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**Between Criticism and Revolution.
Philosophy of History in Marx's Early Views**

Między krytyką a rewolucją

Между критикой а революцией

Karl Marx began his philosophical activity in the circle of the Young Hegelians at the time when the philosophical and political activity of the representatives of this trend was at its peak. In his earliest writings of 1841—43 the thought of Young Hegelianism, with its typical problems, methods and solutions, constituted the implicit basis for considerations. That is why an analysis of how Marx's philosophy of history was formed must start with a brief description of the main tendencies of the philosophy of Young Hegelians.

1. PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY OF THE YOUNG HEGELIANS

This philosophy arose as an attempt to re-interpret and revise the philosophy of Hegel. The attempt remained limited, a product of the historical collapse of the Hegelian system, a manifestation of the decline of German idealist philosophy. By conceiving Spirit (*Geist*) not as a stage of the Absolute but as the self-consciousness of mankind, the Young Hegelians retained the essential scheme of Hegel's philosophy of history: the thought of the historically developing consciousness of freedom which is realized in political and legal systems. Rejecting therefore the idealist-objectivist conception of history, the Young Hegelians did not stop understanding it as a process whose dynamics was the expression of the immanent properties of consciousness and the development of self-

-consciousness. Mankind as a superindividual totality integrated by common consciousness, mankind as Spirit — this is the subject of history in the philosophy of the Young Hegelians.

The basis of a re-interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of history was found by his disciples just there — in the thought of the ultimate triumph of subjectivity. By accepting Hegel's conviction of the historically decisive role of his philosophy they concluded that when it emerged mankind had achieved self-knowledge. Hegel's philosophy marked therefore the essential turning point in the world history.

The past appeared thereby as the period of the spontaneous forming of historical process by individuals who did not recognize its nature, and whose consciousness did not go beyond the particular boundaries of "here and now". The past was the time of the unconscious creation of the Spirit-subject, which developed in the continuous struggle against the alienated forms, which the Spirit had abandoned. This was the period of the self-alienation of the subject, whose development was ultimately subordinated to the "Cunning of reason" (*List der Vernunft*), "the unconscious law of freedom". The achievement of self-consciousness by Spirit did not mean the end of history for the Young Hegelians but only the end of the period of alienation and the beginning of a new stage of development at the same time.

The future was understood as the age of the total subjectification of history, the epoch in which the human community, integrated by common self-consciousness and constituted as a rational state, would consciously create their world and rule over their development. "History is conscious of itself from this day on", said Edgar Bauer, "because mankind knows the rules to advance, because it has its aim before it — freedom".¹ Self-consciousness freed from alienation was to make it possible for man to act consciously in history, and for the rational forms of political systems, in accordance with the developing consciousness of freedom, to progress harmoniously. The vision of the future as a synthesis of reason and reality contained the thought of the ultimate reconciliation of self-consciousness and the political forms of its objectification. The philosophy of the Young Hegelianism can be regarded as a continuation of the tradition of the German philosophy of subjectivity while the thought of the full realization of subjectivity can be seen as the main assumption and premise of Young Hegelians' political-philosophical activity.

The distinction of two different phases of the development of subjectivity significantly supplemented Hegel's understanding of the historical role of self-consciousness and thereby of philosophy (as its form). In his

¹ E. Bauer: *Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat*, Bern 1844, p. 268. Quoted after R. Panasiuk: *Filozofia i państwo*, Warszawa 1967, p. 204.

disciples' view, Hegel's thought closed the epoch in which philosophy came "always too late", reduced to the passive cognition of the past stages of the development of reality. With the revelation of the sense of history, and with the discovery of laws governing it, philosophy accomplished its development as the cognition of "what is" — the cognitive attitude towards reality no longer exhausted its nature. The aims of the Young Hegelians were not purely theoretical. Their activities aimed at the "realization of philosophy", at making the knowledge of history the basis for creating it consciously. Subjectivity assumes a new dimension in this conception: it is not exhausted in cognition, the mode of its realization is action. The Young Hegelians' philosophy, aware of its historical mission of self-conscious Spirit, strove to go beyond the hermetic framework of various systems, turning at the reality not as cognition but as reality-forming *praxis*. The object of its special interest was the State as that form of social life in which the consciousness of freedom is realized.

The importance of the subjective-practical, creative role of philosophy became greater when the Young Hegelians abandoned the conviction of the rational character of the Prussian State, relinquishing the faith that it developed as more and more rational and free in the conscious political practice. In a more general plan of history of philosophy this meant that the thought of the unity of the world, Hegel's unity of reason and reality, of the subject and the object, as the actually existing unity, was rejected. The reality was seen by the Young Hegelians as the "ruptured world", as a contradiction between philosophy and the irrational State, between self-consciousness and the past political forms of its objectification. Thus the turn of philosophy towards reality assumed the forms of a struggle against its irrationality, the struggle for the unity of the world, for the "realization of philosophy". In that atmosphere Karl Marx began his philosophical activity in the early 1840's. His doctoral dissertation was permeated with the characteristically Young Hegelians' awareness of the new historical situation and vocation of philosophy which as "*...in sich frei gewordene theoretische Geist zur praktischen Energie wird, als Wille (...)* sie gegen die weltliche, ohne ihn vorhandene Wirklichkeit kehrt".²

2. CRITICISM OF THE PRUSSIAN STATE

The Young Hegelians' programme of going beyond the theoretical framework of philosophy and the aspiration to "realize" philosophy were manifested in Marx's journalistic activity begun in 1842. The press as

² K. M a r x: *Doktordissertation*, Jena 1964, p. 80.

"die freieste Weise, in welcher heutzutage der Geist erscheint"³, "der geistige Spiegel, in dem ein Volk sich selbst erblickt"⁴ became the means of philosophy striving to shape the "political spirit of the nation". A form of this activity was "criticism" understood as the way of realizing the subjective-practical nature of philosophy.

The critical character of Marx's journalism lay in the judgment of concrete manifestations of the Prussian political system, and the political consciousness connected with it. Philosophy of history, concealed in tacit assumptions, functioned in his articles as the theoretical self-consciousness of the critical practice of philosophy. It provided general categories permitting to reveal the sense of concrete phenomena and to judge them. On the basis of Marx's later considerations in *General Introduction to Grundrisse* (1857) we can say that in journalism what is concrete is cognitively secondary to "abstraction" in the Young Hegelians' philosophy of history, that abstract categories reveal the sense of concrete political phenomena. In the development of Marx's conception of history, this "turn towards reality" will become a continuous effort to go beyond the framework of the initial theoretical construction which will not resist confrontation with the reality. This will be a factor dynamizing the development of the philosopher's theoretical self-consciousness.

In Marx's earlier articles "critical judgment" lay in the confrontation of the elements of the Prussian political reality with the "essence" of State of which the philosophy that knows the sense and mechanism of history is aware.⁵ It was at the same time a confrontation of the specific and the particular with the general because in his articles Marx appeared as a continuator of the tradition of German philosophy, for which generality was the attribute of reason, Spirit, freedom, truth, and of philosophy, which "acts in a general way and melts the forms which obstruct the emergence of the general."⁶ The self-consciousness of the current stage of the development of consciousness, the expression of which was the philosophy of Young Hegelianism, is the ultimate criterion in Marx's articles, the measure of the rationality of the existing forms of socio-political life.

³ K. Marx: *Die Verhandlungen des 6. Rheinischen Landtages. Debatten über Pressfreiheit und Publikation der Landständischen Verhandlungen* (henceforward V6RL) in K. Marx, F. Engels: *Werke* (henceforward MEW), Berlin 1964, Vol. 1, p. 39.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁵ "Wir müssen also das Mass des Wesens der inneren Idee an die Existenz der Dinge legen und uns um so weniger durch die Instanzen einer einseitigen und trivialen Erfahrung irren lassen", *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁶ K. Marx: *Różnica między demokrytyjską a epikurejską filozofią przyrody*, Warszawa 1966, p. 176.

The central problem of Marx's journalism lay in the question whether the Prussian State complied with the notion of the State, whether it was the realization of rational freedom. The notion of the State was the philosophical form of the Young Hegelians' political ideal, to be validated by philosophy of history. The conception of the State, not fully determined in Marx's early articles, bears traces of many inspirations. Young Hegelianism, which was the philosophical advocate of the radical, bourgeois-democratic opposition, was aware of the backwardness of the Prussian system in comparison with the societies which had undergone bourgeois revolutions. However, the criticism of the feudal character of the Prussian political institutions was not accompanied by the postulate of a liberal-bourgeois State. According to Marx, the State, in concord with its essence, is a form of the universal participation in political life, a sphere of the universal law, uniform for all, which is "*das wirkliche Freiheitsdasein des Menschen*".⁷ This anti-feudal political ideal was at the same time characterized by anti-individualism and the primacy of public and political life over private life. The State was recognized as the form which was a requisite for the existence of a nation or people (*Volk*).⁸ The Spirit of the nation (*Volksgeist*) is realized only in the State understood as a political-ethical community. That is why political practice was treated by Marx as the essential form of the realization of subjectivity in history. Outside the State, a nation is an atomized "collection of private persons" (*Privatpöbel*).⁹ Only as a citizen-member of a political community can man rise above the particularity of his private life. "(...) *selbst der Staat erzieht seine, indem er sie zu Staatsglieder macht, indem er die Zwecke des Einzelnen in allgemeine Zwecke, den rohen Trieb in sittliche Neigung, die natürliche Unabhängigkeit, Freiheit verwandelt, indem der Einzelne sich im Leben des Ganzen und das ganze sich in der Gesinnung des Einzelnen genießt*"¹⁰. The State was for Marx the form of the realization of the general while the sphere of "private life" was the domain of the particular. In their solution of the antinomy of "generality" and "particularity" the Young Hegelians were more radical than Hegel's political philosophy, where the "particularity" of the privileged privat sphere (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) was retained as a

⁷ Marx: V6RL, *Debatten über Pressfreiheit...*, p. 58.

⁸ The category of *Volk* in Marx's early writings carried only the political content and denoted an aggregate of "citizens" — equal members of the State as a political community. That is why it can be rendered as "people". Because, however, the object of Marx's articles were local-German socio-political phenomena, its redering as "nation" is also good.

⁹ *Privatpöbel*. Marx: V6RL, *Debatten über Pressfreiheit...*, p. 64.

¹⁰ K. Marx: *The Leading Article in the Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 179, MEW, vol. 1, p. 95.

moment of the "generality" of the State. Hegel's anti-utopian philosophy, directed toward "what is", treated selfish individualism, typical of "the private" sphere as a necessary (and because of its incurable finalism also as the ultimate) stage of historical development. The critical philosophy of Young Hegelianism, directed towards the future, was convinced that in the era of self-consciousness freed from alienation, and with the victory of subjectivity, the particular would melt in the "generality" of political community.

Marx's critical articles revealed deep discrepancies between the practice of the Prussian State and the Young Hegelians' political ideal. The tenor of his criticism led to the conclusion that instead of realizing the "Spirit of the nation", the Prussian State yielded to the pressure of particular interests of groups or individuals. It does not realize freedom understood by Marx as a specific feature (*Gattungswesen*) of spiritual life¹¹; it is a state based on coercion, an obstacle in the development of the political consciousness of the nation. In his analysis of the Rhine *Landtag* activities Marx pointed out that that institution guarded class interests rather than the general interest of the province. "...*der Landtag die exekutive Gewalt, die administrativen Behörden, (...) die Staatsidee, das Verbrechen selbst und die Strafe zu materiellen Mitteln des Privatinteresses herabwürdigt*"¹² Particularity is found both in the legislature and in the government and state bureaucracy which "*herblässt (...) in der Weise des Privateigentums tätig zu sein*".¹³ The illegal constraint on the political Spirit of the nation was, in Marx's view, the censorship law which, directed against the freedom of the press, was ultimately aimed at the self-consciousness of the nation, at its spiritual freedom. Marx asserted that only those laws were rational and "real" where "*das bewusstlose Naturgesetz der Freiheit bewusstes Staatsgesetz geworden ist*"¹⁴, whereas the censorship law, which kills the Spirit of the State, will remain a mere "formal law", "a police measure against freedom". Free press was seen by Marx as a form of the objectification of political consciousness and as a place of the integration of the nation in the sphere of self-consciousness. Its absence led to disintegration as manifested in the contradiction between the government and the society, between the "class of officials" and the "class of non-officials". The Prussian State, instead of being "*ein liches allen zugängliches und ge-*

¹¹ "(...) die Freiheit ist doch wohl das Gattungswesen des ganzen geistigen Daseins", V6RL, *Debatten über Pressfreiheit...*, p. 54.

¹² Marx: V6RL, *Debatten über das Holzdiebstahlgesetz*, MEW, pp. 143—144. pp. 143—144.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹⁴ Marx: V6RL, *Debatten über Pressfreiheit...*, p. 58.

höriges Laienwesen"¹⁵, remained a particular business of the ruling classes. "(...) *weniger der ganze Staat als ein Teil des Staates, die 'Regierung', ein eigentliches Staatsleben führe*".¹⁶ In consequence, the nation, deprived of its unifying political form, was not a community of citizens but an atomized collection of private individuals and the sphere of particular class interests. The Prussian political practice was no realization of the subjective nature of self-conscious Spirit. On the contrary, it appeared to the Young Hegelians as an alienated form which constrained further development of the consciousness of freedom.

3. COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS OF CRITICISM

Marx's critical activity was not confined to judgments, to the simple ascertainment of the discrepancy between the ideal and reality. This most external manifestation of criticism was predominant in Marx's earliest articles, which was derived from their publicistic-political and non-theoretical character. In his later writings, in *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*, in letters to A. Ruge in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* and in *Zur Judenfrage* Marx's criticism, while still being a judgment of the irrational reality, revealed its cognitive function. "So weist die wahrhaft philosophische Kritik der jetzigen Staatsverfassung... nicht nur Widersprüche als bestehend auf, sie erklärt sie, sie begreift ihre Genesis, ihre Notwendigkeit".¹⁷

The basic theoretical instrument of the "explaining criticism" became the category of alienation. Deep in the tradition of German idealist philosophy and the chief concept of Hegel's dialectic, alienation was also present in the tacit assumptions underlying Marx's articles in the *Rheinische Zeitung*. In these writings, while understanding the Prussian State as an alienated form, Marx believed at the same time that it was possible to reconcile the State with its rational essence and to make it a political community of citizens. He considered this possible without abolishing the sphere of particular interests, only by immunizing the State against their influence. Although this conception was very vague and very difficult for Marx to hold (with the ever-growing power of particular interests), it can be considered the main motive of Marx's critical writings in that period. The conception was a rather faithful continuation of Hegel's idea of the State as the realization of the

¹⁵ K. Marx: *Das Verbot der Leipziger allgemeinen Zeitung*, MEW, vol. 1, p. 159.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

¹⁷ K. Marx: *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*, MEW, vol. 1, p. 296.

consciousness of freedom. Any deviations, if we ignore the rejection of objective idealism, were the result of a change in understanding the structure of historical time. The development of self-consciousness in a way anticipated the development of political practice, thanks to which Young Hegelians' philosophy became critical and projected the future in accordance with the discovered "essence" of the State. Its fight against the Prussian State remained the fight for a rational State.

In the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law* (1843) the contradiction between particular interests and the State, revealed in Marx's earlier articles, was described in terms of Hegel's political philosophy as the contradiction between the "civil society" (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) and the "political State" (*politischer Staat*) and, what is most important, it was critically explained thanks to Feuerbach's model of religious alienation. In the *Contribution* Marx gave up the thought of the possibility of realizing the community only through a change of the political system. He concluded that the community which would make it possible for man to realize his subjective nature in full could not be reconciled with the system of particular interests. What the journalistic writings had exposed as their contemporary sociopolitical fact was now theoretically explained and formulated as a new conception of the State as an alienated product.

A characteristic feature of the philosophical criticism in the *Contribution* was its dual reference: subjective and theoretical. This was explicitly stated in Marx's *Introduction to the Contribution* (1843/44): "The criticism of the German philosophy of law and the State, which found in Hegel its most consistent, richest and ultimate expression, is both the critical analysis of the modern State and its accompanying reality, and the distinct negation of the whole hitherto mode of the German political and legal consciousness".¹⁸ Moreover; the binding of this dual reference of criticism, which lies in the recognition that "the German image of the modern State, abstracting from the real Man, was only possible because and inasmuch as the modern State itself abstracts from the real Man",¹⁹ is an early form of criticism which recognizes the alienation of consciousness (whether religious, political, economic, or philosophical) as the mystified consciousness of the alienated world.

The starting point of Marx's criticism of *Philosophy of Right* (*Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*) was the finding that Hegel's description of the division between the "civil society" and the "political State" corresponded to the real forms of contemporaneous social life. Marx

¹⁸ Marx: *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung*, p. 384.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 384—385.

pointed out that this dualism found its expression in the social existence of the human individual who functions as a private person in the system of the particular interest and a citizen of the State in the legal-political system. "*Hegel ist nicht zu tadeln, weil er das Wesen des modernes Staats schildert, wie es ist, sondern weil er das, was ist, für das Wesen des Staats ausgibt*".²⁰ "*Hegels Hauptfehler besteht, dass er den Widerspruch der Erscheinung als Einheit im Wesen, in der Idee fasst, während er allerdings ein Tieferes zu seinem Wesen hat, nämlich einen wesentlichen Widerspruch*".²¹

This contradiction is, in Marx's view, an expression of political alienation. He regards the State as an alienated form of the specific life of "man" ("people"). The concept of "people" (*Volk*), also present in Marx's early articles had only the political content denoting, the collection of equal members of the State, of "citizens" — distinguished from "private" persons, members of the "civil society". Starting from the *Contribution* it acquires a different philosophical content thanks to its connection with Feuerbach's "Man" understood as the essence of human species. Marx conceived of the social forms of human existence, including the State, as the objectification and realization of man's essence as species. "*Der Mensch bleibt immer das Wesen aller dieser Wesen*"²², the subject of his world. However, the subject, says Marx, leads a "double life", none of its existing incarnations being the true subject itself, which realizes its essence. In the "civil society" man exists as an egoistic individual, as "particular interest", who "treats other men as a means, degrades himself to a means and is the plaything of alien powers"²³. This sphere where there is a continual war of all against all is the negation of community. In the "political State" man exists as an equal participant in political life. But the "political man is only the abstracted, artificial man, the man as an allegorical, moral individual"²⁴, and as such he is entirely away from his existence as the monad-individual in the system of particular interest. According to Marx, the State is, the "religious sphere of social life", the "political heaven" of freedom, community, generality of species. Only the "private man" is a real being, yet his real, social existence is egoistic, atomized, subjugated. Man realizes his essence of species only in the unreal political incarnation while his real, non-political existence is the negation of his essence of species.

The above brief characteristics of the conception of political aliena-

²⁰ M a r x: *Zur Kritik...*, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 295—296.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 294.

²³ K. M a r x: *Zur Judenfrage*, MEW, vol. 1, p. 355.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

tion permits a return to the problem of the "explaining criticism". In the *Contribution* the conception of alienation as a theoretical instrument of critical explanation permitted, on the objective plane, to reveal that the sources of contradictions between man's existence and essence are concealed in the system of particular interest, in nature of the modern "civil society". Its consequence will be a significant change of the object of investigation in Marx's further philosophy. The political forms of social life will be replaced by economic forms, starting from the *Philosophical-Economic Manuscripts* (1844). The conception of alienation will prove to be the universal instrument of criticism, serving to discover contradictions specific to this form as well. Secondly, the change in the objective perspective of philosophy lay in passing from the criticism of the local-German social reality with its feudal relics to the analysis of bourgeois societies. "*Wollte man an den deutschen status quo selbst anknüpfen, wenn auch in einzig angemessener Weise, d.h. negativ — (...) immer bleibe das Resultat ein Anachronismus. Selbst die Verneinung unserer politischen Gegenwart findet sich schon als bestaubte Tatsache in der historischen Rumpelkammer der modernen Völker.*"²⁵ However, Marx concluded at the same time, that "German (i.e. Hegelian) philosophy of law and the State is the only German history standing *al pari* with the official modern present day",²⁶ that Hegel's description corresponded to the real character of the early socio-political bourgeois reality. The fragment quoted is therefore a self-critical rejection of the objective perspective present in Marx's early writings. It also permits to notice a certain defect of the analyses in the *Contribution*, where Marx confronted Hegel's political philosophy with the Prussian State.

In the *Contribution* the conception of alienation became the instrument of critique on the theoretical plane, or more precisely theoretical objective. The criticism of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* was not narrowly theoretical, nor was it confined to the analysis of the immanent contents of this work. In his rejection of Hegel's explanation of the dualism of "civil society" and "the political State" as "logical, pantheistic mysticism" Marx did not confine himself to the criticism of theoretical deficiencies. Also in this case his criticism strove to explain and discover the sources of the deficiencies. The "change of the position" of the subject and predicate, idea and empiricism, of the abstract and the concrete, typical of Hegel's philosophy, was understood by Marx as a philosophical form of the mystified consciousness of the real social world, which is the world "upside down". By presenting that which was the essence of the State, Hegel affirmed real political alienation. There lay "*diese Unkritik*,

²⁵ M a r x: *Zur Kritik... Einleitung*, p. 379.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

dieser Mysticismus (...) sowohl das Rätsel der modernen Verfassungen (...) wie auch das Mysterium der Hegelschen Philosophie".²⁷ The criticism of the *Philosophy of Right* was thereby a critical explanation of the objective and the theoretical in their interrelationship, an analysis of the mystical consciousness of the alienated world. "Hegel did nothing but develop the morality of the modern State and of the modern private law".²⁸ This type of criticism was further developed in the *Manuscripts* where Marx asserted that "political economy expressed only the laws of alienated labour".²⁹

4. PRACTICAL FUNCTIONS OF CRITICISM. PRACTICE AS "REFORM OF CONSCIOUSNESS"

In our discussion we have so far indicated "judgment" and "explanation" as the two meanings of the concept of criticism in Marx's early writings. The third meaning of criticism lies in understanding it is activity, *Praxis*, as the conscious shaping of social reality. Such a definition of criticism was deeply rooted in the Young Hegelians philosophy of history as the expression of its specific vision of the role of human activity in the historical process. This was also connected with the tendency mentioned earlier of going beyond the purely theoretical framework of philosophy, with the programme of passing from cognition to "philosophy-realizing" action. A characteristic feature of Young Hegelianism was the treatment of "judgment" and "explanation" as the dependent moments of the practical activity of criticism. They were understood only as premises for action. This characteristic can also be referred to Marx. It must be borne in mind, however, that with the development of his philosophy the interdependence between knowledge and practical action based on it became somewhat complicated. Contrary to the Young Hegelians' conviction that the discovery of the sense of history was the culmination of the development of philosophy as cognition, the development of Marx's philosophy was a process of constantly overcoming the theoretical solutions already achieved. In that way, with the departure from the initial, Young Hegelians' views on the nature of historical process, with the discovery of still deeper strata of social reality, the understanding of the subjective practical role of philosophy also began to change.

What did the "practicality" of criticism lie in? How could it shape reality? The relativity of the distinction between the theoretical and

²⁷ Marx: *Zur Kritik...*, p. 287.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

²⁹ K. Marx: *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*, Leipzig 1968, p. 163.

practical aspects of critical philosophy was emphasized by Marx himself in his doctoral dissertation: "the practice of philosophy is itself theoretical".³⁰ The Young Hegelians understood the critical practice of philosophy as a purely intellectual activity, as criticism of views. This is understandable if we take into consideration that in their conception history was the development of Spirit, of self-consciousness, and that the State was above all the reality of the Spirit of the nation. As a consequence, the practice of Young Hegelians' philosophy remained the activity in the political consciousness of the nation. The difference between a purely cognitive activity and the practical activity of philosophy also lay in the assumption of a definite subjective perspective. And it lay in undertaking problems traditionally regarded as unworthy of philosophy and in the choice of a peculiar medium of criticism. By turning towards the "secular reality" philosophy became "a newspaper correspondent" and took as the object of its considerations such "non-philosophical issues" as the parcelling out of landed property or the troubles of the Mosel region. The aim of criticism confronting the existing forms of the Prussian political system with the "rational essence" of the State was to change the political views of the society.

The final justification of the practical vocation of criticism can be found in the Young Hegelians' philosophy of history according to which criticism is a mode of the historical existence of philosophy, which is a form of human self-consciousness. According to Marx "philosophy is not outside the world", "every true philosophy is the spiritual quintessence of its times".³¹ Philosophical views are thus not only the expression of individual consciousness but also the form in which the historically developing consciousness of freedom is manifested. The Young Hegelians' distinction, which I have mentioned earlier, of the two different phases in the development of subjectivity led to the recognition of criticism as the way of realizing the subjective-practical, creative role of philosophy in the struggle against the alienated forms of self-consciousness. Without analyzing the issue we can add that the concept of criticism was the counterpart of the Hegelian category of negation and should be discussed in the broader context of history of philosophy.

The conception of critical philosophy as the expression of the nation's self-consciousness lay at the foundations of the Young Hegelians' faith in the effectiveness of intellectual activity in the struggle against the irrational reality. It permitted, they believed, the validation of their vision of the future opposed to the reality, and thereby a defense of their philosophy against the accusations of utopianism and of constructing non-hi-

³⁰ K. Marx: *Doktordissertation, op. cit.*, p. 80.

³¹ Marx: *The Leading Article...*, p. 97.

historical ideals. The way of realizing the "critical practice" of philosophy was the "reform of consciousness", as Marx put in his letter to Ruge, "which lies only in that the world must see its own consciousness, must be woken up from its dreams about itself, and its actions must be clarified to it. Our whole aim can be, as is the case with Feuerbach's criticism of religion, but to give the religious and political issues the conscious human form", while the reform was to be executed "not through dogmas but by analyzing the mystical consciousness unclear to itself".³² Thus self-consciousness still remained the key both in cognition and in the conscious creation of Man's socio-historical world. It is not accidental that Marx called Socrates "incarnate philosophy" (*inkorporierte Philosophie*)³³ because critical philosophy can be regarded as his heritage. It did not attempt to impose anything, striving only to make the unconscious conscious, to reveal the hidden, mystified "essence" of man's world and its historical development. The only aim of criticism was to make "man do consciously what the nature of things makes him do unconsciously".³⁴ "We do not want to anticipate the (new) world dogmatically", says Marx, "but it is only through the criticism of the old world that we want to find the new one".³⁵ "We only show the world what it fights for, while consciousness is something it must acquire even if it does not wish to".³⁶ These statements indicate that in his conception of the means of shaping the reality Marx did not go beyond the Young Hegelians' philosophy of history at that time. He saw in "ignorance" (*Unwissenheit*)³⁷ the source of the irrationality of the world, the causes of its "split". He believed that it was enough to spread the knowledge of the nature of historical development, contained in philosophy, and man would become the free subject of this world. It was easy for philosophy, especially as heir to German idealist philosophy, to abandon the conception of history as the development of consciousness of freedom, as the becoming of man's self-consciousness, and to give up the thought of the privileged, subjective role of philosophy in that process.

In Marx's 1843 writings, *Contribution to the Critique...*, *Zur Judenfrage*, and in letters to A. Ruge, a certain trend can be found, however, the development of which permitted philosophy to go beyond the limits of thought of Young Hegelianism and led to the gradual destruction of the initial theoretical structure.

³² K. Marx: *Briefe aus den Deutsch-Französischen Jahrbüchern*, MEW, vol. 1, p. 346.

³³ Marx: *The Leading Article in the Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 179, p. 91.

³⁴ Marx: *Zur Kritik...*, p. 259.

³⁵ Marx: *Briefe...*, p. 344.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

³⁷ Marx: *The Leading Article*, p. 104.

The representatives of the Young Hegelians had little understanding of the economic sphere of social life and confined themselves to criticizing religion, philosophy, and politics. In the development of Marx's philosophy, however, even in his earliest writings, a growing preoccupation with "the system of particular interest" can be observed. The studies on Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and the application of Feuerbach's model of alienation as the theoretical instrument of explaining the "irrationality" of the State allowed Marx to discover "civil society". They permitted him to see in the economic sphere of social reality the seat of "irrationality", the area hiding the "mystery" of political alienation. If we are interested in the inner logic of Marx's philosophical development, the importance of this "discovery" is by no means diminished by the fact that the basis of the explanation of the phenomena characteristic of "civil society" was still the Young Hegelians' and Feuerbach's philosophical structure. We agree thereby with L. Althusser that Marx's philosophy was "theoretical humanism" at that time, and that Feuerbach's Man was its chief headword. "Alienation" functioned in this philosophy as theoretical and practical panacea in the trend to explain and overcome the contradictions between man's essence as species and the socio-historical forms of his existence. We also hold that it was the discovery of the economic sphere of social life that "exploded" the initial theoretical structure. In the above-mentioned writings the consequence of this discovery was the gradual change in the objective perspective. The revelation of the political mystification of social life permitted to perceive its true face. The truth of this economic face of "the system of particular interest" still remained hidden but the question about it marked the further direction of Marx's philosophy.

Along with the change of the objective perspective, another consequence of the conception of political alienation was the recognition that the change of the character of the political system was not tantamount to the abolition of the contradictions between "civil society" and "the political State" because it did not lead to the reconciliation between the political and "private" existence of Man, it did not disturb the particular, atomized character of "private life" but only gave it some other, though invariable alienated, political forms. The polemic with B. Bauer was therefore the self-critical rejection of Marx's own conception of community as only political, which he presented in the *Rheinische Zeitung*. Thus in *Zur Judenfrage* Marx departed from the purely political, republican, antifeudal and local-German programme of the Young Hegelians.

The main object of Marx's criticism at that time was the contradiction between the "political State" and "civil society". Unmasking the alienated

character of the State dominated over the critical analysis of "the system of particular interest". This accounted for a certain generality of the programme of the "emancipation of man". "*Erst wenn (...) der wirkliche individuelle Mensch den abstrakten Staatsbürger zurücknimmt und als individueller Mensch (...) Gattungswesen geworden ist, (...) erst dann ist die menschliche Emanzipation vollbracht.*"³⁸ The question about the way and means to achieve this rather abstractly defined unity remained open. The critical "reform of consciousness" was still the only noticeable means of emancipation. On the other hand, the rejection of the narrowly political programme of Young Hegelianism and the postulate of the abolition of the "civil society" became the basis of radically new solutions.

5. BETWEEN CRITICISM AND REVOLUTION (CRITICISM WITH WEAPONS)

In the light of the foregoing considerations it is easy to understand why the 1843/44 *Introduction to the Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* is generally regarded as the turning point in Marx's philosophy. For the first time the idea of social revolution and the conception of the historical mission of the proletariat as its collective class subject were formulated there. We contend that in the case of this work by Marx the interpretations which persist in marking a clear-cut and unequivocal borderline between "young" and "mature" Marx are especially defective. The work contains a specific collection of ideas anticipating historical materialism and of those still belonging to his Hegelian past. Such interpretations are doomed to absolutize one of those mutually defining moments. However, if we give up that manner of pursuing Marx's philosophy then the most interesting will be the tension between the Young Hegelians' philosophy of history and the direction of the development of Marx's thought marked by successive "discoveries" because this tension expresses the dynamics of his theoretical self-consciousness in the making.

Let us look from this perspective upon the passing from the critical practice of philosophy to the conception of revolutionary practice of the proletariat, treated as a change in understanding the historical subject. The "discovery" itself of the proletariat is complex in its premises. On the one hand, it was connected with a tendency to reveal the inner contradictions of the "system of particular interest" and can be analyzed as a consequence of Marx's earlier interest in the issue of the "civil society". On the other hand, this was connected with Marx's stay in

³⁸ Marx: *Zur Judenfrage*, p. 370.

Paris, which he found inspiring. His "discovery" did not merely lie in distinguishing the proletariat as a separate class because he had already written in the *Rheinische Zeitung*: "Dass der Stand, der heute nichts besitzt, am Reichtum der Mittelklassen teilzunehmen verlangt, das ist ein Faktum, welche (...) in Manchester, Paris und Lyon auf den Strassen jedem sichtbar umherläuft (...)".³⁹ Therefore what we find essential is not so much the context of his discovery as the context of its justification (we regard these terms metaphorically as analogies with their appropriate sense to the methodology of natural sciences). The justification of the historical mission of the proletariat entirely fitted the framework of "theoretical humanism". "Proletariat" was a category whose sense was defined by the Young Hegelians' theoretical structure. Marx understood it as "a social stratum" which "has a universal character through its universal suffering"⁴⁰ and which "having entirely lost the man, can win itself back only by entirely winning back the man".⁴¹ At that time Marx understood "proletariat" as the expression of the extreme though not clearly defined alienation of man, as the class which can free itself only by abolishing the "civil society".

Also the idea of the revolutionary practice of the proletariat, however radically beyond the standpoint of Young Hegelianism on the political plane, carried in its theoretical justification the burden of Marx's early conception of historical development. The postulate of transforming "criticism" into "material power" can be treated as a consequence of perceiving the limited effects of the "reform of consciousness" in the struggle for the "emancipation of man". However, it did not mean the rejection of the subjective role of philosophy (self-consciousness) in historical development. That is why the assertion that in the *Introduction to Contribution...* Marx recognized the proletariat as the subject of revolution raises serious objections. In the declared alliance with the proletariat it was philosophy that was to have a decisive role. Young Marx's metaphorical text left no doubt about this. Philosophy was described there as "the thunder of idea", "the spiritual weapon", "the head of man's emancipation"; we must not forget that for Marx the world still remained "*die Welt des Kopfes*".⁴² The proletariat, on the other hand, was treated by Marx as "the material weapon", "the heart of emancipation", "still naive people's soil", "the passive factor", "the material basis" of revolution. Therefore, the proletariat was not so much the subject as the historical

³⁹ K. Marx: *Der Kommunismus und die Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, MEW, vol. 1, p. 106.

⁴⁰ Marx: *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 390.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

⁴² Marx: *The Leading Article...*, p. 97.

executor of revolution. Revolutionary practice (just as political practice in Marx's early writings) was understood as a way of realizing the subjective nature, which strove to cause philosophy "to realize itself". Its ultimate goal was to reconcile the essence of Man with his socio-historical existence.

The "tension" between the burden of Young Hegelians' thought and the new ideas of Marx's philosophy was also expressed in the equivocality of objective references. By pointing to the anachronism of the German reality as compared with bourgeois societies Marx made a step forward towards transcending the local character of the philosophy of Young Hegelianism. On the other hand, the main problem of the *Introduction* remained the question about the possibilities and means of the "emancipation of Germany": *Wie sollte es mit einem salto mortale nicht nur über seine eigenen Schranken hinwegsetzen, sondern zugleich über die Schranken der modernen Völker.*⁴³ In Marx's reply we can discover the traces of Young Hegelians' belief in the specificity of the historical development of "this philosophical nation".⁴⁴ This belief found its expression in the affirmation of the subjective role of philosophy in the history of Germany, in the conviction that the German *status quo* "would break upon philosophy",⁴⁵ and "that the only practically possible liberation of Germany is the liberation from the standpoint of theory that recognizes man as the highest being for man",⁴⁶ (that is the theory of Marx himself). We also find this in Marx's peculiar double somersault. The conviction that the German proletariat was only in the making, that it was the "naive people's soil", did not prevent Marx from recognizing it, only half a year later, as "the theoretician of the European proletariat".⁴⁷

In the light of the foregoing remarks we must conclude that in the *Introduction* to the *Contribution...* we have to do not so much with the "discovery" of, as with the prologue to, the process of "discovering" the proletariat and revolutionary practice as the form of historical subjectivity. Politically and ideologically new ideas were still situated in the old theoretical space. On the road to cognition which was an effort of "acquiring the concrete", the Young Hegelians' "abstraction" was already insufficient but still to be overcome. But it was these ideas that took a decisive part in Marx's further theoretical development.

⁴³ Marx: *Zur Kritik...*, p. 386—387.

⁴⁴ K. Marx: *Kritische Randglossen zu dem Artikel "Der König von Preussen und die Socialreform. Von einem Preussen"*, MEW, vol. 1, p. 405.

⁴⁵ Marx: *Zur Kritik... Einleitung*, p. 386.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

⁴⁷ Marx: *Kritische Randglossen...*, p. 406.

STRESZCZENIE

Rozwój wczesnej myśli Marksa w latach 1841—43 oznacza przejście od przekonania o dziejotwórczej roli filozofii do koncepcji rewolucji proletariackiej.

Rozpoczynając swą działalność podzielał on pogląd młodoheglistów, iż własna ich filozofia jest ostateczną postacią w rozwoju samowiedzy „ducha narodu” pojmowanego jako podmiot historii oraz że państwo pruskie jest jego wyalienowaną formą. Były to przesłanki przypisania filozofii roli krytyki traktowanej przez Marksa jako: osąd konfrontujący społeczną egzystencję ludzi z „istotą” człowieka; „wyjaśnianie” sprzeczności istoty i istnienia człowieka jako wyniku alienacji; „reformacja” zmistyfikowanej świadomości wyalienowanego świata. Sformułowana w roku 1843 idea rewolucji przekraczając polityczne horyzonty filozofii młodoheglistów wspierała się na tych samych co koncepcja „krytyki” podstawach, na teorii alienacji „istoty” człowieka. Ta porzucona przez Marksa w późniejszych pracach teoria odegrała decydujące znaczenie w procesie prowadzącym do powstania materializmu historycznego, w przejściu od lokalno-niemieckiej problematyki politycznej przez analizy sprzeczności między „państwem politycznym” a „społeczeństwem obywatelskim” do badań nad ekonomicznymi podstawami społeczeństwa burżuazyjnego. Z koncepcji „krytyki” zrodziła się nie tylko idea rewolucji ale też późniejsza teoria ideologii oraz „krytyka” ekonomii politycznej. Artykuł niniejszy śledzi niektóre aspekty wczesnej fazy tego procesu ewolucji myśli Marksa.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Ранняя философская мысль К. Маркса в 1841—1843 гг. отличалась переходом от убеждения о исторической роли философии к концепции пролетарской революции. Начиная свою деятельность, Маркс разделял мнение младших гегельянцев, что их философия является окончательным видом в развитии самосознания „духа народа”, понимаемого как предмет истории, а также, что прусское государство является его отчужденной формой. Это были предпосылки придания философии значения критики, рассматриваемой Марксом как: сопоставляющее осуждение общественного существования людей с „существом” человека; „объяснение” противоречия существа и существования человека как результат отчуждения; „реформа” мистификационного сознания отчужденного мира. Определенная в 1843 году идея революции, выходящая за политические рамки философии младших гегельянцев, опиралась на тех же, что концепция „критики” основах, на теории отчуждения „существа человека”. Эта заброшенная позже Марксом теория сыграла решающую роль в процессе возникновения исторического материализма, в переходе от локально-немецкой политической проблематики, через анализ противоречий между „политическим государством” и „гражданским обществом” до исследований экономических основ буржуазного общества. Из концепции „критики” возникла не только идея революции, но и позднейшая теория идеологии, а также „критика” политической экономии. В данной работе представлены некоторые аспекты ранней фазы процесса эволюции мысли Маркса.