

AN INTRODUCTION TO
MODERN PHILOSOPHY

IN SEVEN PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

BY

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12. "In our time various errors are current respecting the state. We shall mention only one. . . ." Namely?
13. "All the worth which any human being possesses, he possesses only through the state." Elucidate.
14. "There is an ethical element in war." Namely?
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4. AN ECONOMIC INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY —FROM FRIEDRICH ENGELS

From Hegel to Marx and Engels. What came to be called the "idealistic" interpretation of history was the claim that in history, as opposed to in nature, spirit was at work. There is spirit. It manifests itself as matter, the order of nature which the natural sciences study. But it goes beyond that. In addition to being *manifested as* matter, spirit is also *present in* man, the order of human nature, and in all his activities. The German word for "spirit" is "Geist." One therefore spoke of "Geisteswissenschaft," the systematic and orderly study of what spirit does, considered apart from its manifestation as nature. This would give you "history and the social sciences." In all of this, the notion of spirit is ultimate. Given the notion of spirit, you knew how to try to think about "nature," the material order. In this way you arrived at the natural sciences. You knew also how to try to think about man. In this way you arrived at the historical sciences, those inquiries in which spirit set forth the story of its own activities, the activities which it is itself present in.

Now, up to a point, this idealistic interpretation of history satisfied those who wished to extend their thinking beyond history into a philosophy of history. It was an attractive alternative for those who were skeptical of the biblical interpretation of history, but whose skepticism did not lead them to go further and reject also the conception of spirit working in nature and history. If you were able and willing to think of matter, the material order, as somehow produced by or derived from spirit, this speculative idealism held out hopes for you. But the friends of matter have never been willing to do this. They have always insisted that matter is fundamental and primary, and that spirit is produced by, a derivative from, matter. In the beginning was matter in motion. As a result, spirit gets produced. This speculative materialism is felt to underlie the natural sciences, and also the historical and social sciences. This gives you the materialist interpretation of history, the philosophy of

history which makes matter primary and history the story of its motions and changes.

Karl Marx and his friend Friedrich Engels set themselves to work out what became a popular and influential version of the materialist interpretation of history. They called it historical materialism, and referred to it as the economic interpretation of history. They offered it as an alternative to all versions of the biblical or theological interpretation of history, and all versions of the Hegelian or idealist interpretation of history. Matter is primary. Man is made of matter. His activities are "material" activities. The most important of his activities are those which he performs upon matter, transforming it into food, clothing, shelter, and other material means to his material existence and well-being. To this end he everywhere finds it necessary to organize into associations and communities whereby his *working* on matter is made more productive of the means of subsistence. The result is an economy, a community of persons organized to make possible production by division of labor and, therefore, distribution by exchange. What men do as members of economies is therefore the fundamental answer to the question, What goes on in history? Hence the phrase economic interpretation of history.

Note on Marx and Engels. These two men worked together at the job of formulating the economic interpretation of history. Engels says that Marx was responsible for the fundamental idea, and for the intellectual drive required to work it out in detail; whereas he himself undertook to set it forth in simple, popular language. If you read their joint tract, *The Communist Manifesto*, published in 1848, you see the Marxist interpretation of history already at work. It tells you what has been happening to man, and what man has been doing about it, throughout human history. Marx himself wrote some historical accounts of events in his own time, basing his narrative on the assumption that his general interpretation of history would be granted; e.g., his *Class Struggles in France*, his *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, his *Civil War in France*. Late in the 1870's Engels wrote out a statement of their historical materialism. He later published it in the form of a pamphlet, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. This small document contains the clearest and most straightforward wording of the doctrine, particularly in its third section or chapter. That third section, slightly abridged but not otherwise changed, follows. In it Engels explains how, as members of economies, men have transformed economies from feudal, land-based economies into capitalist or bourgeois economies; and will transform these in turn into proletarian socialist economies. The joint *Manifesto*, and this

similar tract by Engels alone, have done more to secure a hearing for the Marxist economic interpretation of history, than any other writings by Marx or Engels or anyone else.

1. The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in man's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought, not in the *philosophy*, but in the *economics* of each epoch. The perception that social institutions are unreasonable and unjust, only proves that in the modes of production and exchange changes have silently taken place, with which the social order, adapted to earlier economic conditions, is no longer in keeping. The means of getting rid of the incongruities must be present, in a more or less developed condition, within the changed modes of production themselves. These means are not to be invented by deduction from fundamental principles. They are to be discovered in the facts of the existing system of production.

2. What is, then, the position of modern socialism in this connection?

3. The present structure of society is the creation of the ruling class of today, of the bourgeoisie. The mode of production peculiar to the bourgeoisie, the capitalist mode, was incompatible with the feudal system. The bourgeoisie broke up the feudal system and built the capitalist order of society, the kingdom of free competition, of personal liberty, of equality before the law of all commodity owners, and all the rest of the capitalist blessings. Thenceforward the capitalist mode of production could develop in freedom. Since steam, machinery, and the making of machines by machinery, transformed the older manufacture into modern industry, the productive forces evolved under the bourgeoisie developed with a rapidity and in a degree unheard of before. But just as the older manufacture had come into collision with the feudal system, so now modern industry, comes into collision with the bounds within which the capitalistic mode of production holds it confined. The new productive forces have already outgrown the capitalistic mode of using them. And this conflict between productive forces and modes of production exists independently of the will and actions even of the men that brought it on. Modern socialism is the reflex, in thought, of this conflict in fact.

4. In what does this conflict consist?

5. Before capitalistic production, the system of petty industry obtained generally, based upon the private property of the labourers in their means of production; in the country, the agriculture of the small peasant, freeman or

serf; in the towns, the handicrafts organised in guilds. The instruments of labour were the instruments of single individuals, adapted for the use of one worker, and, therefore, small, dwarfish, circumscribed. They belonged, as a rule, to the producer himself. To concentrate these scattered, limited means of production, to enlarge them, to turn them into the powerful levers of production of the present day, was the rôle of capitalist production and of its upholder, the bourgeoisie. Since the fifteenth century this has been worked out through the three phases of simple co-operation, manufacture and modern industry. But the bourgeoisie could not transform these puny means of production into mighty productive forces, without transforming them, at the same time, *from means of production of the individual into social means of production* only workable by a collectivity of men. The spinning-wheel, the hand-loom, the blacksmith's hammer were replaced by the spinning machine, the power-loom, the steam-hammer; the individual workshop, by the factory, implying the co-operation of hundreds and thousands of workmen. In like manner, production itself changed from a series of individual into a series of social acts, and the products from individual to social products. The yarn, the cloth, the metal articles that now came out of the factory were the joint product of many workers. No one person could say of them: "I made that; this is *my* product."

6. But where the form of production is that spontaneous division of labour which creeps in gradually and not upon any preconceived plan, there the products take on the form of *commodities*, whose mutual exchange, buying and selling, enable the individual producers to satisfy their wants. And this was the case in the Middle Ages. The peasant, e.g., sold to the artisan agricultural products and bought from him the products of handicraft. Into this society of individual producers, of commodity producers, the new mode of production thrust itself. In the midst of the old division of labour, grown up spontaneously and upon *no definite plan*, arose division of labour upon *a definite plan*, as organised in the factory; side by side with *individual* production appeared *social* production. The products of both were sold in the same market, and, therefore, at prices approximately equal. But organisation upon a definite plan was stronger than spontaneous division of labour. The factories working with the combined social forces of a collectivity of individuals produced their commodities more cheaply than the individual small producers. Individual production succumbed in one department after another. Socialised production revolutionised all the old methods of production. But its revolutionary character was so little recognized that it was introduced as a means of increasing and developing the production of commodities. When it arose, it found ready-made, certain machinery for the production and exchange of commodities; merchants' capital, handicraft, wage labour. Socialised production thus introducing itself as a new form of the production of commodities, the old forms

of appropriation remained in full swing, and were applied to its products as well.

7. In the mediæval stage, the question as to the owner of the product of labour could not arise. The individual producer had, from raw material belonging to himself, and generally his own handiwork, produced it with his own tools, by the labour of his own hands or of his family. There was no need for him to appropriate the new product. It belonged to him, as a matter of course. His property in the product was based *upon his own labour*. Even where external help was used, this was, as a rule, of little importance, and was generally compensated by something other than wages.

8. Then came the concentration of production and producers in large workshops, their transformation into socialised means of production and socialised producers. But the socialised producers and means of production and their products were still treated, after this change, just as they had been before, i.e., as the means of production and the products of individuals. Hitherto, the owner of the instruments of labour had himself appropriated the product, because as a rule it was his own product and the assistance of others was the exception. Now the owner of the instruments of labour appropriated the product, although it was no longer *his* product but the product of the *labour of others*. Thus, the products now produced socially were not appropriated by those who had actually produced the commodities, but by the *capitalists*. The means of production, and production itself, had become in essence socialised. But they were subjected to a form of appropriation which presupposes the private production of individuals, under which every one owns his own product and brings it to market. The mode of production is subjected to this form of appropriation, although it abolishes the conditions upon which the latter rests.

9. This contradiction *contains the germ of the social antagonisms of today*. The greater the mastery obtained by the new mode of production, the more it reduced individual production to an insignificant residuum, *the more clearly was brought out the incompatibility of socialised production with capitalistic appropriation*.

10. The first capitalists found wage labour ready-made for them on the market. But it was exceptional, complementary, necessary, transitory wage labour. The agricultural labourer, though, upon occasion, he hired himself out by the day, had a few acres of his own on which he could live at a pinch. The guilds were so organised that the journeyman of today became the master of tomorrow. But all this changed, as the means of production became socialised and concentrated in the hands of capitalists. The means of production, as well as the product of the individual producer, became more and more worthless; there was nothing left for him but to turn wage worker under the capitalist. Wage labour, formerly the exception, now became the rule of production.

The worker became a wage worker for life. The number of these wage workers was further increased by the breaking up of the feudal system, by the disbanding of the retainers of the feudal lords, the eviction of the peasants from their homesteads, etc. The separation was made complete between the capitalists possessing the means of production, and the producers, possessing nothing but their labour power. *The contradiction between socialised production and capitalistic appropriation manifested itself as the antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie.*

11. The capitalistic mode of production thrust its way into a society of individual producers, whose social bond was the exchange of their products. But in every society based upon the production of commodities, the producers lose control over their social inter-relations. Each man produces for himself and for such exchange as he may require to satisfy his remaining wants. No one knows how much of his particular article is coming on the market, nor how much of it will be wanted. No one knows whether his individual product will meet an actual demand, whether he will be able to make good his cost of production or even to sell his commodity at all. Anarchy reigns in socialised production.

12. But the production of commodities has its peculiar laws; and these laws work in and through anarchy. They reveal themselves in exchange, and here they affect the individual producers as laws of competition. They are, at first, unknown and have to be discovered as the result of experience. They work themselves out, therefore, independently of the producers, and in antagonism to them, as laws of their particular form of production.

13. In mediæval society, production was directed towards satisfying the wants of the individual. It satisfied the wants of the producer and his family. Where personal dependence existed, it also helped to satisfy the wants of the feudal lord. In all this there was no exchange; the products did not assume the character of *commodities*. *The family of the peasant produced what they wanted: clothes and furniture, means of subsistence.* Only when it began to produce more than was sufficient to its own wants and the payments in kind to the feudal lord, did it also produce commodities. This surplus became commodities.

14. The artisans of the towns also supplied the greatest part of their own individual wants. They had gardens and plots of land. They turned their cattle out into the communal forest, which, also, yielded them timber and firing. The women spun flax, wool, and so forth. Production for exchange, production of commodities, was only in its infancy. Hence, exchange was restricted, the market narrow, the methods of production stable.

15. But with the extension of the production of commodities, and especially with the introduction of the capitalist mode of production, the laws of *commodity production* came into action more openly and with greater force. Old bonds were loosened, old limits broken through, producers more and

more turned into independent, isolated producers of commodities. It became apparent that the production of society at large was marked by absence of plan, by accident, by anarchy; and this anarchy grew greater and greater. But the chief means by which the capitalist mode of production intensified this anarchy of socialised production was the exact opposite of anarchy. It was the increasing organisation of production, upon a social basis, in every individual productive establishment. By this, the old, peaceful, stable condition of things was ended. Wherever this organisation of production was introduced, it brooked no other method of production. The field of labour became a battle ground. The great geographical discoveries, and the colonisation following upon them, multiplied markets and quickened the transformation of handicraft into manufacture. War broke out between the individual producers of particular localities. The local struggles begat in their turn national conflicts, the commercial wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

16. Finally, modern industry and the opening of the world market made the struggle universal and gave it an unheard-of virulence. Advantages in conditions of production now decide the existence or non-existence of individual capitalists, as well as of whole industries and countries. He that falls is cast aside. It is the Darwinian struggle of the individual for existence transferred from nature to society. The conditions of existence natural to the animal appear as the final term of human development. The contradiction between socialised production and capitalistic appropriation now presents itself as *an antagonism between the organisation of production in the individual workshop and the anarchy of production in society generally.*

17. The capitalistic mode of production moves in these two forms of antagonism. It is never able to get out of that "vicious circle." This circle is gradually narrowing. The movement becomes more and more a spiral, and must come to an end. It is anarchy in production in society at large that more and more turns the majority of men into proletarians; and it is the proletariat who will finally put an end to anarchy in production. It is the anarchy in social production that turns the perfectibility of machinery into a law by which every individual industrial capitalist must continually perfect his machinery under penalty of ruin.

18. But the perfecting of machinery makes human labour superfluous. The introduction and increase of machinery means the displacement of manual, by a few machine workers. Improvement in machinery means the displacement of the machine workers themselves. It means the production of wage workers in excess of the needs of capital, the formation of an industrial reserve army available when industry is working at high pressure, to be cast out when the crash comes, a constant weight upon the limbs of the working class in its struggle for existence with capital, keeping wages down to the level that suits the interests of capital. Thus machinery becomes the most powerful weapon in the war of capital against the working class; the instruments of labour tear the

means of subsistence out of the hands of the labourer; the product of the worker is turned into an instrument for his subjugation. Thus economising the instrument of labour becomes the waste of labour power, and robbery based upon the normal conditions under which labour functions; machinery, the most powerful instrument for shortening labour time, becomes the means for placing the labourer's time at the disposal of the capitalist. Thus it comes about that overwork of some becomes the condition for the idleness of others, and that modern industry, which hunts after new consumers over the whole world, forces the consumption of the masses at home down to a starvation minimum, and so destroys its own home market. The law that equilibrates the surplus population, the industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, rivets the labourer to capital more firmly than ever. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole; accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole.

19. The perfectibility of modern machinery is, by the anarchy of social production, turned into a law that forces the individual industrial capitalist to improve his machinery, to increase its productivity. The possibility of extending production is transformed for him into a compulsory law. The expansive force of modern industry, laughs at all resistance. Such resistance is offered by consumption, by sales, by the markets. The extension of the markets cannot keep pace with the extension of production. The collision becomes inevitable, and as this cannot produce any real solution so long as it does not break the capitalist mode of production, the collisions become periodic. Capitalist production has begotten another "vicious circle."

20. Since 1825, when the first general crisis broke out, the whole industrial and commercial world is thrown out of joint about once every ten years. Commerce is at a standstill, the markets are glutted, products accumulate, hard cash disappears, credit vanishes, factories are closed, workers are in want of the means of subsistence, because they have produced too much of the means of subsistence; bankruptcy follows bankruptcy. The stagnation lasts for years; productive forces and products are wasted and destroyed, until the accumulated commodities finally filter off depreciated in value, until production and exchange gradually begin to move again. Little by little the pace quickens. It becomes a trot. The trot breaks into a canter, the canter grows into the headlong gallop of a steeplechase of industry, commercial credit and speculation, which finally, after breakneck leaps, ends where it began—in the ditch of a crisis. And so over and over again. We have now, since 1825, gone through this five times, and at the present moment (1877) we are going through it for the sixth time.

21. In these crises, the contradiction between socialised production and capitalist appropriation ends in a violent explosion. The circulation of commodities is stopped. Money becomes a hindrance to circulation. The laws of

production and circulation of commodities are turned upside down. The economic collision has reached its apogee. *The mode of production is in rebellion against the mode of exchange.*

22. The socialised organisation of production has become incompatible with the anarchy of production. This is brought home to the capitalists by the concentration of capital that occurs during crises, through the ruin of large and small capitalists. The mechanism of the capitalist mode of production breaks down under the pressure of the productive forces. It is no longer able to turn all this means of production into capital. They lie fallow, and hence the industrial reserve army must also lie fallow. Means of production, means of subsistence, available labourers, all the elements of production and of general wealth, are present in abundance. But abundance becomes the source of distress and want, because it prevents the transformation of the means of production and subsistence into capital. For in capitalistic society the means of production can only function when they have undergone transformation into capital, into the means of exploiting human labour power. The necessity of this transformation into capital of the means of production and subsistence stands like a ghost between these and the workers. It alone prevents the coming together of the material and personal levers of production; it alone forbids the means of production to function, the workers to work and live. The capitalistic mode of production stands convicted of its own incapacity to direct these productive forces. These productive forces press forward to the removal of the existing contradiction, to the *recognition of their character as social productive forces.*

23. This rebellion of the productive forces, this command that their social character shall be recognised, forces the capitalist class to treat them more and more as social productive forces. The period of industrial high pressure, with its inflation of credit, not less than the crash itself, by the collapse of great capitalist establishments, tends to bring about the form of the socialisation of means of production which we meet in joint-stock companies. Many of these means of production and of distribution are, from the outset, so colossal, that, like the railroads, they exclude all other forms of capitalistic exploitation. At a further stage of evolution this form also becomes insufficient. The producers on a large scale in a particular branch of industry in a particular country unite in a "trust," for the purpose of regulating production. They determine the amount to be produced, parcel it out among themselves, and thus enforce the selling price fixed beforehand. But trusts of this kind, as soon as business becomes bad, are generally liable to break up, and, on this account, compel a yet greater concentration of association. The whole of the particular industry is turned into one gigantic joint-stock company; internal competition gives place to the internal monopoly of this one company.

24. In the trusts, competition changes into its opposite—monopoly; and the production without any definite plan of capitalistic society capitulates to the production upon a definite plan of the invading socialistic society. This is

still to the advantage of the capitalists. But in this case the exploitation is so palpable that it must break down. No nation will put up with production conducted by trusts, with so barefaced an exploitation of the community by a small band of dividend mongers.

25. In any case, with trusts or without, the official representative of capitalist society—the state—will ultimately have to undertake the direction of production. This necessity of conversion into state property is felt first in the great institutions for intercourse and communication—the post-office, the telegraphs, the railways.

26. The crises demonstrate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie to manage modern productive forces. The transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint-stock companies, trusts and state property, show how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. The social functions of the capitalist are now performed by salaried employees. The capitalist has no further social function than pocketing dividends, tearing off coupons, and gambling on the Stock Exchange, where the different capitalists despoil one another of their capital. At first the capitalistic mode of production forces out the workers. Now it forces out the capitalists, and reduces them, as it reduced the workers, to the ranks of the surplus population, although not immediately into those of the industrial reserve army.

27. But the transformation, into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies and trusts this is obvious. But the modern state, is only the organisation that bourgeois society takes on to support the conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments of the workers and of individual capitalists. The modern state is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it takes over productive forces, the more it becomes the national capitalist, the more citizens it exploits. The workers remain wage workers—proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head. But, brought to a head, it topples over. State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the elements of that solution.

28. This solution consists in the recognition of the social nature of the modern forces of production, and therefore in the harmonising of the modes of production, appropriation and exchange with the socialised character of the means of production. And this can only come about by society taking possession of the productive forces which have outgrown all control except that of society as a whole. The social character of the means of production and of the products today reacts against the producers, periodically disrupts production and exchange. But with the taking over by society of the productive forces, the social character of the means of production and of the products will be utilised by the producers with an understanding of its

nature, and instead of being a source of disturbance and periodical collapse, will become the most powerful lever of production itself.

29. Social forces work like natural forces; blindly, forcibly, destructively, so long as we do not understand and reckon with them. But when we understand them, when we grasp their action, their direction, their effects, it depends only upon ourselves to subject them to our own will, and by means of them to reach our own ends. And this holds especially of the mighty productive forces of today. As long as we refuse to understand the nature of these social means of action—and this understanding goes against the grain of the capitalist mode of production and its defenders—so long these forces work in opposition to us, so long they master us.

30. But when their nature is understood, they can, in the hands of the producers working together, be transformed from master demons into willing servants. With this recognition of the real nature of the productive forces of today, the social anarchy of production gives place to a social regulation of production upon a definite plan, according to the needs of the community and of each individual. Then the capitalist mode of appropriation, in which the product enslaves first the producer and then the appropriator, is replaced by the mode of appropriation of the products that is based upon the nature of the modern means of production; upon the one hand, direct social appropriation, as means to the maintenance and extension of production—on the other, direct individual appropriation, as means of subsistence and enjoyment.

31. Whilst the capitalist mode of production transforms the great majority of the population into proletarians, it creates the power which, under penalty of its own destruction, is forced to accomplish this revolution. Whilst it forces on the transformation of the means of production, already socialised, into state property, it shows the way to accomplishing this revolution. *The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into state property.*

32. In doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes class distinctions and antagonisms, abolishes also the state as state. Society thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the state: that is, an organisation of the particular class which was *pro tempore* the exploiting class, an organisation to prevent interference with the existing conditions of production, and therefore, to keep the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom, wage labour). The state was the official representative of society as a whole. But it was this only in so far as it was the state of that class which represented, for the time being, society as a whole; in ancient times, the state of slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, the feudal lords; in our own time, the bourgeoisie. When it becomes the representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule and the individual struggle for existence based

upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary. The first act by which the state constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes superfluous, and then dies out; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not “abolished.” *It dies out.*

33. Since the appearance of the capitalist mode of production, the appropriation by society of the means of production has been dreamed of, by individuals and sects, as the ideal of the future. But it could become possible, could become a historical necessity, only when the actual conditions for its realisation were there. Like every other social advance, it becomes practicable, not by men understanding that the existence of classes is in contradiction to justice, equality, etc., not by the mere willingness to abolish these classes, but by virtue of certain new economic conditions. The separation of society into an exploiting and an exploited class, a ruling and an oppressed class, was the necessary consequence of the deficient and restricted development of production in former times. So long as the total social labour yields a produce which but slightly exceeds that necessary for the existence of all; so long, therefore, as labour engages the great majority of the members of society—so long, of necessity, this society is divided into classes. Side by side with this great majority arises a class freed from *directly productive labour*, which looks after the general affairs of society, the direction of labour, state business, law, science, art, etc. It is, therefore, the law of division of labour that lies at the basis of the division into classes. But this does not prevent this division into classes from being carried out by violence and robbery, trickery and fraud. It does not prevent the ruling class from consolidating its power at the expense of the working class, turning their social leadership into an exploitation of the masses.

34. But if division into classes has a certain historical justification, it has this only for a given period, under given social conditions. It was based upon the insufficiency of production. It will be swept away by the development of modern productive forces. And the abolition of classes presupposes a degree of historical evolution, at which the existence of any ruling class and, therefore, the existence of class distinction itself has become obsolete. It presupposes, therefore, the development of production to a point where appropriation of the means of production and of the products, of political domination, of the monopoly of culture, and of intellectual leadership by a particular class has become superfluous; economically, politically, intellectually a hindrance to development.

35. This point is now reached. Their political and intellectual bankruptcy

is no longer a secret to the bourgeoisie. Their economic bankruptcy recurs every ten years. In every crisis, society is suffocated beneath its own productive forces and products, which it cannot use, and stands helpless before the absurd contradiction that the producers have nothing to consume, because consumers are wanting. The expansive force of the means of production bursts the bonds that the capitalist mode of production had imposed upon them. Their deliverance from these bonds is the one condition for an unbroken, constantly accelerated development of the productive forces, and therewith for a practically unlimited increase of production. Nor is this all. The socialised appropriation of the means of production does away not only with the artificial restrictions upon production, but also with the waste and devastation of productive forces and products that are at present the concomitants of production, and that reach their height in the crises. Further, it sets free for the community at large a mass of means of production and of products, by doing away with the senseless extravagance of the ruling classes and their political representatives. The possibility of securing for every member of society, by means of socialised production, an existence not only sufficient materially, but guaranteeing to all the free development and exercise of their physical and mental faculties is now for the first time here.

36. With the seizing of the means of production by society, production of commodities is done away with, and, simultaneously, the mastery of the product over the producer. Anarchy in social production is replaced by definite organisation. The struggle for individual existence disappears. Then man is finally marked off from the rest of the animal kingdom, and emerges from mere animal conditions of existence into human ones. The conditions of life which environ man, and which have hitherto ruled man, now come under the control of man, who for the first time becomes the conscious lord of nature, because he has become master of his own social organisation. The laws of his own social action, hitherto standing face to face with man as laws of nature foreign to and dominating him, will then be used with understanding, and so mastered by him. Man's own social organisation, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The forces that have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself. Only from that time will man, more and more consciously, make his own history—only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.

37. Let us briefly sum up our sketch of historical evolution.

I. *Mediæval Society*—Individual production on a small scale. Means of production adapted for individual use; hence primitive, ungainly, petty, dwarfed. Production for immediate consumption, either of the producer him-

self or of his feudal lords. Only where an excess of production over this consumption occurs is such excess offered for sale, enters into exchange. Production of commodities, therefore, is only in its infancy. But already it contains within itself *anarchy in the production of society at large*.

II. *Capitalist Revolution*—Transformation of industry, at first by means of simple co-operation and manufacture. Concentration of the means of production, hitherto scattered, into great workshops. As a consequence, their transformation from individual to social means of production—a transformation which does not, on the whole, affect the form of exchange. The old forms of appropriation remain in force. The capitalist appears. In his capacity as owner of the means of production, he appropriates the products and turns them into commodities. Production has become a *social act*. Exchange and appropriation continue to be *individual acts*, the acts of individuals. *The social product is appropriated by the individual capitalist*. Fundamental contradiction, whence arise all the contradictions in which our present day society moves, and which modern industry brings to light.

A. Severance of the producer from the means of production. Condemnation of the worker to wage labour. *Antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie*.

B. Growing predominance and increasing effectiveness of the laws governing the production of commodities. Unbridled competition. *Contradiction between socialised organisation in the individual factory and social anarchy in production as a whole*.

C. On the one hand, perfecting of machinery, made by competition compulsory for each individual manufacturer, and complemented by a constantly growing displacement of labourers. *Industrial reserve army*. On the other hand, unlimited extension of production, also compulsory under competition, for every manufacturer. On both sides, unheard of development of productive forces, excess of supply over demand, overproduction, glutting of the markets, crises every ten years, the vicious circle: excess here, of means of production and products—excess there, of labourers, without employment and without means of existence. But these two levers of production and of social well-being are unable to work together because the capitalist form of production prevents the productive forces from working and the products from circulating, unless they are first turned into capital—which their very superabundance prevents. The contradiction has grown into an absurdity. *The mode of production rises in rebellion against the form of exchange*. The bourgeoisie are convicted of incapacity to manage their social productive forces.

D. Partial recognition of the social character of the productive forces forced upon the capitalists themselves. Taking over of the great institutions

for production and communication, first by joint-stock companies, later on by trusts, then by the state. The bourgeoisie demonstrated to be a superfluous class. All its social functions performed by salaried employees.

III. *Proletarian Revolution*—Solution of the contradictions. The proletariat seizes the public power, and by means of this transforms the socialised means of production, slipping from the hands of the bourgeoisie, into public property. By this act, the proletariat frees the means of production from the character of capital they have thus far borne, and gives their socialised character freedom to work itself out. Socialised production upon a predetermined plan henceforth possible. The development of production makes the existence of different classes of society thenceforth an anachronism. In proportion as anarchy in social production vanishes, the political authority of the state dies out. Man, at last the master of his own form of social organisation, becomes at the same time the lord over nature, his own master—free.

To accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat. To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific socialism.

Reading References. Professor H. J. Laski's book, *The Rise of European Liberalism*, is a good piece of further reading. It will hand the interested reader on to other books by him and to other books by twentieth-century Marxists. Two alternatives to Marxism as a philosophy of history will be found in Toynbee's *Study of History*, and in R. G. Collingwood's "The Idea of History." The reader who has come this far can find his own way in Toynbee: the terms of the assignment ("a pattern detectable in the details") carries over from our earlier authors. Professor Collingwood, however, proposes a new, or at least different, assignment; namely an exploration and description of the *modes of thinking* which mark the historian's effort to make the past intelligible. When an historian addresses himself to that task, what principles and what presuppositions are operative in his thinking? This is to redefine philosophy's problem in respect to history.

READING QUESTIONS

1. The "materialist" conception of history.
2. Why "economic interpretation of history" or "economic determinism" are usable alternatives to "historical materialism."

3. Use his distinction between "individual" and "social" or "collective" to set forth the transition from a "medieval" economy to a "bourgeois" economy.
4. And his distinction between division of labor upon "no definite plan" vs. "a definite plan."
5. Individual production succumbed to what? Why?
6. In the medieval stage the question of the owner of the product could not arise. (a) Why not? (b) Whereas . . . ?
7. Anarchy reigns in socialized production when the products are *commodities*. (a) What is a commodity? (b) Why the anarchy?
8. What is the Industrial Reserve Army? Where does it come from?
9. "Capitalist production has begotten *another* vicious circle" (a) What was the first one? (b) What is this second one?
10. How the "anarchy" generates trusts, monopolies, state ownership.
11. At first the capitalistic mode of production forces out the workers. Then it forces out the capitalists. How so?
12. Why "state ownership" will not satisfy him.
13. What he wants instead.
14. In doing this, the proletariat abolishes itself as proletariat.
15. The state is not "abolished." It dies out. It withers away.
16. Watch his "Summary" carefully.

5. CULTURES DECLINE INTO CIVILIZATIONS. —FROM OSWALD SPENGLER

From Marx and Engels to Spengler. Thus far we have acquainted ourselves with Santayana's description of the popular and wide-spread biblical-Christian conception of human history, with reference to which so much "philosophizing" about history has proceeded. In the beginning God created the world, then created man in the world. Human history is the spread-out story of what has happened to man and what he has done about it. It takes off with the creation and closes with salvation. Our other philosophies of history stand in contrast to that. Kant sees in history the story of nature's efforts, having produced in man an animal capable of living by the use of his rational powers, to force him to develop those powers by posing for him a problem. If he handles the problem it will be because he uses and develops his rational powers. If he does not, those powers may atrophy, but the species will not survive to tell about it. The exercise and development of his rational powers is a mandate of survival from nature to man. Hegel pushes this argument