russia had been unique and that the first priority of Communists worldwide was to defend the Russian Revolution, and concomitantly, to accept political dictation from Moscow.

What then had become of the nineteenth-century Marxian inheritance? The revolutionary side had been spent in the early years of the Russian Revolution in a fusion of Russian populist and Marxist agitation. The theory of the early years may have been Marxist in inspiration (certainly Lenin's background qualified him as at least an intellectual trained in the ways of Western Marxism) while the inspiration of the masses--especially the peasants--was grounded in the populist tradition. When revolutionary hopes and anticipations in the West finally gave out in the 1920's and 30's with the spread of Fascism, Russian Marxism was transformed into what might be termed a "pure" ideology, in the sense of Stalinism--in that it served consciously to disguise the real nature of the totalitarian dictatorship in the out-worn rhetoric of nineteenth-century Marxism (prime examples would be the use of such concepts as "proletarian dictatorship" and "dialectical materialism" by the regime to describe itself and its logical foundation)--and in the West, Marxism was submerged under the weight of Fascism.

This is what Lichtheim means by the contention that 1917

was the last time that Marxism had an historical validity as the theory and practice of a movement. Shortly afterward, it would be bastardized by the Russian experience, and in the West it would lose out to Fascism in the country where its hopes had seemed greatest, at least before World War One.

In this latter outcome, Lichtheim was a casualty, along with a generation of "outsiders" having come of age during Weimar. It is not difficult to detect Lichtheim's own anger at the German teaching profession in his characterization of it as being anti-Western, anti-liberal, anti-humanist, anti-cosmopolitan, and anti-Semitic.²⁴ He was one of its targets. The paradox is that what Lichtheim retained from his intellectual formation was the heritage of German humanistic culture that had been all but shut out of its universities, namely that type of thought represented by Hegelian dialectical thinking and its connection with Marxian theory. The heritage of "Central European thinking" remained part of Lichtheim's outlook on the world in his career as a journalist, and later in life when his thinking turned to the "grand" philosophical traditions from which he himself had gained perspective. Marxism was clearly the preeminent example of such a tradition.

The task of understanding or "interpreting" such a tradition, perhaps especially one as over-powering as Marxism, was made easier but also deeply troubling by the perceived fact (to Lichtheim) that the Marxian tradition had been "resolved," that is, its importance as an active body of ideas shaping events had come to an end--in his own lifetime. The tradition could now be approached as an artifact, as an historical phenomenon whose origins and consequences could be examined for themselves, without the danger of

bias and partiality. The process of interpretation was made difficult because so many times before the adherents to the system had spoken as if they understood what the tradition was, although usually only from an angle of perceived interest. Marxism, a body of thought which had its origins in various "critiques" of thought, which were only inverted images of reality, had itself become an ideology. Therefore, historical interpretation would have to strip away the layers of erroneous meaning which had been appended to the thought of the principal contributors, in this case Marx and Engels. When this process of genetic excavation had been completed, it would then be necessary to establish the historical connections between what the authors had originally intended and what had become of those intentions later on.

What Lichtheim discovered in his research was that Marxism was made up of a synthesis of elements which were not all consistent but reflected the very real problems of the author's own lives and that of society at the time. Whether conscious of any discrepancies or not, the founders had gone through at least four "adjustments" in the meaning of their doctrine, which were reflected in their choice of subject-matter and their political outlook:

- (1) beginning in the mid-1840's with a heavily theoretical exploration of Hegelian metaphysics and German idealist thinking in general (with the help of other "Left-Hegelians" like Feuerbach), and oriented toward democratic reform of German politics and government;
- (2) shifting in the late 1840's and early 1850's to a revolutionary perspective brought on by the anticipated resumption of political struggle suggestive of the French Revolution, only

to be fought out this time with the help of the advanced consciousness of its principal participants and beneficiaries, the "working class";

(3) shifting with the decline of revolutionary activity in the early 1850's to an economic (and historical) examination of the industrial society taking shape at an ever-increasing rate, especially in Britain, and with it the need for a democratic labor movement as the appropriate vehicle to socialism; and finally,

(4) the transformation by Engels during the last twenty years of his life of the Marxian synthesis into the operational code of the European labor movement, especially through the popularization of "dialectical materialism" among labor leaders, Social-Democrats, and radicals as the world-view of the European labor movement.

What distinguishes Lichtheim's interpretation of the genesis and proliferation of the nineteenth-century Marxian thinking from that of others is: (1) the choice of its method, which implicitly follows Marx's own suggestion that a body of thought be understood by the function it is intended by its author to perform in his own social and historical milieu, and (2) the recognition that a body of thought need not be entirely internally consistent, although its elements may be understood to have a logical connection when examined in the context of the author's time and place. Few writers have chosen this approach. The more common assumption is that by isolating a particular problem or interest within a tradition of political thought (or within what is often termed the "history of political thought") one can discover the essentials of an author's work. This has certainly been the case with most of the recent Marx scholarship, which has sought to "lay bare"

his true intentions, as if his intentions are consistent, or could be discovered through an examination of the inner-meaning of his use of language.

What is of concern at this point is the validity of Lichtheim's historical approach to the origins and early application of Marxian thought, in particular Marx's and the later Engel's efforts to formulate a theory of society that would resolve the "crisis" of their time, which was--broadly speaking--that of capitalism and the practical solution to its attendant consequences, that solution being a political movement oriented around socialism or communism. In this regard, Lichtheim's historical approach answers many of the problems of interpretation that have been either unaddressed by others or have been dealt with inadequately. There is a second dimension to Lichtheim's assessment of Marxism that is, in the present view, less adequate, namely Lichtheim's "resolution thesis" as regards the fortunes of Marxism in the twentieth century. For the present, however, it would be useful to examine how Lichtheim's efforts at understanding the Marxian tradition in its early formulation compare with that of others.

It might first be stated that Marxism is of course not the only political tradition that has attracted such wide attention from political theorists. If Marx interpretation has become almost a growth industry in political theory, it is followed closely by the interest that has within the last generation been shown in the origins and fate of the liberal tradition. Even a brief examination of the literature in this vast field reveals many of the same problems that have been encountered in the interpretation of the

Marxian tradition. One of the problems approached by scholars with an historical point of view (although different from that of Lichtheim) is the question of at what time and in whose thinking does the tradition originate. If one follows Robert Cumming's compelling study, the tradition is almost timeless, having its origins in a psychological and intellectual predisposition of authors as varied as the ancient Greek and Roman historians Polybius and Cicero, as well as later contributions by Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hume, Locke, and concluding perhaps in the life and thought of John Stuart Mill. There are, therefore, universal elements of liberalism to be found throughout the Western tradition of political thought.²⁵

Another view of its origins, one clearly more congenial to that of Lichtheim's own historical approach, is taken by C. B. Macpherson, who insists that the liberal tradition is a feature of modern society, or at least of the inception of what Macpherson refers to as a "market-oriented society." This view distinguishes the social and economic character of the basic assumptions of such writers as Hobbes, Locke, and Harrington. What is perhaps vague or unclear about Macpherson's otherwise valuable contribution is how such ideas inspired the adoption of such liberal innovations as constitutionalism and later representative government. In other words, if liberalism was in its intellectual formation reflective of a new type of social order, with particular political requirements, how then were its major theoretical pronouncements received and what consequences stemmed from its proliferation as a doctrine of action?²⁶ In the American connection, the recent work of Gary Wills is illustrative of how doctrines do make connec-

tions with political action, in the case of the presumed influence of the political and epistemological thought of the Scottish moralists (specifically Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith) upon the American Founders, and especially the thought of Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence.²⁷

The issue of who resides within the liberal tradition, when it began, and what were its precise political consequences are no less absorbing to interpreters than are the related questions of whether the thoughts of its various contributors were internally consistent or whether the doctrine is of contemporary relevance. It is fair to say that the various interpreters each have a particular method for selecting certain authors as being influential, while others receive little or no mention. Similarly, how are discrepancies in the thought of authors belonging to the same tradition to be explained? A generation of scholarship has been devoted to the problem of Hobbes' theory of political obligation,²⁸ as to whether it has theological or epistemological roots.

A suggestive approach to the problems of who is of key importance in a tradition and who is not, and of the internal consistency of a particular author's work might be to see the author's literary production as tied to his time, in both its intellectual and political connections, that is, to enlarge one's reading of the author's text to take into account where ideas are borrowed from intellectual predecessors (or less well known contemporaries), as well as to see the author's work as tied to the outstanding events of his age. That an author's work may not resolve the controversy over the place of traditional Christian theology in the new age of Newtonian science (in Hobbes' case)

may be an understandable part of the author's attachment to his age--while the political significance of the Newtonian revolution, with its emphasis on discrete particles of matter, may help us to understand how the author sees his society, as say, in this transfer from science to political theory, as composed of discrete individuals with opposing interests.

The foregoing discussion is meant only to indicate that historical interpretation offers a needed vantage point to view different political traditions in their totality and as part of political life itself, insofar as an author is involved with the human dilemmas of his time. Too often, as Lichtheim suggests, the works of an author are made "holy writ," as if a theorist could be expected to have resolved the contemporary welter of conflicting opinion without having his own work marked by the dilemmas he was hoping to resolve. Lichtheim's historical approach was designed as well to deny a fashionable shiboleth among academicians that the political thought of the past was composed by disinterested scholars such as themselves, as if the great writers of the past had no relationship to political life.

In the case of the Marxist tradition, which has only of late gained a degree of academic respectability, many of the same problems as just encountered in liberalism are reflected in the findings of the leading interpreters. If the work of several of the most recent are examined, many of the same problems to which Lichtheim devoted considerable attention are dealt with, with not always satisfactory results. It may not always be necessary to adopt Lichtheim's historical approach in interpreting political thought,

such as in cases where it is necessary to clarify specific issues in the writings of a particular author. However, when one wishes to incorporate the works of a writer, or to incorporate the works of several authors who are writing within what is perceived (either by the authors themselves or attributed to them by the interpreter) as a tradition of shared methodological assumptions and subject-matter, historical analysis may be especially helpful in resolving ambiguities and discrepancies based on textual examination.

There is little doubt, for example, that the recent work of Bertell Ollman in interpreting Marx adds considerably to the understanding of Marx's "peculiar" use of language, which Professor Ollman likens (following Pareto) to the problem of having to distinguish between a variety of different meanings for the same word or phrase. The solution which Ollman offers is that Marx was in the habit of analyzing societal "wholes" rather than "parts," and that when he speaks of one aspect of reality (or what Ollman refers to as a "relation"), he often is looking upon it as a microcosm of the whole. Such a clarification helps immeasurably, as Ollman demonstrates, in trying to understand some of the technical terms Marx uses in his analysis of capitalism, such as "material productive force," which could mean anything from actual plant to such non-material factors as the division of labor, technology, and science. The same diversity of meaning afflicts the use of such characteristic terms as ideology and class. This would be a point which Lichtheim shares with Ollman and others, except that Ollman finds it necessary to claim that Marx was always clear about what he intended and that he never changed his mind, despite

a lifetime of writing in which many of the same issues were dealt
29
with.

That this is a demonstrably erroneous view, at least in every case, may be illustrated with reference to a concept that Marx uses in different ways, and for reasons that have nothing to do with strict linguistic meaning. The use of the term "democracy" has a variety of meanings for Marx, owing to the fact that it was meant to apply to different historical situations and for different political intentions. What at one time represented a desirable goal to Marx later took on more sinister connotations. If one follows the above outline of elements constituting what Lichtheim refers to as the Marxian synthesis, it is possible to construct at least three distinctive meanings for democracy (as
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Lichtheim himself suggests at one point).

The first, which Marx uses in his writings of the 1840's and early 50's, is associated with the Jacobin conception of democracy. The term is drawn of course from the history of the French Revolution during which the Jacobins ruled with broad-based support from a coalition of peasants, urban merchants and craftsmen, as well as the urban poor. What is most distinctive about the concept is that it is not restricted to the rule of a particular class but is an expression of popular rule commensurate with the Rousseauian idea of a "general will," or with what Marx describes in several of his early political pamphlets as the goal of "political emancipation." Even in the Manifesto Marx is operating with a conception of democracy which is essentially Jacobin in character. The fact is that before Marx was a socialist and a communist he was a radical democrat, meaning that within the confines of

Central Europe (before he emigrated to Paris in the mid-1840's) he was allied with radicals who were pressing for democratic reform of monarchical rule, especially in Prussia.

With the failure of the 1848 Revolution to resolve the crisis of democratic reform, especially in Germany, Marx dissolves his ties with the nascent democratic movement, which has broken down in any case along class lines. Democracy is now identified with "bourgeois republicanism," or with that form of rule which is consistent with the interests of the bourgeoisie. The term has a decidedly negative appeal for Marx and Engels because it conceals the rule of a minority of large property-holders over the majority of propertyless workers. It is later used to describe the form of rule appropriate to the bourgeoisie under the French Third
31
Republic, after 1871.

In still a third meaning, democracy becomes a rallying point for those elements of the population which are pressing for reform in Central Europe, under the leadership of the German labor movement. It is hoped here, especially by Engels following Marx's death, that democracy will provide the peaceful prelude to a new socialist order: that is, once the labor movement is able to capture political power through democratic means, it will be able to make inroads against private property through the instrument of a democratic state. This is of course the meaning of Social-Democracy and the scheme that Marx outlines in his Inaugural Address of 1864.

That Marx and Engels did not bother to clarify exactly what was meant by "democracy" is more than the basis for a dispute over language usage. The term was used differently to refer to

different situations and for different political intentions. The ambiguity of "democracy" and of "proletarian dictatorship" were, for example, to be of key importance to Lenin's adoption of the category "democratic dictatorship" in his pamphlet Two Tactics. Here he borrowed Marx's use of democracy in the Jacobin sense in order to construct a definition that was acceptable to Russian populism, but with the added proviso that the movement would be directed by a worker-peasant coalition (with or without the participation of the Russian middle class) against the monarchy. And he did not bother to specify what the eventual fate of the middle class would be once the Tsarist regime had been overthrown; at that point the "democratic dictatorship" might turn against the middle class to become a "proletarian dictatorship" of workers and peasants.

All of this serves to illustrate that the authors were employing a political vocabulary which changed at different moments in order to conform to specific environmental conditions. While it is true, as Professor Ollman suggests, that Marx's vocabulary is at times confusing, not all of this confusion stems from linguistic or epistemological considerations. The theory of "relationism" which Professor Ollman introduces as a way of clarifying Marx's organic conception of reality, and therefore his approach to analyzing aspects of reality as parts of a totality, may help to clarify certain technical terms (especially pertaining to philosophical and economic analysis), but they do not resolve the meaning of Marx's political vocabulary. Therefore, "relationism" is at best only a partial solution to the problem of interpretation
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in Marx.

An even more formidable interpretive issue that Professor Ollman chooses not to deal with concerns whether there is a discrepancy between Marx's "historical materialism" and Engels' "dialectical materialism." Professor Ollman defers to the orthodox Engelsian view that Marxian theory is equally appropriate to the realms of man and nature. Whether one can resolve this issue by means of linguistic analysis is doubtful, that is, without considering Marx's and Engels' choices of subject-matter, and whether their thinking exhibits an historical evolution--something Ollman dismisses out of hand. Unless one was prepared even to consider Hegel's influence on Marx, not to mention his impact on Engels, the question of whether Marx and Engels are operating in the "same universe" is perhaps unanswerable.

In the case of another formidable interpreter of Marx, who draws considerable attention from Ollman, the issue of Hegel's influence on Marx is very much in evidence, if only for purposes of refutation. Although Louis Althusser does not happen to agree with Ollman that there is no Hegelian influence in Marx's thought, or that Marx's work exhibits unblemished consistency, Althusser does offer an interpretation of Marx, allowing for the exception of an early "pre-Marxian" phase during which Marx was apparently under the spell of Hegel and Feuerbach, that strives for proof that Marx was a "systematic" thinker, and that, specifically, all aspects of his thought "fit together" into a coherent whole. The problem with this argument, according to Lichtheim's own review of the "Althusserian school," is that Althusser and his followers are forced into very often substituting their own ideas of system and structure for those which are only "imperfectly" expressed

by Marx himself. Pretty soon, it begins to appear that Marx's consistency rests upon a series of methodological assumptions (couched in an abstruse language not to be found in Marx) that are highly inferential in character rather than directly attributable to Marx. Is it as important as Ollman and Althusser would have us believe that Marx's thought, or that of any other prominent author, be made consistent at the expense of certain of the author's concerns which happen to lie outside the interpreter's area of interest?

Perhaps Althusser's best known point of departure in interpreting Marx is his contention that after 1845 Marx eschewed his earlier philosophical and humanistic concerns in favor of a purely "scientific" (i.e. "Marxist") approach to society. In order to accept this view--and there is some foundation for it, especially if one is prepared to accept Capital in its positivistic reading as the summum bonum of Marx's work--one must conclude that Marx's early concern with dialectical thought, and especially with the relation between theory and practice, was of no real concern to Marx's later, more technical treatment of society. While it might not serve as a conclusive refutation of Althusser's thesis concerning the "scientific" (hence "post-Hegelian") character of Marx's mature writings, it must be of some embarrassment to those who make this argument that Marx begins his most ambitious economic investigation (Capital) with a critique of commodities as the phenomenal form of congealed labor power in capitalist

production. What follows this auspicious introduction is very often couched in the conventional language of early positivism, but why begin with such a phenomenological device if Hegelian

dialectic is superfluous to your true scientific intentions?

Lichtheim is prepared to accept the fact that both Hegelian philosophy and early positivism are present in Marx's mature writings, and for reasons that are only explicable in terms of the historical evolution of his thought.

Furthermore, to accept only the "scientific" interpretation of Marx, one would be required to sever Marx's more technical writings from his career as a politician and political journalist.

The strength of Lichtheim's research is that he is able to envision the historical circumstances which contributed to Marx's scientific achievement in Capital (as well as its shortcomings), while recognizing that this approach was tied to a political outlook that was intended to encourage the fortunes of the Socialist movement. To view Marxism as a body of thought (scientific or otherwise) divorced from the political reality of bourgeois society (which was for Marx a dialectical or historical reality, that is, in a state of becoming and therefore subject to human mastery) denies Marx's intention that thought be the progenitor of a movement for changing the world. This is something which both Ollman's and Althusser's considerable interpretive efforts tend to overlook.

This is, however, only a single side of the recent controversy over Marx among social and political theorists. Without attempting to exhaust the sheer volume of this subject, it would be worthwhile to point out that there are several authors who pick up the controversy over Marx interpretation where Lichtheim leaves off. Lichtheim was among the first to point out the importance of the democratic element in Marx's thought, a point which had been all but lost in the twentieth-century association of Marxism

and Communism. That Marxist intellectuals allied with the European labor movement were among the strongest supporters of democratic and socialist reform in Central Europe is an historical fact that has been largely ignored. This is not the case with certain recent Marx scholars.

Michael Harrington demonstrates the solidly democratic side of the Marxian inheritance--both in Europe and, at least indirectly, in America, the latter being a country which Lichtheim had all but neglected. Harrington is especially sensitive to the trend in Marx's political career and in his writings which avoids extreme measures. Harrington is careful to indicate that Marx's thinking on the meaning of such concepts as democracy, revolution, and dictatorship was shaped by the circumstances he was addressing and that his thinking took shape over an extended period of time. Given the changing circumstances he was addressing, not to mention the even greater problem of distinguishing between the historical meaning of Marx and the contemporary meaning of some of his vocabulary, as well as his legacy, it is necessary not to confuse his language as being unequivocal in all cases. As Harrington describes the problem of discerning clear signals from Marx's various political intentions: "He was, for instance, certainly revolutionary, but also a moderate, and that dialectical combination baffles
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most of the accepted readings of him.

An example of the type of historical clarification that Harrington brings to Marx's confusing vocabulary is in the precise meaning of Marx's use of the term "dictatorship." The expression, apart from its clearly intended polemical and inflammatory connota-

tions in the few writings where it actually appears, is connected to a number of implicit assumptions which Marx posits about the role of the state, as well as the goal of democracy, according to Harrington. Unless these various, and in some cases obscure meanings are kept in mind, it is impossible to disentangle what dictatorship was intended to mean by Marx, from what it had meant before his time, and what it has come to represent since he first used it.

To follow the most conventional meaning of "dictator," as it was generally understood before Marx, it might be defined as "a ruler or governor whose word is law; an absolute ruler of a state." Furthermore, it derives from the ancients, meaning "the appellation of a chief magistrate invested with absolute authority, elected in seasons of emergency by the Romans and other Italian states."³⁷ The term, therefore, did not imply a rule by force or one that was unlawful, in that it pertained to a constitutional delegation of authority to an individual for the period of an impending emergency. Marx's conception follows this conventional definition in certain respects, but departs from it significantly in others. At the time that the word first appears in his writings, in early 1850 in his Class Struggles in France, Marx does not regard the rule of the bourgeois parties under the French Second Republic as a legitimate form of rule. As Harrington explains, this period represented a watershed in the evolution of Marx's thinking about democracy and revolution; Marx's Class Struggles in France reflects a certain disillusionment and anger over the defeat of the forces to the left during the revolutionary activity of the preceding two years. As such, Marx rejects the idea that the form of rule represented by the Second Republic is anything but the rule of

the bourgeoisie (in its varied factions) over the great majority of working people. The state, which is equated by Marx with its executive machinery, is, therefore, an instrument of repression in the hands of an influential minority in order to maintain its social and economic domination over society.

The peculiar use that Marx employs for dictatorship in March of 1850, therefore, applies to the existing rule of the bourgeoisie through the instrumentality of its class-based state. That a "state" in its executive apparatus is necessarily an instrument for exercising political power (and for exercising force where resistance to its rule is encountered) obscures the fact that this power under the Second Republic is being exercised not for a "public" good but for the maintenance of a social class. It might even be argued, based on Marx's unfortunate definition of state, that all states are dictatorial, because they are but the evidence of a stratified society in which the upper class appropriates force (that is, the enforcement machinery of the state) in order to maintain its social standing over all other classes. Given this very limited definition of "state" in Marx's description of the politics of the Second Republic, what he proposes is the over-throw of the minority, bourgeois dictatorship with another one which would represent that of the majority of working people. To follow this logic to its conclusion, the proletarian dictatorship would then proceed to dismantle the social power of the bourgeoisie--through inroads into private property--and thereby achieve the socialist goal of "abolishing all social classes." As Harrington points out, this was precisely how Marx was to

describe the type of state action which was undertaken some twenty
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years later during the Paris Commune. To follow the logic of
Marx's conception, the proletarian dictatorship would be abandoned
because the state would have effectively been eliminated, there
being no need for the repressive machinery of one class to enforce
its rule over others. (Interestingly, this does not reveal whether
politics would similarly become obsolete, only that the enforce-
ment machinery necessary to maintain political order would have
become a dead weight).

Marx's convoluted definition of dictatorship--which
Harrington finds reason to quarrel with, for reasons of clarity
among numerous others--therefore retains the traditional notion
of being an interim form of absolute rule, but departs from the
conventional sense of the term in that it is associated with the
rule of a social class (either a minority class in the case of the
bourgeoisie or a majority in the case of the proletariat over
the rest of society, and not with the absolute rule of an individ-
ual. Individuals rule presumably on behalf of social classes,
something which the ancients had failed to consider!

To make matters perhaps more confusing, Harrington in-
dicates that even at its most extreme, Marx's clear intention in
his early writings on revolution makes it possible to reconcile
his conception of democracy with that of proletarian dictator-
ship. Because he is operating with the Jacobin conception of a
mass uprising in which the working class achieves class conscious-
ness, or in Harrington's terms, "self-organization" and "self-
emancipation," the overthrow of the bourgeois dictatorship with

that of the proletariat is the practical constitution of the working class as a self-governing force, and the democratic embryo of the socialist society to come. This was, once again, the characterization which Marx had ascribed to the political organization of the proletariat during the Paris Commune.

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The argument over the various interpretations that may be offered for Marx's vocabulary does not exhaust the difficulty of understanding his seemingly ambiguous political intentions. If Marx's tribute to the Paris Commune appears uncertain in retrospect, the same may be said for the document which first established his credentials as a revolutionary. Although Lichtheim pays little attention to it, even the Manifesto contains a strikingly "realistic" and even cautious set of pragmatic demands to be pursued by the different national sections of the European revolutionary movement on the eve of 1848. The long-term goal of revolution was not to be achieved overnight, and the groundwork for it would presumably have to be established gradually. In other words, reform was not to be forgotten in the meantime, even in Marx and Engels' celebrated revolutionary document. The "divided" character of the Manifesto only serves to reinforce Harrington's insistence that documents--and especially those which employ controversial terminology--be examined in the political context of their times.

This historical method is particularly pertinent to Marx's contemporary legacy. While terminology is often borrowed from one epoch in order to explain another, each set of terminology rests within its own social and political milieu, and contemporary usage must take such differences into account. If one follows

the lineage of Marx's conception of "proletarian dictatorship," for example, what it has come to represent in the twentieth century is, perhaps not unexpectedly, quite different from the democratic intention which was concealed at the core of his thoughts on revolution in the middle of the nineteenth century. As Harrington indicates, the term was taken over and given a new meaning by Lenin and his followers. It has by now become synonymous with the absolute and permanent rule of the Communist Party over all social classes, a tragedy which Lichtheim and Harrington both lament. With the help of historical hindsight, an obscure phrase like "proletarian dictatorship" can be seen now as part of an atavistic attitude that Marx shared with other disillusioned radicals following the collapse of their expectations in 1848-50. In Marx's case, as both Lichtheim and Harrington attest, he was able to give up his apocalyptic dream of revolution which would inaugurate a new democratic socialist order. By late 1850, as has been indicated in chapter two ("The Marxian Synthesis"), Marx envisioned the slow but steady growth of the labor movement in Europe and North America as the vehicle of the new order. The apocalypse receded into the background (although Marx was to revert temporarily to this early outlook following the collapse of the Paris Commune--see chapter two for explanation), until it was revived by Lenin, to become one of the cherished myths of the Bolshevik Revolution.

While Harrington lines up foursquare behind Marx's mature vision of the labor movement as the forerunner of a democratic socialism to come, he is equally compelled to admit that there have been at least as many setbacks to the achievement of this

goal as victories, and that Marx's unfulfilled vision of a new democratic social order remains an illusive goal. At one point, Harrington even ponders whether the goal is any longer attainable, especially after the collapse of the original international labor movement at the outset of the First World War:

This question [pertaining to the survival of the social democratic cause], and all other issues posed by the failure of European socialism in 1914, is still unresolved. Now, after the Keynesian 'revolution' following World War II, the integrative and assimilative power of capitalism is even greater than it was in 1914. The social democratic movements themselves have lost much of the élan and the bureaucracies [both within the social democratic movements and in contemporary society] are therefore even more powerful. It is quite possible that these events announce the doom of the socialist hope; but this is not necessarily so.⁴⁰

As will be seen shortly, Lichtheim held a less sanguine view of the contemporary relevance of the Marxian inheritance, that is, in its Western democratic orientation. He was far more assured of Marxism's past than he was of its future.

The past had been clarified and illuminated in ways that were perhaps not possible up until recently. Along with Harrington's contribution, two other theorists help to validate Lichtheim's historical and critical theory of Marxism, to the extent that they recover a lost dimension of its original significance (just as Harrington's work recovers the Western democratic orientation of the nineteenth-century Marxian synthesis). Shlomo Avineri and Jürgen Habermas are both concerned with establishing Marx's credentials within particular traditions of social and political thought. Habermas in fact extends all conventional boundaries in linking Marx's thought not only to that of traditional metaphysics (from Aristotle to Hegel) but also to the progenitors of

modern science (in which Habermas includes thinkers as diverse as Comte, Freud, Peirce, and Dilthey, among others). The effort on the part of both interpreters is to recover the philosophical origins of Marx's thought and to discover its later influence. While Avineri and Habermas see this influence in different directions, they are nevertheless engaged in a type of inquiry congenial to Lichtheim's own pursuits.

Avineri's work on Marx begins with the historical assumption that in order to comprehend his achievement one must traverse the same ground that Marx did in arriving at his point of view. This necessarily includes the connection in Marx's early thought with Hegelian philosophy. Unlike Ollman and Althusser, Avineri sees Hegel's early influence as a residual basis for all of Marx's subsequent efforts (as does Lichtheim). While Avineri does not entirely employ Lichtheim's own historical method (in that he is primarily concerned with the intellectual genesis of Marx's ideas, and less with their historical consequences), Avineri's treatment of Marx brings out the fascinating process whereby Marx's thinking emerges from that of Hegelian philosophy.

In this transmission of ideas, several "secondary" figures play a prominent role. Hegelian philosophy was, after all, subject to a variety of conflicting interpretations--all the way from a "contemplative understanding of the past to speculative construction and practical determination of the future," to quote⁴¹ Lichtheim. These contradictory readings of Hegel's legacy help to explain the formation of rival sects around his inheritance in the 1840's. Marx's discovery of the revolutionary potential of

Hegel's theory of history was immensely aided by the work of two scholars whose importance has all but been neglected: in the late 1830's the work of a Polish aristocrat and Catholic mystic August von Cieszkowski pointed in the direction of a "posttheoretical practice" that might transform reality, and the kernel of this idea was taken over and given a radical new meaning by Marx's subsequent teacher and fellow socialist (between 1842-45), Moses Hess. The product of Hess' instruction on Hegel is to be found, as Avineri indicates by comparing similarities in their respective modes of analysis, in Marx's early thinking on Hegel and his early political economy.⁴²

The most important seed which Hess had helped to implant in Marx's subsequent thinking has to do with the relationship of theory and practice. Where all other Left Hegelians had been content to criticize reality as being irrational, Hess insisted that theoretical criticism was an insufficient basis for remedying the situation, that is, unless it was accompanied by political action. That this practical solution in Marx's thinking might be at one time accomplished through the democratization of the Prussian constitution, at another through the overthrow of the established order, and still later by means of the maturation of the European labor movement does not dispell the practical intention that Marx incorporated in all of his work. Attempts at reducing Marx's later work to scientific explanation of reality, or to a more rigorous method of political economy ignore the philosophical meaning of his "critique" of political economy, which was intended to go beyond science into the realm of practice.

It is to reconstitute the Hegelian-Marxist tradition as well as indicate its challenge to the field of modern science that German philosopher Jürgen Habermas devotes his attention. In this effort Habermas succeeds in breaking new ground, especially in updating Marx's critique of capitalism to contemporary relevance, and without losing the essential meaning of the Marxian inheritance. Lichtheim considered Habermas' work an awesome step forward--one which Lichtheim, not being a philosopher of science, could not have achieved, but which was essential to retaining Marxism as a valuable method for contemporary analysis of society and politics.⁴³ Habermas' particular intention was to reprove certain assumptions in modern science which had the effect of repudiating traditional philosophy, especially those which invalidated any attempt to arrive at a standard of truth which had ethical significance. The fact-value problem, which had bedeviled earlier generations of Marxists, from Bernstein to Lukács--was raised in Habermas' work to a new height of critical awareness.

Without going beyond the surface of Habermas' investigation,⁴⁴ which has recently attracted enormous interest, one of the central conclusions that he arrives at is that an "emancipatory interest" is essential to an adequate theory of knowledge. This might be described in terms of the present inquiry as a theorist's "practical intention," or the interest that a theorist has in approaching any "meta-scientific" problem. As far as Lichtheim is concerned, the attempt to eradicate such "human concern" from the field of investigation--and as Habermas makes clear, a concern which is reflexive to the theorist himself, whose life is bound up with the

problem he is investigating--denies the relation between theory and practice, and is therefore an emasculation of theory's human potential. Habermas goes a long way toward restoring this human-⁴⁵istic perspective to theory.

As hopeful as Lichtheim's reception of Habermas' work appears, it also includes a candid disclosure or admission that reveals part of Lichtheim's own legacy as an intellectual:

It...took remarkable detachment [on Habermas' part] to perceive that the 'critical theory'--so described in the 1930's by the Frankfurt school when the European civil war was at its peak--stood and fell with an assessment of the historical situation which is no longer tenable: although paradoxically the Marxian method of social analysis has not been invalidated by the collapse of its unspoken assumptions.⁴⁶

Marxism in its most authentic and, in Lichtheim's view, most accurate meaning (as depicted by the Hegelian-Marxism of the Frankfurt school) had been made obsolete by changing events, by the passing of the historical epoch it had sought to comprehend in its totality and ultimately to supersede (its tacit "unspoken assumption," at least in its guise as "science"). A theory which had been a critical response to the bourgeois epoch had itself been superseded by the events of the twentieth century. This could not have been good news to socialists who still thought of Marx as a practical guide toward the future. In fact it reduced Marxian theory to the status of Hegel's contemplative legacy: to comprehend the past as complete! What Marxism could adequately explain, namely the formation of bourgeois society--it could no longer change. It had thus been reduced from a movement of ideas and of men to an historical artifact.

Such was Lichtheim's "resolution thesis," which was clearly

one of the basic conclusions he drew from his most incisive re-
search into Marxism in 1961.⁴⁷ That a clear and objective understanding of Marxism had been achieved only with the passing of its practical significance is central to Lichtheim's historical approach. A valid comprehension of any body of thought, or political tradition, is possible only after it has itself passed into history, when its own role in the historical process may be disclosed. Until that time, a theory which makes practical claims upon the world, based upon how it perceives the problems of its age and their solution, is unable to understand history in its "totality." It is for this reason that the past is so much easier to comprehend than the present. Lichtheim expressed this paradoxical situation in 1961 in the following terms:

The closer we are to an epoch, the more difficult it is to understand its essential traits: we know at once too much and too little. While innumerable details elude us, enough information is available to make us wonder whether our principle of selection is not arbitrary and irrelevant. With periods lying in the remoter past this difficulty is lessened: we know--or think we know--what gave them their particular character; what it was, vulgarly speaking, that made them tick. Our immediate ancestors are at once more familiar and less comprehensible. The fact that within limits we are able to enter their universe illuminates, but also distorts, for the categories we bring to the task of understanding our predecessors are partly those by which their own world was organised; not surprisingly they seem to fit their object. Yet the disappearance of that world also involves the rearrangement of those intellectual principles with whose aid the chaos of phenomena was at one time reduced to order. Thus we cannot enter briefly into the history... of the age of Marxian socialism without becoming aware that its unifying concepts are no longer quite the same as our own.⁴⁸

The "critical" dimension of Lichtheim's historical approach thus involves the updating of the adequacy of a theory with the present. Having viewed a theory in its reciprocal relation to

its own time and place, that is, as it has been influenced by its time as well as how it has sought to "overcome" the human dilemma of its age, it is then necessary to provide an evaluation of how well the theory performs in the contemporary world--the interpreter's own world. As Lichtheim indicates this may be more difficult because the author's own time is shrouded in a certain degree of mystery: "The closer we are to an epoch, the more difficult it is to understand its essential traits."

In Lichtheim's case, there is ample evidence to conclude that his world had been, at least in part, shaped by the hopes and frustrations of the Weimar period and the onslaught of Fascism. His view of subsequent events and developments is colored by this Weimar legacy of expectations and ultimately disillusionment. The earlier comparison of Lichtheim and Lukács' intellectual and political legacy is suggestive of how twentieth-century events had lost touch with the rational and humanistic core of nineteenth-century theory--perhaps especially in the case of Marxism, as evidenced by the "defection" of one of its brightest stars. In the wake of Fascism's victory in Central Europe (which Marxism and liberalism were powerless to prevent) and the death and destruction which were soon to follow worldwide, whatever validity Marxism and Socialism might have possessed in an earlier epoch seemed now remote and even antiquated.

Lichtheim's own "world-weariness" did not often come to the fore in his writing, although when it did he left little doubt as to how much of an "outsider" he felt in contemporary society. (The great bulk of Lichtheim's work was done at arms-length from

the various subject-matter he was reporting on, which gives at least some of his observation and criticism a high degree of professionalism and objectivity; he seems not to have wanted to reveal too much of himself.)⁴⁹ When he did, however, as in the instance of a review he wrote of recent interpretations of Marx, his own vision of present desolation--for which Hegel's philosophy of history provided a convenient rationale--could be chilling:

The world has indeed been transformed, not least by those of Marx's followers who took to heart the eleventh of his Theses on Feuerbach: stop interpreting the world and start changing it. But the transformation, although partly conscious and occasionally guided by true insight into the material needs of the human species, has created new and unforeseen problems to which neither classical liberalism nor classical Marxism offers a solution. Moreover, the ancient fatality has not really been shaken off: what is actually happening (the technological unification of the planet) occurs not under intelligent direction, but blindly catastrophically through wars, revolutions, and the turmoil of conflicting passions: national, social, racial. The half-hidden logic of this process has to be inferred from an accumulation of seemingly pointless disasters. Its human agents--not merely individuals but entire nations--are sacrificed to aims they had not consciously willed. The 'Cunning of Reason' reasserts itself. Hegel takes his revenge upon the empiricists who consigned his teachings to the dustbin of history. Science is powerless to control the instrumentarium of death it has let loose upon the world. State-craft sinks to the level of manipulation. Alternately, it pursues senseless or utopian aims, then stands appalled at the results. None of this would have surprised the thinker for whom world history was a 'slaughter-house.'⁵⁰

The unanswered riddles contained in this vast canvas of twentieth-century history gone mad may never be answered. In an early and largely neglected book Lichtheim published in the mid-1950's (under the pseudonym G. L. Arnold) entitled The Pattern of World Conflict, he spoke eloquently of the need for a new world

order, which the United Nations had not fulfilled because its aims far exceeded its capabilities (the "utopian aims of statecraft"?); of the menace represented by scientific breakthroughs in human destruction, the most obvious being the advent of nuclear weaponry--while advances in social and political organization remained on an antiquated nineteenth-century footing ("science... powerless to control the instrumentarium of death it has let loose on the world"?); and of the futility and blindness of the Western Powers--especially the United States--trying to control the decolonization and modernization of Southeast Asia because of their over-zealous commitment to "anti-Communism" (the Vietnam War being a "pointless disaster"?).⁵¹

If the specifics of Lichtheim's twentieth-century assessment remained obscure, the over-all direction was clear enough: reason as the hope of Enlightenment philosophy to overcome the uncontrolled blunders of man's past had not succeeded in transforming the world into a human sanctuary, but into a "slaughterhouse." Elsewhere, Lichtheim amplifies on this generally gloomy assessment with the following:

...what if the enterprise [to transform the world] issues in the monstrosities of Stalinism, or in the over-powering boredom of the atomized 'affluent society,' with its pop culture and pop sociology in the place once occupied by religion or metaphysics? Worse still, what if it turns out that capitalism and socialism are merely alternate ways of producing the industrial and technocratic society of the later twentieth century? Then we seem to have the contemporary dilemma and Marxism as such has no answer to it.⁵²

This sentiment, which reverberates throughout much of Lichtheim's later writings, namely that twentieth-century history is a time bereft of solutions, is a particular theme to be found

among the writings of other survivors of the Weimar Republic and of Fascism. The above remark appears in a review of the work of Max Horkheimer, one of the founders of the Frankfurt school and someone to whom Lichtheim expressed intellectual kinship. For those like Horkheimer who by the 1930's could not accept Marxism-Leninism as either an adequate intellectual or political solution to the problems posed by Fascism, there seemed little to hope for. Social-Democracy and liberalism had been discredited by the Fascist victory in Central Europe; Russian Communism had proved itself incapable of adapting to the very different circumstances of the labor movement in Germany, and may have even been an unwitting accomplice of the Fascists by its tacit abandonment of the Republic in the early 30's. What was left after the defeat of Fascism in Europe was the choice between an authoritarianism in Eastern Europe that rivaled Fascism in its ruthless suppression of the democratic values of individual and political liberty, and, on the other hand, a liberalism in Western Europe and America that was only beginning to come fully to grips with the worst effects of capitalism. The intellectual circle around the Frankfurt school chose sanctuary in the West, although as Horkheimer's writings of the 1940's suggest, what they found there was never entirely pleasing. As Lichtheim points out, to be a Social Democrat was a fallback position which offered only "moderate" comfort.

Lichtheim's own choice after the Fascist onslaught was to avoid both camps and settle in Palestine, where he remained until after the War and the establishment of Israel. At that time he settled in London, where he resumed his career in journalism

(having written for The Palestine Post during the intervening period in Palestine), and began to pursue his theoretical interest in Marxism and socialism. As an "Anglo-American" with his roots in the misfortunes of Central Europe, Lichtheim found a new and larger audience for his writing. Being thoroughly familiar with a tradition of theorizing and interpreting the world which had limited acceptance in the West--namely that of Hegelian Marxism--Lichtheim set about explaining this tradition to an English-speaking audience in terms that illuminated both its past achievements as well as its uncertain future. Whether the Hegelian-Marxist tradition could be sustained in the West amidst the changes wrought by contemporary society was in Lichtheim's view not at all clear. Like other Marxists who had been forced to resettle by the Fascist wave, Lichtheim had grave doubts about the future.⁵⁴

The Weimar legacy remained for many German expatriates a gloomy reminder of how history and reason had failed. For Herbert Marcuse, for whom--like Horkheimer--Lichtheim expresses admiration, the end of the War and the defeat of Fascism did not resolve the deeper problems which had haunted the West before the War. The difference now was that one had to acknowledge that these problems were not simply bound up with the inequities of capitalism. For Marcuse, the post-War crisis of Western society was more subtle and perhaps more illusive, because it had effected the very nature of those living in advanced industrial society. "Alienation," a theme that made immediate connections with Marx's early critique of capitalism, had resurfaced in advanced industrial society, but was not bound up with material deprivation necessarily,

as it had been primarily in Marx's characterization of the working class under early capitalism, but was now a malady that effected a relatively "affluent society," with even more serious consequences. The new alienation, according to Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man, had been brought about by technology and had irrevocably altered the human psyche. Furthermore, the technological revolution had advanced to a stage where it was able to contain any problems that contradicted it, all of which gave Marcuse's theory a strong hint of "inevitability." His analysis of contemporary society, especially in terms of the emphasis it placed on the primacy of scientific "rationality" and the role of the state, appealed to Lichtheim, although Lichtheim departed from Marcuse in his fatalistic assumption that alienation and domination (which Marcuse termed "totalitarian" in its scope) had become the permanent condition of man in advanced industrial society. Marcuse's "technological determinism" was no more attractive to Lichtheim than

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had been Engels' dialectical materialism.

Marcuse's deterministic theory of advanced industrial society was but another side of a cultural pessimism that had crept into the thinking of an elder generation of Marxist scholars following the aftermath of Fascism and World War Two. Some of this attitude is reflected in Lichtheim's own work, especially in his view of the present situation. As one recent historian of twentieth-century Marxism has commented bitterly of this general malaise:

The hidden hallmark of Western Marxism [from 1924 to 1968] as a whole is...that it is a product of defeat. The failure of the socialist revolution to spread outside Russia, is the common background to the entire theoretical tradition of this period. Its major works were, without exception, produced in situations of political isolation and despair....

The generation which had been formed by the dual experience of Fascism and the Second World War remained transfixed by it....56

The dark events of the twentieth century, then, had unalterably changed not only the face of industrial society but the thinking of its most gifted critics as well. The question still remains, however, as to the nature of this transformation.

How then did advanced industrial society differ from its capitalist predecessor, according to Lichtheim? How had Marxism thus become obsolete as a critique of the current epoch? To begin with, Lichtheim is emphatic to point out that at least in Marx's case, the analysis of "society" was intended to be historical in character, and so could not be transported across barriers of time and place, without noticeable distortion. Therefore, Marx was not, for example, in the fashion of much of contemporary political and social science which attempts to arrive at "models" of "systems" of society that would apply to virtually all social phenomena. The question is whether and to what extent Marx's original categories of analysis still apply to contemporary phenomena; it follows that any attempt to use the Marxian apparatus without first identifying what it intends to explain is pointless.

The central category developed by Marx is his nineteenth-century research that most clearly distinguishes his age from that of its successor is his conception of state and society, according to Lichtheim. In neither case were Marx's use of these terms systematic; rather they were more like "basket concepts" which could be stretched or modified according to the particular situation they were meant to explain. Lichtheim points out that had

Marx completed his remaining manuscripts for Capital, he might have clarified the role of the state vis-à-vis society. At least
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such was his intention.

As it is, it is possible to extrapolate from his writings what these categories referred to and, on this basis, what they did not anticipate by way of later historical development. Marx's conception of society was drawn from the phenomenon of the industrial revolution in nineteenth-century Europe, especially in Britain. As such, he tended to equate industrialism with the "bourgeois" epoch, or, quite simply as "modernity." Certainly, industrialism might occur under other auspices than capitalism, but this was the operative assumption given the epoch that Marx was experiencing. Under such circumstances the industrial revolution gives rise to a particular type of social structure which is different from that of feudalism or any of its predecessors. Estate privileges and statuses are diminished in favor of a class structure made up of land-owners, proprietors of the means of production in industry, and all others who are propertyless and are thus "free" to sell their labor power to the propertied classes in return for material sustenance. It is important to recognize that such classes based upon social relations of production do not exist prior to the bourgeois epoch, nor does class conflict, at least as it occurs in bourgeois society. It is only with the advent of the industrial revolution that classes as such appear in history, and that class conflict becomes, at least for Marx, the chief characteristic of politics and social change.

It is at this point that the role of the state can be

distinguished. Lichtheim summarizes Marx and Engels' various comments on the role of the bourgeois state as being that of an "epiphenomenon of the class struggle."⁵⁹ The power exercised by the state, therefore, derives from the class in society which exercises economic power. It is not an original or independent power for Marx, but derivative from that of the ruling class in society. Lichtheim does indicate that there is a second function attributed by Marx to the state, but not under bourgeois auspices. The state may in a revolutionary situation exercise dictatorial power over society once it has become the instrument of the suppressed majority, although this "positive" role is intended to be of temporary duration until the social power of the propertied minority has been absorbed by the socialist reorganization of society, or the abolition of social classes as such.

This is of course the Jacobin-Blanquist conception of dictatorship that Marx developed in the late 1840's and early 1850's, which was encountered earlier in Harrington's discussion of dictatorship. Does even this "secondary definition" of state power conform to twentieth-century practice in the Soviet Union, seeing as it has been taken over as the explanation of the Leninist version of the Soviet state? Lichtheim answers in the negative, on two counts. Marx is operating, even in those rare instances where he assigns the state a role in social change, with the concept of resolving the inherent conflicts in industrial (bourgeois) society in favor of the propertyless majority. In the case of Soviet practice, state power has been used to generate industrial expansion in an otherwise economically backward society--

a case which Marx never visualized. Secondly, such state power is tied to a totalitarian political party that operates independent of all social groupings, and has become itself a new basis of social power and privilege. That Marx never envisioned either such an independent entity exercising such total control over society, let alone the necessity for a state-imposed industrialization policy after the capture of political power, is evident for Lichtheim. The twentieth-century Soviet state has no justification in Marx's writings, even those which pertain to a "Jacobin-type" dictatorship. The Soviet state is a creature of Leninist party organization, combined with the Stalinist policy of state-imposed industrialization "from above."

As much as an original Marxist theory of the Communist party-state did emerge was in the thinking of Lukács and Gramsci. Part of Lukács' intention in History and Class Consciousness had been to underpin the basis for the new political structure in Russia. It even pre-figures in certain respects, for Lichtheim, the most extreme features of Stalinism, in that it enunciates the theoretical basis for a totalitarian reconstruction of society to be carried out by an all-knowing party elite. Gramsci's doctrine of the "new prince" who must re-educate society as to the requirements of the new age makes similar gestures toward a Communist theory of the state (which was actually drawn from his experience of Italian Fascism!), although he did not live to see it carried out by Stalin and would have revolted in all probability against the repressiveness and barbarity of the new regime.

By comparison, Marx was operating with an antiquated view of the state which was largely characteristic of his age.

As such, its power was primarily "negative," that of resolving conflict in favor of the socially dominant class. This conception, as Lichtheim maintains, had more in common with nineteenth-century liberalism than it did with anything else. Its anti-statist assumption is perhaps its most apparent characteristic. As Lichtheim comments:

The simple fact is that totalitarianism was as little dreamed of in Marx's philosophy as in that of Mill. In this respect classical liberalism and Marxism have more in common than either side could have suspected before 1918.⁶¹

If the construction of the twentieth-century Soviet party-state owes little if anything to Marx's nineteenth-century critique of bourgeois society, what application has his critique to the development of contemporary Western society? Once again, Marx's "underdeveloped" theory of the state does not anticipate recent events, at least since World War Two in Western Europe and North America. The present state of affairs resembles a "decomposition" of social classes, such as Marx was working with in nineteenth-century Europe, and the rise of a new technocratic state. If the industrial revolution in Western Europe was the principal phenomenon that Marx had fastened upon in his nineteenth-century investigations, the "technological revolution" is the distinguishing feature of the current epoch. Lichtheim is exceedingly vague as to the character of this new development and its explicit social and political repercussions. As he states, the technological revolution has not as yet "been absorbed," and therefore, its exact dimensions cannot be grasped. Total comprehension arrives after the fact, to paraphrase Hegel's aphorism and Lichtheim's historical epistemology.

Given its incomplete development, what can be said at this point about the impact of technological change upon Western society, and its rearrangement of the social and political structure inherited from the period of classical Marxism and liberalism (1870-1918)? What has occurred, at first haltingly during the inter-war period and with greater assurance after World War Two, is the transformation of the liberal market economies of Western Europe and North America into what is by now the familiar pattern of "mixed economy" characteristic of the "Keynesian Revolution." That this adaptation was forced upon the West by the failure of the capitalist system to perform to political expectations (as evidenced by democratic demands for greater economic stability and a rising standard of living) as well as national exigencies (brought on by war-time economic mobilization) is an indication of the unforeseen changes brought about by events in this century. The liberal state patterned along the lines of minimal intervention in social and economic policy-making coupled with modest involvement in world affairs has given way to the welfare state, which incorporates a "balance" of public and private power in policy-making.

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As for the fortunes of the Marxian inheritance in the West, in those countries where Communist parties retained significant electoral support after World War Two, specifically in France and Italy, these parties adhered to the rigid pattern of Stalinist policy through the early 1950's and were, especially in France, reluctant to depart from received orthodoxy. According to Lichtheim, the situation of Communist parties in France and Italy

reflected "structural defects" in these countries owing to economic backwardness and to an unresolved legacy of anarchist and syndicalist radicalism. Communist parties were able to exploit both factors as a means of retaining support, with the curious result that an authoritarian party structure was coupled with a largely syndicalist labor movement in France and northern Italy, as well as with a backward peasantry in southern Italy.

The important point is that in most cases the Communists were not in the forefront of post-War politics and could not be expected to play a prominent role in national politics unless they found new bases of support and moderated their revolutionary line. In other words, Communists could not make substantial gains without in effect joining the new system and agreeing to play by the rules of the democratic game, which included recognition of a substantial degree of pluralism in social and political life. This is one of Lichtheim's predictions which seems to be borne out by recent events in both France and Italy, although it does not necessarily help to explain the events of Paris in May of 1968. The obsolescence of the revolutionary tradition, which is one of Lichtheim's major assumptions about the current period, will be examined later, especially as to what vitality "revolution" may still possess in the West.

An additional factor which has added weight to the success of Communists and Socialists alike, is the existence of a radical intelligentsia especially on the Continent, but also on the left-wing of the Labour Party in Britain. If Marxism had from the beginning always represented a coalition of intellectuals and

workers, this coalition continued to persist in Western Europe. It was one of Lichtheim's postulates that the absence of a radical intelligensia in Britain and America was one of the prime reasons for the absence of Marxist movements in both countries, and of even a non-Marxist socialism in the United States. Socialists and Communists could both draw support from prominent intellectuals on the Continent, which gave these parties a place in the cultural life of the nation.

The fact remained that where nominally Marxist parties were successful, especially in France and Italy where Socialists might join a governing coalition, they did so on the basis of a new political order, and one which nineteenth-century Marxism had not prepared them for. As such, they were no more successful at mastering the requirements of the new period than were non-Marxists. And as the 1950's gave way to the 1960's, most of the Socialist parties of Western Europe had abandoned the hard-line rhetoric of Marxism, which by that time had begun to creak in any case. This was perhaps a political accommodation to the new electoral arrangement, but more importantly, the practical abandonment of Marxism's revolutionary heritage represented a recognition that the new period made different demands upon Socialists than classical Marxism had envisioned.

The most obvious factor weighing on the Marxian legacy, as was the case with liberalism, was the absence in the Marxian tradition of any place for the type of mixed economy and social structure that had arisen since the War. This was a situation which had not been anticipated. While orthodox Marxists, and

especially Engels and Kautsky, might have spoken simplistically about the subordination of the state to society, about "base" and "superstructure," no one had anticipated a situation in which the state would operate in a supervisory capacity over an otherwise market-oriented society. Nor had Marxists any special skills to handle the technical requirements of planning which was perhaps the hallmark of the new epoch (throughout the world, regardless of the political dimensions of the respective states).

The central problem of "who" would be the planners represents for Lichtheim an unresolved question. The "technological revolution" had substantially altered the social structure of early industrialism but without producing a new, self-constituted ruling stratum. He referred at one point to the difficulty of fixing upon a clear definition of this new structure as bound up with "the problem of characterizing a society that is still largely capitalist but no longer bourgeois. In such a society, stratification tends to correspond partly to ownership of capital, partly to rank with the industrial hierarchy, with organizers, scientists, and technologists usurping some of the prerogatives of the old entrepreneurial stratum."⁶⁵ If central planning was the direction in which society was moving, and Lichtheim seemed to feel this was the only responsible course of action to take, the decisive question of exactly what type of elite would emerge from the competing elites of the welfare state as predominant was unresolved in his thinking.

He alternately subscribed to a rather "neutral" view of a rationally planned society (ultimately to be integrated at the

international level, given the technical and economic inefficiencies of the nation-state) to be run by a technocratic elite composed of scientists and managers, on the order of Max Weber's scheme of a "rationalized" social order--and, conversely, to the hopeful anticipation that the new "directing stratum" would incorporate the humanistic vision of the last century, in its commitment to the liberal values of freedom and diversity and the Marxian vision of a greater egalitarianism. The latter anticipation was not a strong one on Lichtheim's part, given his "realistic" assessment of its chances. The likely prospect would be a society in which technological efficiency had pushed out the older humanistic values, which would have no place in such an "efficient" society in any case. He once described the fate of such values, and of the movements that push for their enactment, in the following terms:

Disillusionment always occurs at the point where a movement has 'seen through' its own limitations. The latter in turn become visible only when an attempt has been made to transcend them. Such transcendence is involved in the strained effort to realize the original aims of the movement, conceived under circumstances different from those which attend their actual fulfillment. Realization remains incomplete, not only because conditions have changed in the meantime, but because the programme was from the start shot through with metapolitical ideas and anticipations.⁶⁶

Lichtheim was describing his own disillusionment with the twentieth century in the above statement. This disillusionment has been traced to the seminal experience of the Weimar Republic during the 1920's and its disastrous culmination in Fascism. If the revolution were to have happened in Europe, it should have taken place then and there. That it did not, that it was frustrated in part by the very forces who claimed to be working for its

enactment (both Social-Democrats and Communists), meant that the "historical possibility" had been missed and would not return. It was too late for the fulfillment of the Marxian vision. Marxism as a unified theory and practice had been lost. What remained was its historical method of interpreting the past, including its own past!

For those who persisted in the attempt to reconcile Marxian theory with the practical requirements of the contemporary world, that is, for those who wished to restore the dialectic of Hegelian-Marxism to its original status, Lichtheim was extremely skeptical. One might interpret the past in order to arrive at or "sum up" the human condition, but to use philosophy as a mediation between past and present was inconsistent, according to Lichtheim. Thus, in the post-War efforts of Jean-Paul Sartre to search out a bridge between his previous philosophical work and the practical requirements of his age, Lichtheim is critical of even the possibility. He points out that Sartre's existentialism had earlier been based on the ontological categories of "being" and "consciousness," of the irreconcilability of these two halves of man. Human alienation had been made into a permanent condition, with no hope of resolving the contradiction. In Sartre's later work, however, he had found a way--via Hegel and Marx--of bringing about their reconciliation, that is, through history and human practice. Revolution would be the summing up or "totalization" of past contradictions; alienation might be thus overcome. Lichtheim was unconvinced of Sartre's attempt to place existentialist thinking in a Marxian framework, especially one which placed philosophy in a

"prospective" light. Of Sartre's brilliant attempt to bring off the marriage of existentialism and Marxism, Lichtheim offered the following:

As matters stand, Sartre's philosophy of history presents itself as a speculative system which transforms the concepts of Marxian analysis--history, praxis, class conflict--into ontological notions and then sets up a dialectic between them. At the same time he clearly regards his own theorizing as a guide to action--as though it were not in the name of philosophy to come after the event! This contradiction is something he refuses to acknowledge....This is only another way of saying that he may have misconceived his current role, for in actual fact the revolution to which he still looks forward is already completed and lies in the past....Subjectively, however, Sartre's commitment to the idea of 'changing the world' is unquestionable, as is his belief that the last battle has not been fought.⁶⁷

That Sartre had been a "fellow-traveller" of the French Communist Party at the time he wrote his Critique of Dialectical Reason lent credence to his political commitment, although it did not help his chances with Lichtheim. The French Communists remained committed, in theory if not in practice, to the apocalyptic vision of revolution enshrined in Marxism-Leninism. That this was no longer an historically feasible goal in the West, nor a morally defensible one, in view of the recent experience of Stalinism--indicated to Lichtheim that Sartre's efforts had been indeed misconceived.

Efforts by the New Left, by French student radicals in May of 1968, and by young people in general to revive (in whatever form) the revolutionary tradition in the West seemed similarly blind to Lichtheim. His acid criticism of the young radicals of the 1960's, who more often than not drew upon nineteenth-century

anarchism for their inspiration and not Marxism, belied a contempt on Lichtheim's part for all such schemes which he viewed as utopian and "romantic." His identification of romanticism in politics was associated with Fascism, and it is quite possible that he saw much of the rebellion of the 60's as a fanciful reenactment of past failures (the Paris Commune being the most notable), and even as a page out of his own youth, which had ended in catastrophe. Analogies were being made, even at the time, between the political extremism of the Weimar period and 1960's radicalism in America and Western Europe.

What is lamentable in the present view is Lichtheim's failure to connect up his own doubts about the technological revolution with the radical movements of the 1960's. Not that the radicals were all sensible, nor that they were not in some cases bent on nihilistic revenge against modernity in all its aspects. But to claim this as the only meaning of the movements which were spawned during the 1960's is unfair.

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Lichtheim's contempt for much of the radicalism of the 60's, which included repeated diatribes against Maoism (in China and its "spin-offs" in the West) as the most sinister phenomenon since Stalin's reign, were symptomatic of a certain despair which he had about the present situation. Even though he was able to criticize Marcuse for prophesying that there were no solutions to modern forms of alienation brought on by technology, he very often ended up with an equivalent attitude of resignation. "Technological collectivism" was the only future foreseeable, short of a romantic rebellion against it, and this would undoubtedly be far worse.

Was the range of feasible choices this limited? In the present view, Lichtheim's historical method had revealed the potentiality of a prospective theory that was all but hidden from view by his personal misfortune, and that of others of his generation who had abandoned hope for the future. To be sure, Lichtheim's numerous writings on Marxism provide a valuable lesson in what a prospective theory (Marxist or otherwise) can not do. A theory which bases itself on an historical treatment of society and politics cannot recapture a "moment" in time that has already elapsed. To try to do so is pointless, as if by "imagining" oneself to be Lenin or Mao it might be possible to improve upon their performance. Such false historical thinking approaches what Kojève intended when he spoke of the self-certainty to be attained by a purely subjective contemplation of absolute truth. What is to distinguish this attitude or the imagination of the bomb-thrower who believes he has recaptured the moment of 1848, from the mental condition of lunacy?

Historical thinking oriented to the potentiality of the future must accept the past, with its achievements and setbacks, as irreversible. Furthermore, it is futile to employ an analytical framework from one epoch into another as though the same set of social and political circumstances necessarily persist. Whether they do or not or to what degree is an empirical question to be carefully verified by present experience. A second clear lesson to be drawn from Lichtheim's account of Marxism is that historically-based theory cannot make empirically-verifiable claims about the future; "predicting the future" is no part of historical thinking

in either the Hegelian or Marxist sense. This activity is best left to the empiricists who wish to construct such a science of society and politics. Professor Karl Popper's claims notwithstanding, "historicism" in the Hegelian-Marxist tradition may make knowledge claims about the past without making any such claims about the future. The past provides a "logic of historical development" from which courses of future action may derive. That any particular one will follow from others which preceded it is a "meta-scientific" question, and thus resides outside the boundaries of historically-verifiable knowledge. It is for this reason that Marx was more than an empiricist when he spoke of socialism as the successor to capitalism. This is a philosophical statement bound up with his anthropological view of man as a being fully-developed in a socialist society of the future. That it may ever come about is dependent upon human agency and not predetermination. (Although, it must be pointed out, the deterministic view of the future did play a prominent role in the thinking of a generation of "Marxists" devoted to Engelsian "dialectical materialism," as previously indicated).

With these guidelines in view, what would a prospective theory in the tradition of Marxism indicate, given the current arrangement of advanced industrial society? On those rare occasions when he permitted himself the luxury of contemplating a feasible socialism of the future, Lichtheim provided an important first step toward the definition of such a prospective theory. A few years before his death in 1973, he wrote (in A Short History of Socialism) that what constituted socialism in the Marxist tradition

was quite different from contemporary thinking in Western Europe
70
and America. Too often he warned Western socialists had confused the social and economic reforms of the Welfare State (such as the extension of public services and nationalization of basic industries, at least outside the United States) with socialism.

As beneficial as such measures were, on humanitarian grounds perhaps, they did not strike at the heart of the capitalist system of production and distribution (although public services might ameliorate social inequalities produced by capitalism). Until production was socialized in such a way as to give producers an adequate share in deciding what would be produced and how it would be distributed (through the democratic mechanism of works councils, as exemplified by the experimental liberalization policy carried
71
out in Czechoslovakia, before the Soviet deluge!), even a policy of nationalization in industry would not be socialist. Such nationalization policy when carried out by central authority does not really alter the market system; it only changes the hands of those who are in control. Lichtheim is careful to point out that central planning would have to be carried out on the state level, in order for production to be co-ordinated. The difference would be that producers and planners would at least be in a bargaining position with each other over production and distribution, and that the consequent "tug-of-war" would not be entirely one-sided as it currently is under either capitalism or State Socialism (in the Soviet bloc countries).

That such a socialist system of production and distribution does not now exist either in the East or West (not to mention the

economically depressed areas of the Third World) is a function, according to Lichtheim, of several important factors. First, it makes certain assumptions about adequate levels of material development that would afford at least the majority of people the luxury of looking beyond increased productivity as the sole criterion of personal and social enrichment. It is not likely that a democratic socialization of production could guarantee the same degree of growth that currently is attainable under conditions of the mixed economies of the West or the State Socialist economies of the East. Secondly, the type of socialization envisioned by Lichtheim makes certain assumptions about the level of cultural development of the majority of workers: would they recognize the benefits of a trade-off of more consumer goods for a greater role in determining social investment policy, as, for example, in the arts, leisure-time activity, and areas of public service that are currently not thought to be "profitable" for investment (such as high quality care for children and the elderly outside the home, as well as for the treatment of physical and psychological disabilities, which are needs that are presently not being met)?

The third factor concerns the question of whether the socialization policy envisioned by Lichtheim has any political feasibility in the Marxian sense. Is a cohesive, democratic majority currently available for such a program to have any chance of being adopted? Otherwise, the program resembles a mild form of utopia. Lichtheim's answer is instructive: if one revises Marx's early definition of what constitutes the working class, that is, to include-white collar workers as well as traditional blue-collar

workers (both of whom are propertyless in the Marxian sense), then it becomes possible to envision a democratic labor movement large enough to carry out such a socialization policy. Especially prominent would have to be the participation of intellectuals and scientists, who would hopefully discover an "emancipatory interest" in their own work.⁷²

As of yet, the social structure does not fit together politically in these terms. Lichtheim held out little confidence that it would, and was therefore more convinced that the future would be non-socialist and non-democratic. Technocrats would prevail as the new "ruling stratum" of society.

Against Lichtheim's pessimistic expectations, it is hoped that in his "weaker" moment of historical thinking about the future, he was in fact providing practical instruction as to how to proceed.

FOOTNOTES

1

On the originality of Korsch's interpretation of Marxism as a theory of history, which may have been superseded in certain respects, see George Lichtheim, From Marx to Hegel, (New York, Seabury Press, 1974), pp. 4, 78; also see Karl Korsch, Marxism and Philosophy, trans. by Fred Halliday, (New York: New Left Books, 1970), pp. 56, 70 ff.

2

Lichtheim, From Marx to Hegel, p. viii; also George Lichtheim, George Lukács, (New York: Viking Press, 1970), p. xi.

3

George Lichtheim, Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study, 2nd rev. ed., (New York: Praeger, 1965), p. 368.

4

Lichtheim, George Lukács, pp. 13 ff.

5

Ibid., p. 18.

6

Ibid., pp. 6, 28.

7

Ibid., pp. 66, 67-68.

8

See the biographical sketch of Lichtheim, written by a close friend of his: Walter Laqueur, "George Lichtheim, 1912-1973," Commentary, vol. 56, no. 2, (August, 1973), p. 46.

9

Lichtheim, George Lukács, p. 72.

10

Ibid., p. 54.

11

See Georg Lukács, Tactics and Ethics: Political Essays, 1919-1929, trans. Michael McColgan, ed. Rodney Livingstone, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1975), pp. 240 ff.

12

Laqueur, op. cit.

13

See Lichtheim, Marxism, pp. 3-4; also Lichtheim, Lukács, pp. 83 ff; and Lichtheim, The Concept of Ideology and Other Essays, (New York: Vintage, 1967), pp. 242-43. Also for a critique of sociological analysis (in the mode of neo-positivism) of the same problem, see Lichtheim, Collected Essays, (New York: Viking, 1974), pp. 141-42.

14

For Lichtheim's pessimistic assessment of Goethe's role in the German Enlightenment, see Lukács, pp. 83, 94 ff.

15

Lichtheim, Lukács, pp. 85-86.

16

Ibid., pp. 83-84.

17

Ibid., p. 84.

18

For an excellent study of the Nationalist Socialist phenomenon which takes a decidedly economic view of its origins, see Franz Neumann, Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933-1944, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), *passim*.

19

This is a conclusion that is reached by one of Lichtheim's closest associates, and someone for whom he expressed the greatest admiration, namely Franz Borkenau. Lichtheim's intellectual biography of Lukács is dedicated to Borkenau. For a view of the Weimar Republic and the tragic role of the working class that closely parallels Lichtheim's own account, see Franz Borkenau, World Communism: A History of the Communist International, (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1962), pp. 134-160.

20

Neumann, op. cit., *passim*.

21

This view is suggested by Morris Watnick. See his excellent article: "Relativism and Class Consciousness: Georg Lukács," in Revisionism, ed. Leopold Labedz, (New York: Praeger, 1962), pp. 50-51.

22

Lichtheim, Marxism, pp. 368-70.

23

Ibid.

24

Lichtheim, Lukács, p. 83.

25

See Robert D. Cumming, Human Nature and History, 2 vols, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), *passim*.

26

See C. B. Macpherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), *passim*.

27

See Gary Wills, Inventing America, (New York: Doubleday, 1978), *passim*.

28

See articles by W. H. Greenleaf ("Hobbes: The Problem of Interpretation"), and Brian Barry ("Warrender and His Critics") in Hobbes and Rousseau, eds. Maurice Cranston and Richard S. Peters, (New York: Doubleday, 1972). For an historical interpretation which looks to the context of Hobbes' statements in order to resolve the dispute between Warrender and his critics, see the excellent article in the same collection by Quentin Skinner, entitled "The Context of Hobbes's Theory of Political Obligation."

29

Bertell Ollman, Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society, 2nd edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 3-11.

30

See Part Three, Chapter 2, "Nationalism and Democracy," in Lichtheim's Marxism, pp. 76-89.

31

Ibid.

32

For Ollman's cursory treatment of "democracy," which interprets the democratic state only in the second sense of the above characterization, that is, as a form of class rule, see Alienation, pp. 212-15.

33

Ibid., p. iv.

34

Lichtheim, From Marx to Hegel, pp. 143-159.

35

Karl Marx, Capital, trans. Samuel Moore, Edward Aveling, ed. Fredrick Engels, (New York: Modern Library, 1906), pp. 43 ff.

36

Michael Harrington, Socialism, (New York: Bantam, 1973), p. 65.

37

See "dictator" in The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 720.

38

Harrington, op. cit., p. 59.

39

Ibid., p. 75.

40

Ibid., p. 90.

41

Lichtheim, Collected Essays, p. 359.

42

Shlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 109, 124 ff.

43

For Lichtheim's laudatory praise of Habermas' work, see Lichtheim, From Marx to Hegel, p. 175 ff.

44

See the unpubl. diss. (Graduate School, C.U.N.Y., 1979) by Stephen K. White, "Rationality and the Foundations of Politics," passim.

45

Jürgen Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), pp. 286 ff.

46

Lichtheim, From Marx to Hegel, p. 176.

47

Lichtheim, Marxism, p. xx.

48

Ibid., p. 203.

49

An occasion on which he departed from conventional impersonality was in a review of "the romance of Max Eastman" in his Collected Essays. As originally published in January of 1965 (in The New York Review of Books), he wrote:

There are millions of socialists, but only a handful of poets, and--if one can believe the psychologists--not too many accomplished lovers. If a choice has to be made, I for one am willing to trade a carload of political prose for a single solitary glimpse of either love or poetry. (Collected Essays, p. 165).

50

Lichtheim, Collected Essays, p. 356.

51

G. L. Arnold (pseudonym George Lichtheim), The Pattern of World Conflict, (New York: The Dial Press, 1955), passim.

52

Lichtheim, From Marx to Hegel, p. 170.

53

Ibid.

54

See Laqueur, op. cit., passim.

55

Lichtheim, From Marx to Hegel, pp. 172-174.

56

Perry Anderson, Considerations on Western Marxism, (London: New Left Books, 1976), pp. 42, 45.

57

Lichtheim, Marxism, p. 382.

58

Ibid., p. 380.

59

Ibid., p. 375.

60

See Lichtheim's comments in the following: Marxism, pp. 368-70; A Short History of Socialism, pp. 302 ff.; Lukács, p. 47.

61

Lichtheim, Marxism, p. 373.

62

George Lichtheim, The New Europe: Today and Tomorrow, (New York: Praeger, 1963), pp. 203 ff.

63

Ibid., pp. 186 ff.

64

George Lichtheim, Marxism in Modern France, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), pp. 51 ff.

65

Lichtheim, The New Europe, p. 203.

66

Lichtheim, From Marx to Hegel, p. 224.

67

Lichtheim, Collected Essays, p. 390.

68

See excellent review article of recent literature on the Weimar period by Carl E. Schorske. Writing in May of 1970, Schorske wrote in The New York Review, (May 7, 1970):

Today American interest in Weimar has an opposite premise [from that of the last generation which regarded Nazism as a uniquely German problem]: a sense of kinship. Caught in a crisis ourselves, we turn to Weimar because its tragic experience of dissolution--political, social, and cultural--seems to promise understanding of our own situation. It is not abhorrent strangeness of Weimar society that strikes us now, but our affinity with it. (p. 22).

69

For an alternate view of student radicalism of the 1960's which is more balanced in the present view, see: Sheldon S. Wolin and John H. Schaar, The Berkeley Rebellion and Beyond: Essays on Politics and Education in the Technological Society, (New York: New York Review, 1970), passim.

70

Lichtheim, A Short History of Socialism, pp. 315 ff.

71

An indication of the importance Lichtheim attached to the reform movement underway in Eastern Europe--prior to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia--may be gathered from the following statement, originally published in September of 1968:

'We were prepared for a harsh dispute with political dogmatists. What we encountered was a bunch of gangsters.' This shattering comment by one of the Czechoslovak leaders on their return from Moscow at the end of August found an echo around the globe while the Soviet tanks were still rolling around Prague. It summed up an experience that has burned itself into the minds of Communists

the world over for reasons not immediately perceptible to people who have spent their lives outside the closed universe of Stalinism. The former inhabitants of that demonic realm were sustained, in the midst of indescribable terror and suffering, by a faith which now lies in ruins: the faith that the Russian leadership, whatever its blunders and crimes, was composed of men to whom socialism mattered. The discovery that nothing matters to them save their power and the military security of the U.S.S.R. spells the effective end of Communism as a world movement centered on Moscow. From now on, a Communist is going to be defined as someone who has written the Soviet Union off as a lost cause. (Collected Essays, p. 330).

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72

For a view of contemporary social structure which is similar to that of Lichtheim's, especially concerning the role of white and blue collar workers, see: Andrew Hacker, "Cutting Classes," The New York Review of Books, vol. XXIII, no. 3 (March 4, 1976), pp. 15-18.

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