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DISCUSSION, Feb. 15, 1960

(Note: Notes taken on R are more or less complete & were taken down by Grace; the rest of the notes, taken by R, are disgracefully sketchy except the last of G's on form.)

Raffa:

Discussion and development of Marx's Capital viewed now and quintessential from 2 vantage points:

1) American proletariat.

Just as 1945-6 general strike transformed abstract Russian ques. on prop. forms and relations into actual production, so at present the struggle of miners and new content they have infused into "No contract, no work" is what gave me impulse to go into essential dialectical development of Marx himself. Dialectically, the problem of form, is the problem of the contract today.

2) Lenin who was led to re-evaluate and the whole method of thinking and evaluating by 1914 war and collapse of 2nd Int. General division--when world fell to pieces in 1914 the 2nd Int. also fell to pieces, the Int. which was supposed to overthrow this capitalist world which fell to pieces fell to pieces itself. This sent Lenin to reevaluate the labor movement--all problems, philosophical, and immediate were summed up in this break-up. Lenin was of course a revolutionist long before he reread the Logic, but the very reevaluation of Logic led also his own development. Up to 1914 he was a Russian Marxist, fighting for proletarian method of bourgeois revolution.

Without going into any of the many developments which show that in detail, I will show for the time being but one example. Take Lenin on socialization of labor before 1914. He views it as collective labor vs. individual appropriation--~~and that was the main thing~~ That was vulgar material for it wasn't just collective vs. individual appropriation--it was labor vs. capital and one had to look into the break-up of labor itself into skilled and unskilled, into aristocracy and mass. In the same vulgar manner concentration of production vs. anarchy of market is spoken of as true irreconcilables. He sees socialization of labor as end. In 1915 all this is turned around. Socialization of labor is now not and but transition--transition to a higher form. Socialization of labor and concentration of prod. is now spoken of as one breath and on the other hand is the unskilled, the lower mass which is fighting the aristocracy of labor which the 2nd represents. The Lenin of Imperialism is altogether different from the Lenin of the Development of Capitalism in Russia. But even the 1915 Lenin with Logic does not see what this higher form to which the socialization of labor transits is. It is the proletarian action in 1917 which shows that form: the Soviet.

Concrete content assumes abstract form, all the while there is a new unformed substance--the proletarian revolution which begins to ~~show~~ show the intellectuals the new form.

Thus, from these 2 vantage points 1) the American proletariat and 2) the internationalization of Lenin in 1914 brings us back to Marx himself. He himself goes through a development and transition. We see here the limitations of thinking, even the thinking of a Marx, unless proletarian action propels forward. We will take Marx's development, 1843-1873.

I, 1843-7--Impending proletarian revolution

1843--turns, in his editorial work on bourgeois democratic paper, to economic problems.

Preliminary to Marx's bourgeois political economic had reached its highest development in the classical school. Since this was not just a conclusion but a development and the beginning from which Marx started we'll take a brief look at it:

1876-1821--the period of classical political economy must be viewed from two points of view: (1) the industrial revolution, and (2) the Jacobin revolution. While the bourgeois revolution gave birth to the science of economics, the Jacobin revolution gave birth to the political form which which bourgeoisie tries to solve social problems, gave the science of govt.

Rosa Luxemburg understood this period which immediately followed the classic stage, 1820-30 which Marx called the disintegration of economics as a science, she called the period of self-criticism of the bourgeoisie. For Smith was followed by St. Simon and Ricardo by Sismondi who incorporated all the doubts, says Marx. Self-criticism of itself; said Rosa, was the transition period which enabled pol. eco. to be transformed into its direct opposite--socialist (Marxist) criticism of bourgeois production.

The economic impetus to the disintegration or the self-criticism came from the first major economic crisis in 1825.

I want to take here a term Marx uses in explaining capitalist subjection and use it to explain the stages of proletarian revolutions. Marx has 2 forms of labor subjection--One he calls formal subjection which deal with the increase of surplus value only through increase of working day. The other he calls real subjection--the possibility of surplus value, or exploitation of labor without limit--precisely because he is limited by a certain length of the working day. Hence the capitalist within the same working day tries to extract all surplus labor through intensification of labor, that is speed-up and because you create surplus value every single minute and you create the more the greater the speed-up, the extraction of this surplus labor because immeasurable.

Now this type of division, from the exact opposite point of view, I wish to use for explaining proletarian revolutions. The formal revolution is 1848. The real revolution is 1871 Paris Commune. The first period of Marx's development, 1843-7, will be climaxed by the so-called formal revolution 1848. We will see how differently his work on Capital will end when climaxed by the real revolution.

Back then to 1843--the then current discussion of forest thefts had led Marx to economic questions. But, being an intellectual, he begins first to criticize not economics so much, as juridical relations. His first serious work is the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. He criticizes politics by counterposing economics to it.

1844-45 Marx, while studying economics, goes back to philosophy. Just when he thinks he knows everything about political economy, having studied all its representatives, he begins to settle accounts with his philosophic conscience. Here he counterposes ~~materialism~~ materialism to idealism. Criticizes socialist idealism (utopianism) and Hegelian idealism. But he merely stands them on their ~~heads~~.

In his preparatory works for the Holy Family, the Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts which we translated, he grasps the essential Alienated Labor, but he does that in philosophic terms alone. Nevertheless, precisely because the pure essence is there, they remain with him throughout and the minute he can give it the concrete form of the actual alienation of labor at the point of production, we will have Capital.

But in this first period, 1843-7, when Marx counterposes economics to politics, materialism to idealism, and while he has not yet worked out his whole system, Proudhon rises to give a certain objective basis to Marx's criticism of idealism, and the results send Marx to the other extreme. For Proudhon, who thinks he has synthesized economic and politics, materialism and idealism, has become what Marx calls a "composite error." (This will have to be further developed for we have here the counter-revolution which we later see ~~clearly~~ clearly in Stalinism giving an objective basis to Lenin's formalism and creating state capitalism. But I cannot stop here to do it.) However, Marx's criticism his Poverty of Philosophy, merely counterposes Ricardo's theory of value to Proudhon's mystification of it, that is he counterposes bourgeois economics to Proudhon's utopianism. What saves Marx is his comprehension of history. He uses history against Ricardo to disprove the eternal nature of capitalism, showing that there were social orders before and there will be after. He uses history against Proudhon to show the specific nature of capitalism--the workshop, he says, is a capitalist category. Proudhon thought cooperative form would organize exchange and do away with money. Marx shows existing reality is the class struggle which cannot be synthesized. But the whole discussion has merely added class struggle to Ricardo's economic categories.

On the other hand, the same year, 1847, Marx wrote Wage Labor & Capital --he is wonderful there because he is dealing with pure essence; not a thing had to be changed forty years later except the term, labor power, for labor. But the struggle of dead and living labor, remained essentially same in Capital also. Its superiority arises because he deals with essence--but he understands Korn not at all, or at least only in so far as it deals with the one commodity

-4-

labor; but not commodities in general and precisely because the general commodity-form escapes him, he does not derive the specific commodity form of labor--labor power.

Thus the 3 subdivisions of our first period of Marx--when he counterposes economics to politics, materialism to idealism, history to non-history--but all in the forms of counterpositions of one to the other and not of systematizing or reaching notion--are climax by the 1848 revolutions, anticipated by Marx in his Communist Manifesto.

1848 revolution brings first period to completion. But when revolutions are ~~annihilated~~ defeated, the stamp on the next period is the capitalist form. (The whole will have to be worked out later--what happens to the poor intellectual when he tries to work things out by himself while proletariat is doing his own reevaluating and not acting.) The limitations of the intellectual working by himself is seen also in Marx and brings us to the second period.

II -1850-59--Critique of Political Economy--Period of Quietude and hence vulgar materialism.

After the defeat of the 1848 revolutions Marx returned to his economic studies. He monkeys around with this for a solid decade and yet not much comes out. We should remember that Marx first thought he knew all about political economy in 1845 and thought then of writing "A Critique of Political Economy and National Economy", but he wrote to his publisher that he had to put it away because he felt it necessary to give a philosophic base, or rather a critique of philosophy, as base for his positive economic theory. But after Holy Family and German Ideology no such Critique followed; instead we had Poverty of Philosophy. His present return to economics is based much more in economic reality. The impulse is given by crisis of 1857. Had 1857 crisis resulted in immediate class battles, we would have had Capital, instead of Critique of Pol. Eco., in 1859. But instead of class struggle being the impulse, it was money: the financial crisis of 1857. He does get in addition to economic categories being social categories, a certain movement within the limits of economic categories, he develops the idea of money being but a link in a whole series of economic, social relations. But all his immense studies do not lead to any form--each one is written out as a separate monograph--until January 1858 when he rereads Hegel's Logic.

He writes Engels that his rereading of Logic has given him many "nice developments" and that he has now overthrown the entire theory of profit as it existed up to then. What did Logic give him? Both its value and its limitation is seen here. He makes ~~the~~ a sort of intellectual revolution--he gets the general form--surplus value--and hence refuses to deal with but fragments of it, such as profit. He also gets thereby the concrete form--commodity--and whereas he was going to write the first book of his critique as Value, Money, etc., he throws the abstraction of Value out, and begins with the concrete Commodity in which the opposition

of value and use-value gets the concrete material embodiment in the commodity-form. Thus once he gets the general form of surplus value, he gets the concrete form--the commodity form. The actual writing of Critique proceeds extremely rapidly at that point--he writes the whole thing as published in October-November 1858.

But the class struggle is missing. Therefore he still thinks he has to deal with landed property. His whole conception, as stated in letters and in the preface to the Critique, is to deal with Capital - Landed Property -- Wage Labor (I deal with the economics; he had 3 other books he planned on the political, state forms). He says this movement --capital, landed property, wage labor--is both dialectical and historical. But when the class struggle solution of these contradictions is missing, well, the Critique is a sort of embodiment of all bourgeois contradictions, but not the embodiment of the proletarian revolution, so to speak, as Capital is. It is vulgar materialism as contrasted to the dialectical material of Capital. Without the active class struggle showing him the way out, he keeps sticking in landed property as a separate book, between capital and wage labor, despite the fact that from Logic he had gotten the form and known that rent was a form of s.v., a fragment. What then? Evidently he still thought of workers needing to fight with bourgeoisie against landed property. In any case, writing as an intellectual Critique (1) answers Proudhonists and shows the inevitability of money arising from the contradiction in commodity between use-value and value; and hence impossibility to "organize" exchange and leave commodity relations intact and (2) keeps on supplementing his conclusions with history of theory; that is there is a division between theory and history. Ch. I on Commodities is followed by history of theories on the subject; same with money. So long as the separation is kept he gets nowhere. The class struggle is not there to help him, and the intellectual is lost.

No sooner does the Critique get published than the masses begin to move--1860 Marx notes is distinguished by two great movements (1) that of the slaves in the US as a result of Brown's raid, and (2) that of the serfs in Russia. He gives up his monographs and sets down to rewrite.

III--Third Period, 1861-73--the period of the specifically proletarian revolution. Foreshadowed in 1860 by movement of slaves which is climaxed by Civil War in the US, 1861-5. This sets off great strike movements in Europe. In England the climax is the tax organization of the First International, 1864. Marx will say in his preface to Capital, just as Am. rev. in 1776 set off middle class revolutions in Europe, so Am. C.W. 1861 sounded the tocsin for proletarian revolution. This will be climaxed by the Paris Commune. Intellectually the result will be Capital as we know it.

Now for some details. 1861-3. Reworking of Capital or "continuation" of Critique begins. Still has somewhat of old method of presentation, that is, continues from

-6-

commodities and money to transformation of money into capital and follows it up again with history of theory. The entire theories of S.V. interrupts the movement into production. In other words, he is still arguing with the bourgeoisie that s.v. comes from labor.

But in the meantime (1) he has worked out and done away with completely Ricardo's theory of rent. Landed property thereby gets kicked out. (2) the Civil War in the US and his sureness that the North will win--the development of machinery assures that; on the other hand, the bourgeois methods of fighting, this being a bourgeois war, assures its "non-completion" ("what one single Negro regiment" could do to transform this war, he writes Engels; and if only the Northern proletariat followed this up with some actions as "the French in 1892"). (3) He begins asking Engels questions of machinery, wear and tear, of the self-acting mule and what the workers before and after. Engels replies giving theory; Marx answers, yes, I know, but what did the man do? He insists he wishes information about "all categories of workers, exclusive of warehouse". (4) Finally the international effects of Civil War, particularly the great meetings of the English proletariat against their country's intention of intervention on side of South

All this results in the following in 1852 in the midst of this rewriting. He writes an outline of Capital in ~~Notbook 18~~, which is substantially what we have in Vol. I--the separation of history and theory is once and for all destroyed. He writes the famous "Chapter 6" which originally ended Vol. I, and which I'm always quoting Marx, furthermore, takes a practical course in machinery. Then he begins the whole section on Working Day, which was not even in this latest outline. And he works out the whole schema of reproduction, Tableau Economique. Finally, for the first time the law of s.v.; that he says was after implicit already in classical economists. Of course, labor is source but the real mess is the form it takes. What in the hell is this form? It is the actual appearance of the perverted production relations where machine masters man.

Lassalle comes to visit him and when Marx tries to interest him in American Civil War, Lassalle says the Yankees have no "ideas". He criticizes that but he also criticizes Engels for being afraid South will win; this is not a military question, he writes; it is a question of wage labor and capital though in bourgeois rev. form. He is through completely with landed property. He gets all kinds of new economic concepts. He writes Engels about organic composition of capital, outside of landed property, but of the very organism of capital; the conceptions of constant capital and variable capital flow from organic composition, and he speaks as to how many problems are solved by this.

1863, then, as he approaches end of first draft he reads Lassalle's; that is our state capitalist. But whereas he first fought Lassalle and Bismark as landlord and couldn't get anywhere else. But when he begins fighting Lassalle and Bismark as state capitalist and welfare statist, he gets places.

It is now (August 1863) that Marx writes that he has had "to turn everything around".

Sees also that industrial revolution had no machines, so to speak, outside of clock and mill. But from clock--or with clock came regular motion; and with mill--theory of friction. And the actual inter-relation then of all previous machines produces a new stage--the specifically capitalistic stage of manufacture and relative surplus value.

Marx begins once more to rework Capital, 1865-7. There is the Jamaica Negro revolt 1865. There was the Polish revolution, 1863. Then there are the Factory Reports. Asks Engels for pamphlet on Machinery. Works out average working wage. The whole history now becomes history of production, not history of theory.

1868--are the famous letters to Engels and Kautsky where, instead of 6 books such as Critique, we have the 3 Volumes in the way we know it:

- Process of Production
- Process of Circulation
- Forms of Process taken as a

whole. (~~Engels~~ Engels had on his own eliminated the word, Forms, from the title of Vol. III when he published it.) History of Theory.

Now, as Vol. I finally is on way to printer, he begins to work on form. (1) Particular Form of social organization of labor process gives him universality of commodity-form. (2) Independent form of exchange which gives objective show of value. (3) Abstract labor form contrasted to creative activity. He emphasizes to Engels as he reads the proof sheets that the section on form is "too decisive for the whole book". But even here, 1867, is not the final way in which the section on form was written.

Only with the Paris Commune--that complete, irreconcilable opposite form to that of Fetishism of Commodities--does he get fully the Fetishism of Commodities and does this section and other editions appear in French edition, and the definite edition as he left it in 1883 as in 1873.

Again on form, then: 1st edition of Capital, 1867, the section on Form of Value is subdivided into dial. dev. but a briefer one than the present within text; and then an appendix to which he refers the non-dialectical reader to. 2nd ed. (French)--no longer subdivides the section on Form of Value, and at the same time completes section on fetishism.

Form, finally, then emerges as :

formally free but actually enlaved
formally individual labor, but actually socialized
(By the time they are made into cooperators, their labor power no longer belongs to them.)

form of value equals fetishism of commodities

1591

* From the violence of capitalistic socialization of labor.

Political economy had reduced everything to value. Law of value, as the present contract, is the fixed form of the production relationship.

Only FREELY associated labor can strip off this mystical veil.

Form of value--new universal by which mastery of machine over man is established.

Johnny: Mistake, then that Marx made in contrasting essence to form is what has been reported by subsequent revolutionists. When you don't have notion of future, you just counterpose essence to form; is that what this means?

R: Yes, now that there was the Paris Commune form.

J: At last we're on the track of something.

General conclusions: Revolt of CIO --attempt of workers to control production. LT made it in general way & felt it but his method was unsatisfactory, so couldn't place it historically and concretely. We have got hold of it. We are dealing with 1943-1983--the important thing is the dialectical process which is constantly filled with more and more content.

Specifically, it is an abstraction which is filled with more and more content. Filled by constant simplification of categories at every new stage. Every time Marx sees a new stage, it gives him opportunity to refine category and incorporate new material, subordinating it to simplified opposition of labor & capital.

Take Rae's letter (1.24/50) where she speaks of Marx's shifting from history of theory to history of production relationships. A whole essay could be written on that.

Ultimately, says Marx, the fundamental premise for the abolition of inequality is the shortening of the working day. He makes this the real historical framework of capitalism itself. It is a struggle of the workers over the working-day that develops capitalism and the ultimate creation of freedom rests upon this shortened working day--it embraces all concepts inside and outside of it, the philosophic concept of shortening of the working day.

Central question is Marx's "turning everything around." What was turned ~~on~~ and why? The important part of Civil War is not in the US, but its effect in Europe and the formation of the First International. Marx didn't decide it. Some ~~workers decided~~, some workers decided that Civil War was beginning of Holy War on Labor.

Critique of Political Economy as the vulgar materialist Marx vs. the dialectical materialist Marx of Capital is worth pursuing to the end.

More precise philosophic ques. We have got some distance on Lenin before 1914 and after 1916. Work that out with Karl Marx before and after. Attempt to do it. You may find that what Lenin ~~was~~ did was a more advanced stage of what Marx did, 1857-63.

What is the principle involved here--Marx splits a category because of the contradictions that have developed in proletarian struggles. He splits it due to fact that outside of old category there have arisen new material forces and it is necessary to make a leap from understanding to Reason: understanding can no longer embrace the reality.

When he splits category, he has new weapons of investigation. Proceeds to draw those out to logical conclusions.

One of greatest splittings is difference between labor and labor power. You will note Kant did the same to those who preceded him and Hegel did the same to Kant.

Lenin did the same to 2nd International.

We have split the concept of state property and Lenin laid the basis. Marx did it abstractly. Our function is further to split the concept of the party. Whenever you split the concept, ~~you get~~ you get a refinement of your categories as weapons of investigation which result in deeper penetration into previous categories and hist. events which seem established. All our work on civil war in England and French Revolution will be more deeply illuminated from fact that we split the concept of party. Every single aspect of Marx's work will be illuminated by this, and we will understand his work better in some respects that he did himself because of historic stage in which he lived and the one in which we live.

The question of influence of Commune in historical work, particularly on state property. Read the sections underlined by Marx and you'll see.

(Reads Modern Liby. edition on Paris Commune, sections underlined by Marx, pp.400,401,402)

New conception of state in relation to capital. This all should go into this document.

Splitting of categories

From Kant right up to 1871-
one connected stop.

Simple Coop. Div. of Labor in Mfr., Machinery deals with role of proletariat. Finally able to break through bourgeois conception of theory. Originally thought theory, with history of bourgeois decline, and then say "prol." Pretty close to Rosa Luxemburg.

Then not that intellectual must work out ideas, but concepts of unified theory = violent action of proletariat itself, which creates possibility for intellectuals to develop capital.

Write in such a way as to lead to our ideas today embodied in J's MSS. We have here the really fundamental

break with Hegel and it is in this that Capital is distinguished from Logic. Marx was from start to finish concerned with revolutionary actions of proletariat in production itself.

Practical Conclusions:

for Grace

Notes on Karl Korsch and relation of this to Engels, and relation of it to Hegel. We should know about

this school. Marcuse &. ME Believes that in earlier writings, in earlier years Marx was more revolutionary and that in later years became sobered up. In reality opposite is true. This all shows that revolution appears as imbedded in cap. mode of prod. and prol. rev. is new stage where proletariat instead of influencing it indirectly, begins to influence it directly.

Translate Ch.6 and make supplement of it. Rae should proceed now to write it

out. Write a draft and get in all we have gotten up to now. And then a special essay on Form and Content as exemplified in this business. Or begin with that and write on how far we got later. When you get it all down, then we can begin handling it.

Grace:

The problem that we have been trying to solve on the abstract and concrete. Synthetic Cognition (J: that 's the word I meant when spoke of Understanding and Reason).

receives its impulses on the one hand from the spontaneous action of the workers--Marx shows the spontaneously developing proletariat vs. form. German word, naturwissig--spontaneous action. Spontaneous action of peasants and anarchists will result in anarchistic spontaneity. But from the spontaneous action of socialist proletariat you will have socialism.

No, not vs. form, and to understand form

The key is in the fetishism of commodities. (Reads 2 paragraphs from Capital on fetishism not in use-v but in form of commodity).

(See below for development of this point on form, r)

Lassale is anticipation of welfare state. If you don't split up the unified form, then you adopt the counter-revolutionary opposite form.

See below for development of this point on form, r

Grace on form:

The key is in the mistake of Engels when he said that Being and Commodity were the same thing, and Essence and capitalist production were another and Marx had that type of connection.

The idea is rather that Marx took the alienation of capitalist production for all the historical reasons that you have analyzed.