

Production Volcano or Market Swamp?

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Introduction

1. Working method

Our method of work tends towards a general arrangement of the historical Marxist doctrine, but for obvious reasons of the limited means of the present movement, it cannot be done organically and by conducting all the various parts on a uniform plan, and even less is it intended to be done by expounding chapter by chapter a defined 'subject' as in a school or academic course of lectures. The gaps to be closed in the communist movement's baggage of struggle are so many and so serious that we work under the demands of the most serious manifestations of disorientation and opportunism, and in a certain sense of our despised topicality, and even from time to time we must devote ourselves to putting back on the right lines theories elaborated by groups that would like to call themselves extremists and 'akin' to us. As a result, some important areas of proletarian theory, method and tactics have been alternately treated, sometimes in study and work meetings, sometimes in series of writings in the column 'On the Thread of Time' in this fortnightly. For a long time, however, it has not been possible to publish an issue of our journal, which following the Dialogue with Stalin collection had to take the name (in turn) of 'On the Thread of Time' (Sul Filo del Tempo).

2. Dissemination of materials

The material published in the fortnightly journal or collected in the magazine format could be made available to the comrades, who provide for the dissemination of our programme in a lesser circle, in the form of more or less extensive abstracts, theses, and sometimes opposing counter-theses. But when the meetings with their verbal exposition, of no small amount and sometimes on theoretical topics that are not simple, have not been followed by an adequate publication, the greater have been the difficulties in the further development of the work. There were eight meetings prior to this (leaving aside two of a regional nature), beginning on 1 April 1951. Of the first two, the verbatim report was circulated in a cyclostyled party bulletin, while the material of the meetings that was held up to the one in Genoa (April 1953) was given in a summary text in the aforementioned magazine-file. All of this material is therefore available to a certain extent, with some indicative reference to the topics of theory, programme, politics and tactics; in the economic, historical, social and philosophical fields, with the aid of earlier publications in the magazine and journal.

3. The national question

While the central objective of the work was the vindication of the party programme against the degeneration of the wave of opportunism that swept the Third International, placing this critique historically in relation to the vigorous tactical opposition of the Italian Left from 1919 to 1926, before the break with the Moscow centre, it proved necessary for repeated requests from comrades and groups to clarify the Marxist scope of the great questions of proletarian historical strategy that are usually referred to as the national and colonial question, and as the agrarian question. The meeting in Trieste on 30-31 August

1953 was dedicated to a complete treatment of the Problems of Race and Nation in Marxism and served to replace a certain easy subordination of these relations to a simplifying class dualism - of which we have always been vilified - with the correct evaluation of the axis of historical materialism, which is based on the reproductive fact even before the productive one, in order to draw from material data the deduction of the complex innumerable superstructures of human society. This material was published in full extent in a series of 'Threads' in the latter part of last year in this journal, and is available for the work of the comrades. With Trieste, however, came the exposition of Marxist views on the European national theme up to the 19th century, and it remained to deal with the problem of the colonies and coloured peoples and the East, connected to the period of capitalist imperialism and the world wars. Of the subsequent exhibition in Florence, which represented a bridge between the data of Marxism in the classical texts and those of Lenin's works and the theses of the first two congresses of the Moscow International, we have so far only a summary account in the journal: since 6-7 December, the date of the meeting, no more extensive and richer account has been prepared or circulated than the documentation that was provided on the occasion. The lack of such a text was felt because some positions were not well assimilated and accepted even by a few comrades. It is therefore necessary to provide one.

4. The agrarian Question

The demands of other comrades on the agrarian question led to it being dealt with in a series of 'threads', which appeared from the beginning of 1954 to the present day¹, and which constitute an organic whole, with the series of concluding theses given in the most recent issue. However, here too there is still, as is well known, a vast amount of work to be developed. We have completely given the outline of the agrarian question in Marx, showing that it is not a detached chapter (this is never the case in the Marxist system) but contains within itself not only the entire theory of the capitalist economy but all its inseparable connections with the revolutionary programme of the proletariat. It remains with another series, which will be begun shortly, to unfold the history of the agrarian question in the Russian revolution, in order to show how Lenin's class theory of the party collides in everything with Lenin's approach, and the correct explanation that must be given today of contemporary Russian social developments.

5. The general economy

The conclusions on the agrarian question lead directly to the theme that the present report proposes: the great conflict, which is not one of ideas and pens but of real class forces operating in society, between the economic construction of the Marxists and the many, but all similar and none new and original, that the advocates and apologists of the capitalist order oppose it. The right approach to this fundamental background of ours serves to ensure the formation of the renewed movement against a twofold danger that sometimes also undermines those less well provided for than ours, in spite of the strict cordon sanitaire of organisational intransigence about which we are frequently ironised. One danger is that of being impressed by the stark contrast with the

¹ Translator note: 'Commodities will never feed man 1-14'. Available in 'On the Thread of Time Collected Works 2nd Edition, Book 2

doctrines of official economists chronologically posterior to Marx, and by the alleged advantage they have for having been able to work on 'richer' later materials, which plays into their claim that the events of the economic world have disproved Marx's theory with their predictions. The second danger is that in the face of the frightening collapses of the proletarian front, elements far more presumptuous than willing claim that the economic theory of capitalism and its end must be remade with data that Marx could not have, and rectifying many of his positions.

6. Batracomomachia

A contribution to this second point was made by an earlier series of some 'Filos' dedicated to the 'batracomiomachy' of certain small groups, such as the French Socialisme ou barbarie, to which some deviants from our movement have assimilated, who claim to construct an updating of Marx and an elimination of his 'errors', a series in which the flawed theory of an insertion between capitalism and communism of a new mode of production with a new ruling class, the so-called bureaucracy, which would oppress and exploit the workers in Russia in place of capital and the bourgeoisie, was particularly combated; reducing this divergence to an insuperable opposition to the first, most vital, most valid elements of Marxism.

7. The invariance of Marxism

Therefore, the theme of this meeting is related to the one that was discussed in Milan on the historical invariance of revolutionary theory. This theory does not form, let alone duplicate itself, day by day, through successive additions or skilful 'juxtapositions' and corrections of shot, but arises in a monolithic block at a turning point in history between two epochs: the one we follow had such an origin in the mid-19th century, and in its mighty integrity we defend it without abandoning any shred to the adversary. The scientific proof for this theory of invariance lies in showing, in the light of the counter-revolutionary rumblings over the course of a century and more, right up to the most recent ones, that the great polemical battle, fought at decisive turning points by the two sides, is unitedly always the same, and we come down to it with the same arguments that constituted the revolutionary proclamation of the Marxist communists, which not only no discovery or finding of pretended science has surpassed or undermined, but which dominate with the same power and from ever greater heights the insanities of conservative culture. And to crush this they need the power of class, but certainly not the help of intellectuals and circles, intent on parading a new and better Marxism.

First Part: The Typical Structure of the Capitalist Society in the Historical Development of the Contemporary World

1. Marx's model

The recent study of the agrarian question in Marxism has provided the necessary elements to understand Marx's 'model' of the present society, which succeeded the great revolutions of the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries of Europe. According to our doctrine, a class that comes to power when one of the great 'modes of production' takes over from the previous one, has an entirely

approximate knowledge and ideological consciousness of the process that has taken place and of its further developments; however, on all sides it is admitted, in the bosom of the victorious and romantic young bourgeoisie, that a social type with characteristics different and opposite to those of the feudal world has appeared, and it is recognised that the new economic relations are radically different from the old ones: the law and the state do not place obstacles in the way of any category or order of subjects in the fulfilment of all transactions of purchase or sale, and deny that any person can be forced to give without compensation time of his work and not be allowed to depart from a circle of work.

Residues of the old feudal relations are not lacking, and the most 'subversive' laws cannot take away any gradualness from their disappearance: thus the rent of land in kind in the early days has the forms of the ancient provision of tithes of the product to the lord, to the clergy, to the state. But everything tends to assume a unique form of relationship: mercantile, and voluntary access to the market open to all. Just as the liberal formula says: many citizens, equal molecules before a single state of all, so it says: many free buyers-sellers, within the framework of a single open national, and then international, market. However, one does not have to go as far as Marx to see patterns in which the swarm of isolated economic insects with their myriad relationships is replaced by a pattern of a few social groups - classes - between which the movement and flow of 'wealth' actually takes place. For Marx, in the complex society of his time that still in large countries in the centre of Europe carries out capitalist conquests, and thus with real objectives of individual and national scope, from electoral rights to the independence of race and language, the pure pattern of the new great form of production that triumphs is three classes: capitalist entrepreneurs; wage-earning proletarians; landowners.

2. The three "pure" classes

None of these three classes reproduce the feudal legal position. In the agrarian field, the feudal lord, who had the right to take labour and servile product from his territorial subjects and could not lose his power over the land by economic vicissitude, has disappeared, and the landowner in the bourgeois mode has taken his place, land now being alienable property for money from anyone to anyone. In urban production, the co-operation in masses of manual labourers has replaced the modern proletarian with the even humbler artisan, who owned the shop and tools and had the manufactured objects; while the larger shop owners have been replaced by the quite different capitalist manufacturer, possessor of the tools of production and capital for the advance payment of wages. It is well known that these classes have new and different resources. Whereas the serf lived by consuming as much of the physical product of his labour as was left to him after he had fulfilled all his obligations, the modern proletarian only lives off his wages in money, converting it on the money market into subsistence goods. Whereas the feudal lord lived on the benefits due to him, the bourgeois landowner lives on the rent paid to him by the tenant of his land, and with it buys through money what he consumes. The capitalist industrialist from the sale of products, above cost, makes a profit, which he in turn converts into consumption - or into new productive tools and human labour forces - on the general market. Three new classes, three distinct and precise

classes, three necessary and sufficient for one to say, seeing them present, that the capitalist epoch has arrived.

3. Physiocratic model

A Trinitarian model of society preceded Marx: it is that of the physiocratic Quesnay. Classes are distinguished in an incomplete way, as they could be identified in a scarcely industrial production and before the fall of feudal orders. It is important, however, that Quesnay precedes Marx in making the movements of value and wealth between class and class, thus attempting to study the becoming of the 'wealth of a country', and opposes the mercantilists, who neglect to give a model of the productive machine, claiming to see the emergence of goods from the world of exchange whose imposing diffusion within and beyond borders they exalt. It is well known what Quesnay's three classes are: landowners, and these clearly no longer are understood in the feudal sense, but who receive their income from tenant farmers. Active class, which are the tenant farmers themselves together with their agricultural workers, already understood as pure wage earners. Sterile class, i.e. industrialists and manufacturing wage earners, who according to Quesnay transform and do not increase the value of what they handle. This model is insufficient to explain the formation of new value, of surplus value, since the physiocrats believe that this is only determined when man's work is carried out in the field of the forces of nature, since only in agriculture can the producer consume a part and not all of his physical product, thus feeding all of society in the non-productive strata.

4. Classic model

In the classical English economists, and in the supreme of them Ricardo, while the problem is still, incomprehensible to the pre-bourgeois world, that of promoting the greatest national wealth, which the post-feudal Quesnay had set himself, the solution is scientifically more correct, inasmuch as it is established after the experience of the first great manufacturing industry, that not nature but man's labour produces wealth, and that the social margins of this are obtained from any worker paid by the hour, who adds more value to the product, be it commodity or manufactured product, than is paid to him as his wage. But Ricardo's model has this flaw: it is a corporate and individualist model and fails the social construction that Quesnay brilliantly addressed. The worker on the farm produces so much wealth that one part is his wage, another the profit of his employer, and, when this occurs on agricultural land, a third, the rent paid to the owner of it.

5. Models are hot

It is therefore not Marx the first who, in order to explain the economic process and give it its laws, constructs a scheme of the mechanics of production, seeks the origin of value and its distribution among the factors of production, and this he expresses by imagining a model form with pure classes. As long as economists expressed the needs and interests of a revolutionary bourgeoisie, on the threshold of political power and social leadership, they did not hesitate to work on the discovery of a model that represented the reality of the production process. Only later, for reasons of social preservation, did economics as an official science take a different turn, ostentatiously denied and mocked the models and schemes, and plunged into the indefinite and indistinct chaos of

mercantile exchange between free entrants into the general traffic of goods. More will be said later about the 'right to patterns' as a rigorously scientific method and not as an ideal aim or propaganda tool. For now, let us stay with the result of the schematic three-class society. Quesnay's model was intended to show that it could live without upsetting fluctuations; Ricardo's that it could develop indefinitely in the capitalist structure on the condition of accumulating more and more capital invested in industry, and at the most with the additional step of confiscating the rents of the landed class, thus becoming binary and not ternary. Marx's model has come to provide certain proof that such a society, in the ternary or binary hypothesis, runs towards the accumulation and concentration of wealth, and also towards the revolution that will unseat it from the mercantile track.

6. The spurious classes

Before proceeding to our present task, which is the defence of the validity of the model and of the quantitative relations to which its use has led us, which are confirmed by the current facts in the most evident way, and the demonstration of the inanity of the efforts of bourgeois culture to escape from the grip that thus ensnares it, it is nevertheless necessary to pause a little on the other classes, left aside, out of the light of the scene on which the three protagonists move.

A frequent error not only of opponents but even of followers of Marx consists in believing that these classes are rapidly disappearing, that in any case only after their total disappearance will the conditions be created for the final crisis and collapse of capitalism. And a similar error is to say that Marxism ignores or at least neglects their existence, is to declare that the social movement of these classes can in no way influence the relation of forces and the prevalence of the type classes against each other. The question of these other classes, especially the lower classes, is a burning issue in the face of the degeneration of proletarian motion into opportunism. Today, these impure and ill-defined strata are by the policy of the big parties brought down to the same level as the real wage-earners, and vague and dull claims are made that are said to be of interest to all the poor classes, all the popular strata, at the same time. By this route, the tactics, organisation, and theory of the workers' party have gone to ruin, and since the poor have taken the place of the proletarian, the people has taken that of class.

7. Model societies and real societies

The Marxist thesis that the middle classes will disappear is not taken to mean that in the near future in all developed countries there must be only capitalists, large landlords, and wage earners, but instead that of the three type classes, only the proletarian class can and must fight for the advent of the new social type, the new mode of production. Since this will entail the abolition of the right over land and capital, and thus the abolition of the classes themselves, once the resistance of the present two ruling classes has given way, there will be no place for the lower classes in a form of production that will no longer be private and mercantile. They can only bind their forces to the cause of the preservation of the exploiting classes, or in certain cases, and by subconscious effect, to that of the proletarian class, but what they are excluded from is fighting for a type of society 'proper to them'. Hence not their current or

imminent non-existence or even their total absence from economic, social or political struggles; only the certainty that they have no task of their own and that they are of secondary importance and cannot be put on the same level as the wage-earning class, where it is a matter of an exchange of aid; while it is a clearly regressive phase of the anti-capitalist revolution when the proletariat substitutes for its own the demands of these classes and blends in with them in organisation or in the notorious alliances and fronts.

8. Infinite range of bastards

If we look around Italian politics today, the series of these classes and strata, to which the parties that boast of organising the working classes address the warmest and most nauseating invitations of fraternal friendship, never ends. In agriculture, we would hardly stop at the three types: small sharecropper-worker, small tenant-worker, small landlord-worker, because immediately the 'middle' types, i.e. those who openly employ farm labourers, will also present themselves as other worthy *sozii*. This is not enough: the agrarian office of the Stalinist party, which only fights against the windmill of the feudal barons, occasionally proclaims that it also defends and protects the interests of the large agrarian tenant farmers! the true pillar of the bourgeoisie and the Italian state. Outside the countryside, we will also see the artisan, the clerk, the shopkeeper, the professional, the small trader and industrialist, and even, sure, the medium trader and the medium industrialist, not to mention the civil servants up to... Einaudi, not to mention great artists and film divas, poor priests, brewers and so on. All this stuff serves as a voter, as a reader, as a card-carrying member.

9. Statistical junk

We have given multiple quotations from Marx where he explains that he is dealing with a hypothetically pure capitalist society, but that in his time, i.e. in the second half of the last century, not even the advanced England had a population or even a majority of population divided between only three modern classes. A lot of time has passed since then, and as we continue to manipulate the model of the model society (overcoming Luxemburg's concern that it 'cannot work' or Bukharin's belief that it could work in the technical-economic sense; both agreeing that impure or pure awaited the revolution), we note that in all countries the middle or spurious classes form a very large part of the population.

We will take not recent statistics, but the international comparisons contained in the official Italian Statistical Yearbook of 1939, as they refer to a general pre-war situation, and are less uncertain, although always to be taken with a certain reserve, as to parallelism of research method and terminology from nation to nation. In Italy, for example, a distinction began to be made between the active population (individuals with their own income, and therefore excluding the old, children, invalids, etc.) and the total population. Out of 42.5 million, about 18 million were active, 43.4%. Of the active population, 29% were employed in industry. Sterile for Quesnay, they are for us, workers or entrepreneurs, many 'pure'. In agriculture, 47% of the active population were employed. Meanwhile there are still, scattered in so many figures, 24%, about a quarter, who are impure. The difficult thing is to sort out the agricultural workers, between pure (landowners, tenant farmers, capitalists, labourers) and all the rest. For Italy we can find some criteria in the table of the population over

10 years of age employed by profession. In industry 7/10 are true workers; in agriculture 4/10, while the owners of large companies and properties are confused with the 'independent'. So the working class could be 12% in agriculture and 21% in industry: a total of 33% of the working population. [Verified counting, we would arrive at 39%]. The true capitalist and landed bourgeoisie would be very few: in short, in Italy we have one-third 'pure' capitalist society, two-thirds 'impure'. Zero, however, barons and feudal serfs!

10. International comparison

Turning to other countries, we can certainly set aside those that have a worse impurity index than ours, and are therefore 'less capitalist', although among them many are considered more modern, evolved and civilised due to many indices of well-being and culture. They are certainly: Bulgaria, Ireland, Finland, Greece, Norway, Portugal, Hungary; and outside Europe (geographically incomplete data) India, Palestine, Egypt, South Africa, Canada, Chile, Mexico, New Zealand. They are 'less than a third pure capitalist'. We see the countries more capitalist than us very wholesale. We only have data for industry and agriculture, and we do not have the power to sort as we now attempt for Italy. They are in Europe: Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Holland, Switzerland; and outside: the United States of America. Remember that we are with the borders before 1939, and realise that we have not talked about two primary cases: Great Britain and Russia. For example, France: agriculture 35%, industry 35%. France is not a country with a much higher concentration of companies than ours, and calculating with the ratios used for Italy of 4/10 and 7/10 we would have that the salaried working population, plus the large bourgeoisie (if it is true that there are a hundred families!) reaches about 40%: more than a third, not yet half as an index of capitalist purity.

Not even Germany, Austria, and the others mentioned above reach half. The United States as a percentage employed in industry is on a par with France (but with 1926 data and white population only!) and for agriculture they have less: 28%. Considering the whole territory, even today they cannot be much above 40-45% 'pure'. Note that there is a high proportion of trade and banking workers (including a few blue-collar workers), i.e. around 19%, as in Great Britain 1931 (stigmata of the exploiters of the world).

11. The sensational extremes

For England and Scotland the statistics are at first sight embarrassing. Industry 47-48%, agriculture 5.8%. Such a fact can only be explained by admitting that capitalist tenant farms are counted as industry, and only the relatively small farming population remains in agriculture. We must then consider only the estimated 48% of the population as capitalist. Let us also take into account the high share of transport and communication workers (7.8%), a world maximum, and out of the 55% overall, taking into account that this is a big business economy, let us take not 7, but 8, and if you like 9%: we will come close to 50%. So: the typical country for Marxist analysis does not go so far as to constitute a capitalist society that is 50% pure form: it is only semi-capitalist. Marx knew this well. And we have the quotation that bourgeois society is condemned to carry with it huge and shapeless masses of middle classes, agrarian and non-agrarian, leftovers from outdated times.

Soviet Union. Data from 1926: Industry, thus calculating all declared workers without specification, only 6.6% (transport only 2.6, trade only 2.5). Agriculture: 85%. Since 1926, as is well known, much has changed. This is precisely why it is a pre-capitalist economic society evolving towards capitalism with the spread of large-scale industry and the general market. We do not discuss here how the population living in the countryside is classified today. The part that was in the feudal relationship, boyars and serfs, has certainly disappeared. The rest have to divide themselves between small-scale production and collective farms: is the current form a hybrid between the rural capitalist company and agrarian communism? No, it is a hybrid between the agrarian company and the ancient forms of fractional farming. Russia's 1926 capitalist purity index was no more than 8%, today it is still (it is understood that the whole of Asia is included) below any other European and white country, whether inside or outside the curtain. A sneer at the equation: American imperialism = Russian imperialism.

But enough, gentlemen: we are going to discuss a capitalist society such that we cannot show you, in reality, anywhere in the world, or at least on this adventurous planet. Nor do we ever expect to be able to show it to you, wanting well beforehand to send impure and pure, confessed and lied-about capitalisms to the scrap heap.

12. Geographical staggering

We have thus attempted to give a cursory glimpse of how the three-class form of capitalism is scattered in various ways in the social magma.

By way of a mere mention, let us recall how geographically the countries and continents already conquered by large proportions of capitalist forms mingle with others where the social composition is so much more backward that there is no appreciable share of bourgeois economy. There are the African and Australasian populations in their still savage and barbaric state, there are the dense populations of Asia with social forms that are not only pre-capitalist but also pre-feudal, with military and sometimes theocratic lordships still superimposed on primitive communism and miserable parcel culture, a form so many times defined by Marx as one of tremendous inertia, reluctant to evolve towards new relations of production, still indifferent to mercantilism, to the initial and progressive accumulation of capital (which in Europe under the medieval regime laid the foundations of the cycle leading to capitalism and socialism). In these areas (India, China, and so on) capitalism appeared on the contours as imported by the white race, bringing about conflicts and imbalances on contact with the internal, satrapic-dyspotic or feudalistic society. But two factors are determined by the same laws of historical materialism and the contrast between new productive forces and traditional property relations: the struggle of the small peasants and artisans and the first indigenous bourgeoisie against the old authoritarian powers, and the struggle to become nationally independent of white colonisation. The emergence of capital and the national struggle are suggestively associated with the same aspect they had two centuries back in Europe; Marxism has in this a vital confirmation, which goes beyond racial, religious, philosophical, voluntarist and granduomistic explanations of history.

13. Mysteries on motorbikes

The example of Japan (absent from the previous picture) would be enough to give a huge proof of this. Then there is the problem of China. We mention it here only to note that that government boasted after the first historic census that it had 560 million citizens; that's 600 counting the Chinese abroad: a classic boast of national-capitalist style. Can a capitalist revolution arise and live by endogenous force in such a field? It is already underway! It has characteristics, for example, as different from the Japanese as the German had from the English; also for geographical reasons. It may be different from, say, the Korean or Indo-Chinese one, as it was from the Piedmontese one, where there was no obvious indigenous civil war, but a clash of foreign armies and imperial states.

The development of the comparison is exhaustive. The circumstance of the presence of western imperialist colonies and bases certainly matters, but in what sense? Certainly not, especially in the last twenty-five years, in that the class struggle in the East languishes and sleeps, while that of a higher degree between workers and industrialists in the metropolises of the West flares up. The thesis that bourgeois capitalism has taken the market to the limits of the world and determined the no longer national but international character of the subsequent antagonism between classes and modes of production, between the capitalist bourgeoisie and the communist proletariat, would be translated disproportionately in the terms: in the present historical situation there can be no class struggle, whatever the composition of the various national societies, except within the world framework. The general economic, political and military world situation does not allow one to say that in the camp of the half billion Chinese there cannot be a massive civil struggle to decide between the feudal mode of production and the bourgeois mercantile mode, which now suits peasants, artisans, intellectuals, bureaucrats better, and in which foreign agents and internal governments can make parallel technical contributions, while struggling politically with each other.

14. Camps and cycles of struggle

With this digression on spurious societies, within the framework of a discussion on the typical capitalist society, we want to stem the threat of throwing out a quarter of the human species from obedience to historical materialism, and to reply that if one admits (like the yellow press in the sense of red and white) that social dynamism is nourished by 'fifth columns' and 'imperial aggression' aimed at exporting economic forms such as cotton and conterie, Marx's determinism has no choice but to fall back on.

In fields of the most diverse extent the bourgeoisie has everywhere struggled with the ancien regime, and according to these fields in the most diverse - but definable and stable throughout - historical cycles, the proletariat first struggled for the same end as the bourgeoisie, then came into inexorable conflict with it. This is the key to the Marxist reconstruction that links, even in the work of a few years of our present movement, the historical and social doctrine to the strategy of position and manoeuvre of the international communist party, organised in 1848 avowedly. The closed camps of class struggle have been, for example, in Italy and in Flanders and the Rhineland, since almost a thousand years ago, even only communal. The big city bourgeoisie took power away from the agrarian aristocracy by founding small,

democratic, capitalist Commune-States. The popolo minuto, the Ciompi, the first proletarians, fought with the Commune against the nobles, sometimes against the Church and the Empire. When they tried to rise up against economic misery they were bloodily beaten by the banking and governing bourgeoisie. Historical materialism lives and wins when we see the same process unfold, not of a city but of a nation, after centuries, for example in 19th century France.

It is said as early as the Manifesto that the movement accelerates. If it took centuries and centuries to unite the communal forces of the bourgeoisie in an assault on power in the great states, it took half a century for the new social form to spread throughout Europe. And in long treatises we showed that the development was deep in the social magma and even went against the invasions of victorious armies, as with the barbarians themselves who had conquered the Roman world.

Great or very great fields of the eastern, African, Asian space, cannot but have to give the same 'historical spectacle' before only two characters arrive on the scene: capitalism and the proletariat. The new forms, which went faster from London to Vienna than from Genoa to Pisa, may not make us wait too long to make this tour of the world and the races, but they will do so with the same laws and cycles, unless we have so far been dreaming, telling lies, and badly chewing on stiffened and lifeless formulas.

15. Bringing you back into line

A whole chapter was included in the Trieste report to put in order the well-known and fundamental concepts of the forces of production, their contrast with traditional relations of production or forms of ownership, the alternation between two successive historical major modes or forms of production; in the political aspect of the transfer of power from class to class, and in the economic aspect of the reorganisation of production and distribution on the new radically different basis. And it was done with regard to the Russian October Revolution, which was a double revolution, of the bourgeoisie and other classes against feudalism, and of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois and democratic appendages; with a double victory. Of the two victories, the first has remained acquired in history, the second without civil war (long demonstrations were given of this possibility, in the light of historical materialism with remembrance of the medieval communes) in the Russian camp, but for the battles lost through our own fault, that of us proletarians in the west, it was turned into defeat. Now at this meeting in Asti we had to deal with the interpretation of the Chinese revolution. It has not yet been a double revolution and for the time being is consolidated as a capitalist and bourgeois revolution, in which peasants, artisans and little proletariat fought in subordination, as exponents of the arrival of the social capitalist mode. There was no shortage of Ciompi attempts and June insurrections, but bourgeois power and weapons smothered them in blood. One continuous bourgeois revolution in power in the government of Chiang Kai-shek and that of Mao Tse-tung, as with the Orléans and the second republic, with Bonaparte and the third in France. A revolution though nothing other than a walk of red-star soldiers. And a revolution not yet chilled, not crystallised, not ankylosed. It is we, the white revolutionaries, who are tied up like salamis, and there are few lessons we can impart to the inflamed East.

["il programma comunista" n. 14, 23 luglio - 6 agosto 1954]

16. From the model to the measurements

We have thus declared that Marx's doctrine of the capitalist mode of production is established by reducing it to a pure model, which not only does not correspond to the structures of bourgeois societies in even the most developed nations of the last hundred years, but which is not even intended to be the definition of a stage they are expected to pass through, or even one of them, with total adherence.

The model was indispensable for the application to the course of economic facts of a 'quantitative', and if you like mathematical method (apart from the question of exposition which we will not fail to mention). We are not the only ones among the ancient and modern schools to treat economic facts and phenomena with quantitative methods: statistics, a science of the most ancient origins, also uses quantitative methods insofar as it records and considers successive figures of prices, quantities of goods, numbers of men, and similar concrete quantities, and by all according to common practice can be indicated by numbers, such as the land, treasures, slaves of a Roman patrician, for example, or the census of a citizen. But the step from recording statistics to economic science lies, as in every other science that the human species has, in successive stages, constructed, in introducing not only the measurement, in numbers, of quantities that are palpable and visible to all, but also that of new quantities that have been 'discovered' and in a certain sense (and with value as an 'attempt', made in history in various senses before coming to grips with it) 'imagined'; magnitudes 'imagined' in order to set up deeper investigation, magnitudes therefore - yes, sirs - invisible and abstract, and not the direct object of sensory experience. One would not have arrived at measurements and magnitudes (the main example being the magnitude of value) without starting from the 'model' of the society being studied, and without this path one would not have arrived at the laws of development of that society (in the case of capitalism) and the predictions of its course and development.

Without drawing speculative summits, it is sufficient to understand in practice that if the concrete phenomena that can be observed and recorded in the hundred years since the method was applied and in the hundred - let us say - years to come, were to go in a different direction, then it would be concluded that the construction of the model, the choice of magnitudes the relations calculated between them, and all the rest, all to be thrown away, as has happened historically with so many doctrinal constructions that sought to reproduce the ways of being of 'slices' of the natural world, and of that special slice that is human society, and that - not without having had historical effect - disappeared as theories. So we do not look for proof that our model is valid, and the laws faithful to the actual process, in particular virtues of the spirit, in the claimed internal absolute properties of human thought, less than ever in the brain-power of a discovering genius, who has appeared in the world; certainly not then in the heroic will of a sect, nor even of a revolutionary social class.

17. Theory and revolutions

The point of arrival of this discussion is not so much to re-present the backbone of Marx's economic theory (although this is an unceasing necessity in

the face of the countless counterfeits of enemies and sometimes weak followers), but to establish that the criticisms, whether frontal, or more insidiously 'flanking', of even the most recent and current times, do nothing but re-propose ancient objections, on the ruins of which the new doctrine was victoriously constructed from its first and bursting birth, and thus reconnect us, especially through an examination of the positions of anti-communist economic schools, to what was the theme of our meeting in Milan: the invariance of Marxism, and in general of all revolutionary doctrines and faiths in human history. These do not arise from successive approximations, juxtapositions, additions, a cloying contradiction and collaboration at the same time of pleiades of so-called researchers, but explode at given times and acute turning points in the general cycle, and cannot but form themselves precisely, and organically, in that way, of one block.

We have seen that the same bourgeois class, which boasts of having for the first time erected an economic science, boldly began to manipulate models, and to establish magnitudes to be introduced into economic calculation and into the construction of laws which it applied to the becoming of organised and modern human society. But this was precisely because it was then a revolutionary class, and was carrying out perhaps the greatest revolution in history, for which arms were needed that wielded weapons no less than heads pervaded by a theory (and whether it was in the form of faith or fanaticism, it fits into our explanation of history completely). When we cry from Marx's youth that there is no revolutionary movement without revolutionary theory, we do not mean that only the workers' movement is revolutionary and only revolutionary theory is communist theory. We apply that enunciation to all revolutions, and we do not mean by this to say (neither for the pre-communist ones nor for our own) that every intellectual coterie can fabricate a theory and thereby spark a revolution! The profound forces that disrupt social organisation at a given (rare) turning of the cycles, just as they take the form of economic and productive contrasts and clashes between groups and classes of men, so they take that of a battle of new faiths against the old, and also, it is not difficult to admit it, of myths against myths.

It is no less well known that the proletarian-communist class does not forge itself a theory with a religious or predominantly romantic-ideological background, but attains that which is the true science of the economic fact; and this in adherence to its different behaviour with regard to the appropriation of the productive forces, with the rupture of the old forms of class appropriation, compared to the classes and revolutions that historically preceded it. And since the usual misunderstandings that lie in wait must be looked at from all angles, we also warn that in order to arrive at this conclusion we do not need to maintain that human society will arrive at an infallible absolute general formulation of the laws of the physical and social cosmos, any more than we believe that it set out with a baggage of supreme truths entrusted to it by immaterial powers, or that it can discover them by delving into the mysterious and innate immanence of its speculative thought.

18. Sizes and economy

As soon, therefore, as the bourgeois class no longer needed working revolutionary doctrines, the economic science that followed it underwent the

transformation, thoroughly treated by Marx, from the classical school to the vulgar school. The dangerous 'flights' of Ricardo and his on the definition of the value that the products of the capitalist economy have as an intrinsic property, and which is called exchange value, but is not defined according to a moment of exchange, but according to a moment of production, were put aside. For Ricardo it was stated that a commodity does not have value as measured by a given 'number' because, perhaps in the statistical average of market prices, it exchanges for so much. Instead, it is because the commodity has a given value that is determined and calculable according to the average social labour time that goes into forming it, that it must be sold on the market, barring occasional fluctuations, at that much. On this central theorem of the classical school, held but with quite a different vital force in the Marxist school, vulgar economics then hurls itself, which calls all this madness, illusion and myth, and in essence gets rid of the value magnitude, its determination and measurement, and the laws in which it is to be found, as a useless burden.

The essential objection since then, in different words, is always the same. We are not in the physical field that obeys (then believed and conceded) rigorous laws of causality, which can be established by means of quantities that can be treated by mathematical processes. We are in the human field in which the disposition, the will, the 'taste' of individuals is influential, and the average phenomenon is neither graspable nor predictable nor pigeon-holed into fixed formulas. Away, then, with the greatness of value (not the idea, the notion of value, which, stripped of its material determination, is brought to triumphantly invade the so-called sciences of society: law, ethics, aesthetics...); away with the greatness of value in general, away with the notion of value in the sciences of society.); away, in general, with the quantities that can be introduced into economic science, and that are not brute monetary quotations or quantities of contracted commodities; away (and this was the burning point) with the possibility of establishing, through economic research, the road that humanity takes, understood as a society that organises its activity for the purposes of its own needs: one can do nothing more than watch, and write the unpredictable, infinitely free, autonomous from every itinerary, and indifferent among all possible routes, the concrete and a posteriori history of this swarm of earthly wreckage. Of everything susceptible and capable, and even of believing scientists.

19. Value or price?

All of Marx's critics, as diverse as they are in age and colour, have in essence a common ground: the claim that a generic economic 'science', busy after Marx making giant strides in university chatter and library paper, has done justice to the theory of value and that of surplus value, and furthermore to that, which Stalin wanted to give the coup de grace, of the descent of the profit rate. With this, they want to do away at the same time with the equally essential theory of the general levelling of the capitalist profit rate in national and ultranational economic society. In all this - and rightly so for them - they are putting more emphasis than in the scandalised crusades against the preaching of class struggle, the use of insurrectionary violence, mud on the face of democratic and liberal ideals, dictatorship and proletarian terror, having for a forerunner the usual hirsute scholar whom the English - not so dumb - called in the last years of his life the red terror doctor.

In a well-known pamphlet of his from 1908 (let's be far off), republished in 1926, entitled 'A Study on Marx', a wide-ranging rehash of all the innumerable theses of Marx's critics, whether accepted or rejected (the worst is when Marx is defended and treated with respect), the well-known Arturo Labriola, vindicates an early writing of his from 1899 in which - acknowledging the inadmissibility of the Marxist theory of value - he attempted, in his own words, to reconcile a theory of price with that of value. The book appeared at a time when two revisionist wings were throwing themselves against Marx, as we understand him: the reformist and legalitarian Bernstein, and the syndicalist and self-styled extremist Giorgio Sorel, whose acid preface to Labriola is quoted. Those who recall how historically and politically the two tendencies clashed to death, may note how eloquent is the frequent theoretical echoing of Bernstein's criticism, in his continuous derision of the Marxist laws of development of capitalism, and in his substitution of the sweet progressive curve at the breaking points. No less parallel to this screen could be found recent treatments of purported remedies to the accidents of Marx the scientist-prophet, who adorn themselves with the purported experience of the new facts of this century, and the no less purported infringement of the 'schemes' dear to Marx.

20. Poker of aces

If it were sensible in 1954 to find out where the Marxist 'plan' for the itinerary of the historical capitalist form had fallen short, one could only laugh at such a prolonged wait, once the foul-mouthed Neapolitan professor had already discovered it, or rather coined the story, which Sorel has been basking in for fifty years now, that it was... Karl Marx himself who discovered it. According to this story, Marx had suspended his work as an economist for a long time after the publication of the first volume of Capital in 1867, not because of the serious illness that seized him, but because he had been enlightened in 1871 by reading the works of Jevons and others on 'truly scientific' mathematical economics. Acknowledging his own errors would have meant that Marx left his materials in disarray, and all the bad words of types of this calibre go to Engels, and also to Kautsky of the good times, who arbitrarily would have tidied them up. Could it, said Mr Labriola, be thought that Marx, alone, is right, and against him wrong, 'all, it is said, all Science'?! But this situation, which still exists today - without Marx's name appearing at least twelve times in every newspaper issue that is printed in the world - precisely this situation we needed and need. It is if science had made way for Marx that we would be screwed.

We complete the quartet of professors (Sorel, Labriola, Bernstein) with our old Tonino Graziadei, another professor. Echoing, he himself a pre-war reformist trade unionist, who in 1919 switched to the entire left, Labriola Arturo's 1908 thesis, with a series of books on Price and surplus value in the capitalist economy, while apologising for the historical, political, philosophical side of Marx and Marxism, he fought every theory of value and surplus value, which caused the (then) Communist International to be defeated. The point is therefore this, in a war of positions in which we have been lined up since 1848: has modern capitalism disproved the attempt to mark its curriculum vitae by means of a class-type doctrine of society, and the calculation of its tendential laws on the basis of a system of formulae, in which not the mercantile measure of price, but that of the value generated in social production, appears as the

fundamental quantity? If we are crushed on this point, the professors of 'marginal Marxism' will be right, but so will the Jevons, Sombart, Pareto, Einaudi, Fisher, Kinley; and also the Rothschilds, Morgans, Rockefellers, etc., with Joseph Stalin at their head - à tout seigneur -.

21. Physical and economic quantities

According to Sorel, Marx

"did not understand the use of quantities in economics as mathematicians understand it when dealing with problems of physics. It seems (?) that the quantitative relations seemed to him (?) only suitable for providing distant or perhaps symbolic summary indications (what then, Dr. Sorel, is mathematics if not the use of symbols?); their clarity being all the greater the more unreal they are. It would be important to study this difficult question if one wanted to arrive at a perfect understanding of the texts of Capital'.

Good. It wouldn't have done any harm in these fifty years to study this difficult question, and not devote them to activistically and voluntaristically bastardising the proletarian struggle.

A few observations on this 'use of quantities in physics and economics' are in order here.

First. Marx intended to come to use numerical quantities and the quantities that are measured by them in economics, as did the physicists. This is apart from the manner of exposition, on which historical reasons always have an influence: for example, Galilei, threatened with persecution, expounded the theory of the motion of the Earth in the form of a dialogue and premised that he only wanted the opposing conclusions to be shown to be equally acceptable to human reason, so that revealed doctrine could decide. It took a middle revolution for Laplace, justifying a well-known anecdote, to answer Napoleon's stern question: I see no mention of God in your explanation of the formation of the solar system! - with the simple sentence: Your Majesty, I have not made use of such a hypothesis. A professor who spoke like that would be burnt today. As for Marx, since he had to address the working class, which with the minimum control of labour conditions had lost even that of culture, he followed a literary form, then went on to use numerical examples at length (often not sketchy, but far too detailed for the reader's fatigue), rarely to algebraic formulae, and thought, we shall see, in his later days to higher mathematics.

22. Physical models and symbols

Second. The recent history of physics and mathematical physics in particular shows that the use of quantities and quantities in the study of the material world does not go as smoothly as it seemed in 1900. The rule is that one works with ever new symbols, and on models that often change and are proposed, and that the very rule that seemed to Sorel to be a weakness occurs: clarity is all the greater the more unreal the models are. Without going into the difficult, if one wants to do science, it must be communicable and applicable, and then in order to make oneself understood and to move forward, one must be, if not summary, then to a large extent simplifying. The model of matter in many atoms of different qualities attracted to each other by chemical valences was

quite 'clear'. Much less unreal and equally less clear is the model of the atom decomposed into a central nucleus with electrons revolving around it: but before, the (abstract but not very) chemical quantities of weight and valence were enough; today, many others, mechanical and electromagnetic, enter in. We can continue when the nucleus is vivisectioned (and then fixed) into protons, neutrons, and other particles of which the newest and most mysterious would be found today: the antiproton. Models are being made of the system, measurements and symbols are being given of the particles: are they corpuscles? Are they ripples? Are they strips of trajectories struck on the plate for a moment? For now, it seems that everyone can say what they like.

Third. It must be conceded that historically, the ability to deal with the problems of the physical world with quantitative methods developed earlier than with those of the social aggregate developed. It must also be conceded that if in the former, simplified schemes have to be introduced, at first with even arbitrary proofs, then with greater exactitude, to discover laws and give formulas, nevertheless the accessory, impure, concomitant phenomena, to the point of sometimes obscuring it with the pure relationship that one wants to isolate, are a less diabolical encumbrance than in the field of sociology and economics. All this put, by necessity in a summary way, we affirm that the employment of magnitudes and quantities in Marx, once the model to be studied has been formed, is wholly peremptory and rigorous; it is central, not accessory, and employed as the only means of uncovering the developments of interest in their general tendencies. What is more, we affirm that this employment is strictly consistent and decidedly uniform, from volume to volume, from work to work, from epoch to epoch of the immense work.

23. Value: economic mass

The subject deserves that the parallel, which has been dealt with at other times (see various issues of Prometheus, first series, some 'Threads of Time', and the like) be developed a little for the purpose of popularisation, even if it falls into repetition, which is usual in party work.

Price is an empirical datum, as everyone knows how to indicate and report it and also judge it, as long as it is expressed in the current currency of the moment. As late as 1954 we will see people writing in defence of this single mathematical quantity to be used in economics: the monetary share; but for a century Marx had noted that, if the diatribe on value is long, one falls into the depths of complications and abstruseness if one examines the thousand theories on money. So immediate is the notion of the price of a commodity, mediated is that of its value. Physics took a giant step forward with the concept of mass enunciated by Galileo, while until then the more 'external' and 'practical' concept of weight was considered. A leap, not a step, that could and should have been made as a corollary of the development of a more organised productive society, urban and manufacturing rather than rural and peasant, as in the Renaissance. While mass is constant, the weight of an object varies depending on whether we are at the sea or on the mountaintop, at the pole or at the equator, or perhaps on a celestial body other than the Earth. Galileo on this theoretical basis - unreal, if you like! - demonstrates what was practically evident: two bodies of the most diverse weights fall at the same time from the same height: something that had been denied from Aristotle onwards, only for not having known how to

get rid of impure factors: air resistance, for example. Hence the famous cry: feather and lead ball! Just as we shout: the labourer and the great Genius! This step was taken in order to have introduced a new greatness: undiscovered in the first notions of thought, in the data of the spirit; and if we want, 'provisional' itself. But the 'revolutionary' leap remains. Galileo's expression that weight is force, which depends on the quantity of mass, and then on the other factor, acceleration, made it possible to reduce the fall of the stone and the turning of the Moon around the Earth to the same mathematical law, which was made evident by Newton by simply working on symbols.

When, at a further stage of development of the technical social organisation, an attempt was made to establish this link also in the other comparison between the falling stone and the running infratomic corpuscle, the expression had to be modified, and in this new field the mass is no longer constant, for a certain body considered, but in turn variable according to its velocity, if very high, i.e. it can decrease if energy is released. Now the distance of the Moon is a billion times greater than the fall of an object from a stool to the ground, but the ratio between the mass of that object, perhaps a nib, and that of an electron is written with twenty-seven zeros (billions of billions), and Galileo is excused for not noticing this four centuries earlier. We, with Marx, claim to be able to make our way through the farrago of weight-price measurements and introduce the constant quantity, as far as we are concerned, mass-value of each commodity, to deduce the data of the orbits on which the world of capital turns, and it is enough for us that the new quantity pass for valid and constant as much historical time as it takes to throw that world into the bottom of the Abyss.

24. Essay "test" for the capitalism

Having defined the model of a typical society, we must now recall which measurable quantities are of interest to us. In this exposition, the recent series on the agrarian question with its counter-theses and final theses will help. It is therefore easy to draw Marx's 'picture' of the movements of value between the great classes in play, and to indicate the simple expressions that serve the calculation of capitalist economy and the enunciation of its laws, in order to defend its validity and vitality against the conniptions of the anti-revolutionary economic schools in a second part, both those that focus their enquiry on the pure phenomena of the circulation of commodities and money, wallowing in the mire of the market swamp, and those that, as has been the case in recent times, forced to attempt the elucidation of a theory of production, have wished to venture onto the flanks and into the crater of the volcano, where the prodromes of the tremendous eruptive explosion are bubbling.

The early economists started from the vague concept of national wealth. This endowment, think of it as in the monetary expression with the units and rates of the time, think of it as a mass of things useful for organised life, premises, tools, stocks for consumption, is in continuous movement, undergoing an outflow that imposes uninterrupted renewal. Not only is there no concrete example, but neither is it possible to propose an abstract model of a society that only consumes and whose wealth consists of an immense reserve from which every day or every year one can draw what is needed to live for all the members of the aggregate. Every model of economic movement will have to contemplate a cycle of displacements, at the end of which, as a minimum hypothesis, the

endowment and the general social stock will have returned to what it was at the beginning. We will soon come to the integral problem, not only of taking into account the possibility of a progressive increase in equipment and reserves, but also of an increase that begins by balancing that due to the variation, almost always a marked increase, in the number of the population.

25. Accumulated dead labour

Social organisation continues along its path in that, from a given moment, it is not only in the presence of the natural environment disposing of its capacity for work (which is not just muscular strength but transmission, a tradition from past generations of technical preparation, and technological knowledge in all fields, to which all science, knowledge and social and individual thought is directly reduced), but also a mass of things and plants of all kinds that have been passed on by past generations, transforming the earth's crust to which we cling, equipping it with all sorts of artefacts, and having at all times a share of consumer goods already produced and not yet used. A social mass of wealth, a social mass of labour, a set of commodities and goods produced by labour, from the way of calculating which we will disregard for now, as in the final analysis it is of no interest, since all apportionments are made, for reasons of power and class, with operations on the masses of current and living labour, of value 'added in production' in the cycle that is opened and studied.

In a capitalist economy, therefore mercantile, it is evident that part of this transmission present at the start is given by money, by circulating money: which in itself and especially since the existence of paper money is nothing more than a social mechanism to direct the distribution of 'nascent value'. One cataclysm stops, for example, normal means of transport and human society will die in short order, with full coffers and accounts receivable. Not all crystallised past work is set in motion in the cycle of productive activity that begins. A workshop, a machine, can sit idle for the whole year, a stock of consumer goods not in demand at the moment can sleep all the time in the warehouse. But even that part of wealth already produced that is set in motion in the new period of production can be set in motion in two different ways; that is, with total employment and with fractional, partial employment, so that at the end it is not absorbed and disappears, but only needs to be replenished for a given share that has been subtracted, thus becoming again as efficient as at the beginning.

26. Marxist units: capital

When the classical school established that the value of these accumulated endowments was measured by the past labour invested in them, and considered them as capital, it was induced to present them as factors in the new production cycle and to calculate their value, considered proportional to the labour that had been needed to realise them, and better to that which would have been needed to reproduce them, if they were missing.

He made the distinction, in which economics still struggles, with the individual blinker forcing it to measure each individual's share (which is then not even the famous Person, but the Firm), between fixed capital and circulating capital, considering in the former that which is used in production but does not remain depleted of it, such as a plough, and in the latter that which is all used, such as seed and fertiliser.

We will not insist on this distinction any longer: in the Marxist expression of the quantitative relations of the process, fixed capital, insofar as it is really used without diminishing it in quality and quantity, does not concern us and we do not take it into account: but that which is all incorporated into the productive operation and remains physically in the product, or vanishes into by-products and waste, such as the wax from which candles are made. We will therefore not calculate the plough, but note its 'wear and tear'. Even the most primitive ploughshare is not eternal and needs to be sharpened and eventually renewed: if it is enough for twenty cycles, we will consider the twentieth part of its value as constant capital to be introduced into the 'production function'.

Thus, the first quantity to be considered is constant capital: raw materials, consumed ancillary materials, such as fuel, lubricants, etc.; wear and tear on tools and equipment all according to the periodic need for renewal; the oft-mentioned 'depreciation' that also occurs for buildings where work is done and for any other fixed artefact. This part of the elements, of the terms of production, is therefore called constant capital by Marx. Predecessors often confuse: Ramsay went so far as to identify with what we understand [...] the current notion of fixed capital; all or most of the others confuse company assets and constant capital, some get lost between the terms of capital invested and employed in production, a distinction of no interest to Marxism, as far as calculating values is concerned.

27. Marxist units: labour

In fact, as we know, there are three quantities we have to introduce and add up: after constant capital comes variable capital and surplus value. Since their sum is the value of the product, which goes into the hands of the capitalist and is thus capital, or at least can be capital, all three terms are qualitatively part of capital insofar as they are part of value, and historically today every value is capital. But the first, or constant capital, considered earlier, is past labour, which goes through the cycle coming out the same, i.e. without giving birth to any value other than that which it already contains; the second and third are living, present, labour, from which comes out the value added during the cycle, a term the bourgeois did not want to know about, but which they use today in their statistics, as we shall see, calling it 'national income'. The second term to be added Marx called variable capital, and it corresponds to the wage bill relative to the cycle under consideration. Nominally, therefore, the first two quantities would be capital. This is because it is implied that they form the capital 'anticipated' in production, i.e. spent in commodity purchases and wage payments. But the whole sum is earned capital, earned value, and is greater than the first two terms, of anticipated expenditure. Obviously added to this, which the bourgeois call 'cost of production', is the gain, the profit, and thus what we call surplus value. So adding up: constant capital, plus wage capital, plus surplus value, we get the value of the product.

This has nothing to do with the 'value of the firm', hence the basic distinction: for us, capital is the receipt of goods, the product, whereas for the bourgeois economist, capital is the assets of the firm and its owner (whether or not a natural person), including receivables, cash on hand, and the market value of real estate such as land and buildings. But the distinction lies in this: for the

bourgeois, there are two factors (leaving aside for the moment the income from land and the like): capital and labour.

Wage or variable capital would be the value generated by labour and paid to those who lent it, the margin or profit would be generated by constant capital (advanced for all the time from the purchase of raw materials to the sale of the processed product) and wage capital (advanced for all the time from the payment to workers to the sale of the final product).

For the bourgeois, capital however invested, in materials and commodities, or in labour-power, generates value. Labour generates wages and is compensated by them. For the Marxist, constant capital generates nothing because it traverses the cycle with unchanged value; labour, on the other hand, generates all added value, i.e. variable capital plus surplus value; while the worker receives only the first part, the wage, in return. If the capitalist-entrepreneur has no money, he will borrow money for commodities-materials and wages-and return it after sales. The interest paid he will deduct from his surplus-value: thus the same is not the child of capital but of labour itself. These things are well known, but needed to be rearranged in the counter-argument scheme.

28. Margins and essays

The four quantities: constant capital, variable capital, surplus value, and product value are linked by a simple addition like those of the delicatessen account, and our very simple 'production function' is, they say in mathematics, a linear function. According to our enemies, it is a vain exercise to write production functions using the value quantity, because in economic science there are only circulation functions expressed with the price quantity that varies with the famous mercantile conditions: supply, demand, utility, ofelimity, marginal advantage, and... itch to spend carefully bred. We will then see that they also set up a production function. But is not all applied economics, or estimation, based on a production function which is that of simple interest (fruit proportional to capital and time: rational function, i.e. admitting of division) and compound interest (cumulation of fruit with capital: exponential function)? With this formula - put to the practical test, as we want to put ours - during mankind's sleep for two thousand years, the famous penny became a ball of gold as big as the earth.

We therefore do nothing but add, and ours does not include the fruit of capital at the rate of interest, which appeared, with usury, before modern capitalist production. What then is the margin, the profit, to be related to? One must adapt oneself to make some division. It is clear that vulgarly this margin (quantitatively it is the same for them and for us: it is the difference between the sales proceeds and the production expenses all; the name varies, for us it is surplus value) is put in relation to the expense of plant, to the company's assets. A guy opens a workshop, spends a million on machinery and needs half a million in cash for his business: at the end of the year he has the workshop, the machine, the half million in the till and he has earned three hundred thousand liras more: he says he has invested one and a half million, earning twenty per cent a year. But classical economics had taken a step forward and had called the profit rate the ratio of the profit not to the value of the plant, but to the cost of

production of the entire block of goods that that profit allowed for in the final alienation: thus the ratio of profit to constant and variable capital expenditure. If that workshop in the year bought raw iron for two hundred thousand, paid mechanics for three hundred thousand, and sold it for eight hundred thousand, it has earned three hundred thousand on the advance of five hundred thousand, and the rate of profit is sixty per cent. The essay of surplus-value, on the other hand, as is well known, is found by relating profit-plus-value, which was three hundred thousand, to only variable capital or wage expenditure, which was three hundred thousand: in the said case it is one hundred per cent.

Thus constant capital passes through the cycle without yielding anything. Labour passes through it by adding to the product a value (six hundred thousand) which is double the wages paid to the workers.

29. Company and society

This is not complete, as it has only served to well define the four quantities that represent the value of the product and its relative quantities: the rate of surplus value and profit. But these easy relations can be applied to a single firm, and to this the bourgeois economist usually limits himself, or they can be applied to the whole field of social production. If we do not move on to this second aspect, it is not possible to give a complete account of the Marxist function of production. It should be noted that we are here only once again setting out the Marxist scope of the quantities and relations introduced, and we do not claim that proof and confirmation come from the fact that the logical discourse runs, or that in certain derivations a feeling of innate justice begins to vibrate, or that the operations square with the rules of algebra and arithmetic. The coherence of the system with itself and the rigorous connection of the parts (even denied by the usual lightweight butterflies) are not sufficient for demonstration, which can only be given in the historical field and by the appearance of phenomena that our model-scheme can contain, and theirs cannot. Marx states that in a complete capitalist production (given only in its pure model-state) the profit rate of the various branches of production tends to level off: this tendency is all the more manifest, the closer a society approaches the model and contains little of spurious classes beyond the three of the general type: workers, capitalists, landowners.

30. Law of descent

This general rate of profit corresponds to a general rate of surplus value. The two ratios are linked to a third ratio, namely the organic composition of capital, which is the ratio of constant capital to variable capital. If with 20 wages one has processed raw material for 80, the technological or organic composition ratio is 4 (its inverse 25%). If the value of the product is 120, the profit is 20, and so is the surplus value. But while the essay of profit is 20% (gain 20 on advance 100) that of surplus-value is 100% (20 of gain on 20 of wages). In the various sectors the organic composition cannot be the same, and as we have seen it grows strongly in industry, slowly in agriculture. In spite of this, Marx introduces the average rate of profit. For now we affirm, and do not discuss yet, the law of descent.

They call it - a la Stalin - a tautology. Marx says that if at the same rate of surplus value the organic composition rises (as is historically accepted by all) the

rate of profit must fall. But who is to say that the surplus-value wage remains stationary? Vain objection. If the rate of surplus value were to fall, then nothing: the rate of profit would fall for two reasons (I earn 10 and not 20 out of 20 wages: rate of surplus value 50%; materials worked not 80 but 100, organic composition goes up. Total expenditure 100 plus 20, income 130, profit rate dropped to 10 out of 120, from 20% before to only about 8%). And if the rate of surplus value goes up? Kill them! That would mean they lowered wages and increased the working day: and that is against the general sense of the historical movement of capitalism. That this should jump if it starves everyone and increases exploitative pressure, goes without saying. The economic law is that, even if it improves, it will still jump. That is the point, for the many who are sick of demagoguery.

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31. The average rate of profit

The fundamental argument of the tendency of the rate of profit to descend in the historical life of the capitalist mode of production, as it has already been dealt with in our work, so it must be dealt with again and more thoroughly, and it is one of those where it is most necessary to faithfully re-present Marx's material and to systematise its mathematical apparatus. It is also one of the points of misunderstanding, since it trivially sees a contradiction between the law of descent and the boundless hunger for surplus value and profit inherent in capital in modern forms, which Marx formidably denounced and which has had the most impressive confirmation in recent history. In the Dialogue with Stalin it was recalled how, with the unceasing increase in the mass of capital and the mass of annual commodity production, which for us measures it, the mass of profit also increases powerfully, although the relative ratio of the mass of profit to the mass of product tends to fall historically.

In the discussion of the agrarian question we then consider the fundamental, original, monolithic theory of surpluses, which includes within itself the theory of rents of all kinds (hence not only land). Evidently from the earliest theorems of Marxism, it is clear that the amount of surplus profits is progressive, at the same time as the average social profit rate falls. Marx himself among many other phenomena explains the influence of that of the concentration of capital: even among the most superficial critics no one ignores that the law of concentration is given in the earliest texts even prior to Capital. Now the average wage is derived from the sum of all profits in relation to all capital, of small, medium and large firms, and the mere size of the firm is a motive for greater profit: thus small firms work at underprofit, at less than the average wage, large firms at overprofit, given the whole picture of industrial society in the same epoch. As capital concentrates in fewer firms, the growing mass of profit divides into fewer and fewer profiteering firms: but the total capital of these few but vast firms in its mass grows still more, and the mass of products with it. Hence: increase in production, decrease in the number of firms, increase in the average capital of each firm, increase in the total mass of profits, but the latter less fast than the increase in production - and in social consumption for all fields - and thus the average rate falls.

32. Production price

Apart, therefore, from a discussion of a statistical-historical nature to confirm that Marx's law has been fully verified, it must be understood that our entire representative model of typical integral capitalism needs the criterion of the determination, at a given historical-economic moment, of the average profit, the average profit rate, of all 'capitalist enterprises', i.e. of all industrial enterprises, including those that with the employment of capital and labour exclusively of wage earners act in agriculture (mining, hydraulic, construction, etc. included). For without this term, of average profit, our entire doctrine of value would become impractical. For us, the value of the commodity produced in a given branch of industry cannot be deduced from a search for averages on the shares of bargaining at the markets: it must be known first. In this Marx's step goes well beyond Ricardo: he identified value deduced from the labour-value theory with sales value, and stated, in an initial form that was only approximate, and above all inspired by a model of an all-industrial society without rents (i.e. without overprofit: a society that remains the ideal of every liberal economy, but which is impossible, and historically increasingly distant): each commodity is exchanged for another or for money in proportion to the average social labour that is needed to produce it.

Marx's formula is instead that every commodity has a price of production, which constitutes its value in our sense. While continuing to call this exchange value, retaining the classical distinction from use value (inherent in the specific physical qualities of the commodity and the particular human need it is suited to satisfy), the concept is that the value of every commodity is calculated according to the economic elements given in its production. So we could well introduce the expression: production value, and say that we are for an economic theory of production value, our opponents for a theory of exchange price.

We are at the given 'linear function' of capitalist production (of it and of it alone!): production value is defined as the sum of three terms: first: constant capital - second: wage capital - third: surplus value or profit. To find out the third term or profit, I do not go and ask how the commodity was sold or even how much on average it is sold for in given space and time; instead I look for the average rate of profit for my 'model of society' under consideration: I combine (add) the first two terms of constant and variable capital, multiply the whole by the average rate, and this is the third term. The set of the first two the common economy calls cost, cost price. Now for us the value is the cost price with an added so much per cent which is always that, because it is the average rate of profit taken from the whole of the companies in the studied society. We have not yet gone to the market at all and leafed through mercurials and price lists, and we have found the magnitude that matters to us: value of the commodity, given by its social production price. Constant capital plus variable capital plus profit at the average social rate equals the value of the product.

33. Price of exchange

If we now leave our hot forge, where everyone frets, the proletarian because such is his condemnation, the capitalist because as capital personified, even if he is a robot, he has, Marxistically speaking, 'the devil in his body', and go to the market where the exchangers sneer 'in search of who to fool' and where 'differences are made' without the disbursement of mechanical or physical

energy, more or less as they are made at the bourgeois gaming table, we will not at all bother to theorise about such diverse ups and downs. Cheating does take place, it is certain, and from the very first pages Marx says how fraud is the very climate of bourgeois society, but this law can be enunciated: the average social rate of mercantile cheating is zero; that is to say, all those ups and downs, those good and bad deals in the general cycle come to offset each other. The school of the mercantilists, whose principle was that wealth was formed through exchange, had long since been proven vain; however, this school, peculiar to the epoch of the first European overseas trading expeditions, referred above all to international exchange, and we, with Marx, do not dispute that surplus value - hence value - can arise in exchange between a capitalist economic society and non-capitalist societies and even, in the white world, between the capitalist sphere and that of backward types of production (see parochial agriculture). It is once the pure capitalist society is established in the model that we assert that all profit and value it socially generates originates in the process of production, never in the acts and rounds of exchange. To mutate the theory of value into a theory of price, or to attempt a hybridisation of the two (Labriola Arturo), or to mutate the theory of surplus value into a theory of surplus price (Graziadei) is only permissible for those who make mincemeat of Marx and pass arms and baggage to the enemy camp.

We do not argue that even our terms: constant and variable capital, and consequently the share of profit we add, are given with deductions taken from exchanges of commodities (raw materials, labour power) whose shares in turn undergo those occasional fluctuations. Even before we go so far as to draw up, with language to the mathematical case, an 'economic abacus of Karl Marx', the goal perhaps of this group work, we assert the right to discover the value that 'lies before the price' with a price elaboration. The physical mass was found and measured only by starting from weights, and even from roughly known weights, but this did not in any way detract from the fact that the mechanics of masses were constructed with all rigour by determining their measurements independent of the infinite weights a mass can assume, just as the same 'value' can assume infinite prices.

34. Sales quotes

Marx's expression that a given commodity sells above or below its production price, and thus precisely above or below its value, is now natural and familiar. There can be many causes of discrepancies, in both senses, between value and market price. All those due to the pure mercantile mechanism, and to the laws of competition, of supply and demand, to the effect of the modern skilful propaganda, advertising, and publicity of the French, to the refined art of marketing of the Americans, to the whiteness of the teeth of the shop assistants who smile at the customer, or to the facetiousness of the pavement barkers, are resolved in a secondary oscillation around social value.

But the theory of the agrarian question and the land rent has established that there are systematic deviations of price from value; and it has erected the formidable condemnation of capitalist society whereby all agrarian products are sold and paid for by those who consume them above their value, provided they are the products of an agriculture proper to the pure model of capitalist society. In that case only the product of the most sterile field is sold at its value, and that

price makes the market law. If, then, as we have amply seen, one moves from that to more fertile fields, it will be the case that for the same product there will be fewer advances of capital, fewer advances of wages, and therefore less profit for the agrarian entrepreneur at the standard rate. But the law of mercantile distribution is that 'all bargaining prices level off quickly' and therefore that product will not have a lower selling price. Rather, it will have a lower production price than the bad land: there will be a higher profit. Having already calculated our third term, the normal profit, which went to the agrarian industrialist, this added margin is overprofit: it goes as an annuity to the owner of the land; if you like to the state. So when capital enters agriculture and dominates it, the selling prices of the commodities are above the social value. Conversely, since the small farmer provides for his meagre produce at enormous expense and labour, and is forced to sell it at the current market price, the products of minimal agriculture are sold below value: the small farmers form a layer of slaves to capitalist society as a whole.

35. Surplus profit and income

Although all of this matter repeats the expositions of the Threads of Time on the agrarian question, and the thesis-contrast that summarised them, it is well to point out that the surplus-profit in agriculture is not the only type of surplus-profit that appears in the typical capitalist society, and is transformed into an annuity enjoyed by the class of landowners, one of the three basic classes in our model. Similar surpluses and rents are enjoyed by those who have, with the same title to agrarian land, natural waterfalls, mines, deposits of all kinds, and building land as well as various buildings and artefacts needed by industrial entrepreneurs. In all these cases, the organisation of bourgeois society, founded on the security of private property, forms and guarantees a series of monopolies, which are inherent to its nature. It is therefore not free competition that is the basic character of the bourgeois economy, but the system of monopolies, which makes it possible to sell a whole range of products, including the preeminent products of agrarian land and extractive industry, at prices that are higher than the value, i.e. the sum of social effort they cost, after also paying the normal profit of 'free' industry. The quantitative theory of the agrarian question and rent is thus the complete and exhaustive theory of every monopoly and every monopoly superprofit, for every phenomenon that sets current prices above social value. And this happens when the state monopolises cigarettes, as when a powerful trust or syndicate monopolises, say, the oil wells of an entire region of the globe, as when an international capitalist pool of coal or steel or, as it will be tomorrow, uranium is formed.

So the general sense of capitalism is this: historically it begins by lowering what might be called the social labour index for a given amount of manufactured product, which would lead society to consume the same products, and even increased products, with less labour, and thus decreasing the working hours of the solar day. From the beginning, however, and despite the decrease in the average profit rate, the agricultural surplus is established and the average effort for foodstuffs increases. Then, as a necessary consequence of the inseparable mechanism of the market and the current price, a whole series of other surpluses arise, and despite the technical progress and productivity of labour, the possibility of greatly reducing the average individual working hours in the day is paralysed, even while raising the general standard of consumption. This

human slavery for a third of one's own time and for at least half of that of organic activity (sleep deducted) is not surmountable as long as one hits the limit of the current price, and of the mercantile system, which are the cause of the ever-increasing mismatch between the social value of objects of use and the price at which those who consume them obtain them.

36. Simple framework of reproduction

Given that everything insists on the calculation of a social value to be premised on prices, in which we have already counted the three terms: labour 'of the dead', used and replaced without anyone having taken or remitted - labour 'of the living', in exchange for which wages have been paid - class premium due to the entrepreneur because of a fixed bribe on the first two lots; and given that we need to know the social quantum of this bribe, it is not possible to put the questions forward without a vision that is no longer corporate but social. Marx therefore, who in the first volume of Capital gave the general function of capitalist production, within the limits of the analysis of the value of a given commodity, and in its application to the total production cycle of a given capitalist company (with formidable integration of historical data on the development of society to arrive at capitalism, and on the revolutionary programme of the way out of it, although not only the usual intellectuals but even Joseph Stalin said that Marx disliked this non-descriptive part!), moves, in the further course of the work, to deal with the circulation of capital in society as a whole. The criticism of the mercantile system is contained on every page, and right from the first volume in the famous paragraph on the fetish character of the commodity. On the contrary, it is a question of presenting the cycle of capital in production, passing from the sphere of the capitalist company to the social sphere, in order to prove that, as in the former, in the latter there is only one source of the increase in capital, and it consists in a transfer of wealth from class to class.

Marx then forms the prospects of this circulation of all capital in his and our model of society. True, he begins by considering a society without incomers, a binary society, with capitalists and wage earners, and first examines the case in which capital (as Quesnay did for national wealth) remains unchanged from cycle to cycle: simple reproduction.

37. The two sectors of Marx

Let us divide society into two sections: one dedicated to the production of goods that go directly to the consumption of its members, and that is the Second. The other, which we shall call the First, produces objects that in turn serve as instruments for further production.

The figures in this first picture are famous:

We did not want to say what the figures mean after so many repetitions: first figure: constant capital - second: wages - third: profit - fourth: product.

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| First section | $4.000 + 1.000 + 1.000$ | $= 6.000$ |
| Second section | $2.000 + 500 + 500$ | $= 3.000$ |
| The whole company | $6.000 + 1.500 + 1.500$ | $= 9.000$ |

Assume the cycle is one year and it is over: the company has produced 9,000 and such is its capital. It stops, draws breath, takes inventory: 3,000 are consumption, to be 'eaten', 6,000 are tools and work materials.

In the following cycle, it is clear that this 6,000 will be employed again, 4,000 as constant capital in the first section, 2,000 in the second.

The 3,000 of consumption goes:

- a) 1,000 to the workers in the first section, 500 to those in the second: thus 1,500;
- b) 1,000 to the capitalists of the first section, 500 to those of the second: still 1,500.

Total 3,000. That's all.

The considerations to be made even on this simplified scheme are numerous, and the discussions that have arisen also. We will only note this. In such a society, in both sections the rate of surplus value is 100 per cent (in the first 1,000 on 1,000; in the second 500 on 500). What this means for us is that the workers have added 2,000 and 1,000 of value to the inert constant capital, but have only had and consumed half of it: the other half has been had and consumed by the capitalists. The rate of profit is 20 per cent (in the first section 1,000 out of 5,000, in the second 500 out of 2,500). The degree of organic composition of capital is 4, i.e. 4,000 versus 1,000 and 2,000 versus 500 (constant versus variable capital).

38. Ternary framework

Let us do what Marx did not: let us bring into his mirror the third class, the landowners. Let us imagine, again for the sake of simplicity and clarity, that all the goods consumed are foodstuffs or at least products of agriculture, and let us call the first section industrial, the second agrarian. In this we would give the wage earners 500, the capitalist entrepreneurs 500. Let us add 1,000 of annuity going to the landowners.

The picture becomes:

| | | |
|------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| Section I | $4.000 + 1.000 + 1.000$ | $= 6.000$ |
| Section II | $2.000 + 500 + 500 + 1.000$ | $= 4.000$ |
| Complex | $6.000 + 1.500 + 1.500 + 1.000$ | $= 10.000$ |

The whole product rose to 10,000, but this was only because the same quantity of consumer goods was paid 4,000 instead of 3,000, and by the workers, and the capitalists, and the landowners. Notwithstanding the profit rate, in the second section there was an overprofit of 1,000, added to the normal profit of 500, thus a total margin of 1,500 on 2,500 anticipated: 60 per cent. The agrarian capitalists had 20% like the industrial capitalists, the landowners an annuity equal to 40% of the pure cost of production of the agrarian goods, equal to a quarter (25%) of the value of the products of the land. These sell, in such a society, a quarter above their value, their actual 'production price'.

What movement takes place in this society between classes? As a movement in the market, everything is in equilibrium: that is why academics and bourgeoisie want to do the maths on prices. Indeed:

Proprietors: with 1,000 of rent they buy 1,000 of products for consumption.

Capitalists: with 1,500 of profit they buy 1,500 of products to consume. But from the sale of products for 10,000 in all 8,500 come out of their hands: 1,000 they have passed on to landowners, 1,500 they have paid in wages to workers, with 4,000 they remake the constant capital of section I, with 2,000 that of section II: the account is all even. The law of market value, or Stalin's great shadow, is safe.

39. The class account

Let us now define the movement - which as passages from buyers to sellers is all in balance, in wonderful moral equilibrium - as a passage of value from class to class. The constant capital manipulated by the workers was a total of 6,000. After manipulation the product was 10,000. So: value added by labour 4,000. Of this 4,000 the workers had only 1,500 as wages. So they paid out 2,500. These 2,500 remained in the hands of the capitalists, as it is they who are the masters and sellers of all

| | | Active class | | Passive classes | | |
|------------------------|----|----------------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| | | Workers I | Workers II | Capitals- these | II Capitals - these | Fondiani |
| Workers | I | ↓ ---→ ↓ | ↓ ---→ ↓ | ↓ + 1000 ↓ | ↓ ↓ ↓ | |
| Workers | II | ↓ ---→ ↓ | ↓ ---→ ↓ | ↓ ↓ ↓ | ↓ + 500 ↓ | |
| Capitals | I | ↓ ---→ ↓ | ↓ ---→ ↓ | ↓ + 4000 ↓ | ↓ + 2000 ↓ | |
| Capitals | II | ↓ + 1000 → | ↓ + 500 → | ↓ + 1000 → | ↓ + 500 → | ↓ + 1000 |
| Fondiani | | | | | ↓ 1000 | |
| Totals (cash proceeds) | | 1000 | 500 | 6000 | 4000 | 1000 |

- Vertical arrow: movement of Money
- Horizontal arrow: movement of Goods

the products of both sections. However, the capitalists had to pass on 1,000 of them as income to the landowners. Their return of wealth was therefore 2,500 - 1,000 = 1,500. Balance: from the working class to the capitalist class 2,500. From the capitalist class to the landowning class 1,000. To the capitalist class for its consumption, net of reinvestment in subsequent production of all the necessary constant and variable capital: 1,500. To the working class for its consumption the total variable capital: 1,500. At a meeting in Naples on 1 May, an explanatory prospectus was made of this in the form of "Marx's Chart" in order to show the mercantile draw and class-versus-class appropriation, which could not yet be reproduced but may usefully be in due course. This framework can be reduced here to a rudimentary scheme (avoiding showing, as in the original, in separate columns the 'tool-farms' and the 'subsistence-farms', which are pure points of passage of values as they are identified with the capitalist class) of movement between three classes.

40. Enlarged reproduction

This is not the time to carry out the further examination of extended reproduction with the more complicated schemes that have been discussed at length concerning the progressive accumulation of capital, in the famous polemics of Hilferding, Luxemburg, Bukharin, Lenin and others. In the scheme so far given of simple reproduction, the capital invested in successive cycles remains constant, being always 4,000 + 1,000 + 2,000 + 500 or 7,500 in the

two sections, and adding the profit and income of $1,000 + 500 + 1,000$ or $2,500$ in all, which is all consumed by capitalists and landowners.

But both can (the famous 'abstinence') not consume it all, but save (according to bourgeois theory even workers can save, on their wage of $1,000 + 500$) a part, to invest in new production. Say half, and then capitalists and earners consume only $1,250$ and capital increases by $1,250$.

The analysis becomes more complicated when we go to form the picture of the next cycle, distributing the differential investment between the two sections. In fact, the $1,250$ saved is practically, physically, subsistence not consumed, and therefore to reinvest requires not only less subsistence produced but more capital goods (constant capital) for the cycle to come. So even the subdivision of numbers in the mirror of the first cycle must be recalculated: very easy to say by the usual commentators that Marx would be lost in such a quagmire.

These are accounts that will be made elsewhere: here we need only re-establish and reiterate the fundamental concepts. The capital of the society in question, which in simple reproduction remains of the same magnitude, is measured by the product of one cycle - of one year - by the 'cost of production' of the product of the cycle, and if we consider the income of the three classes as consumed, we can say in general terms that the total value of the plants, manufactured goods, machines, and the quantum of agricultural land under cultivation also remains constant: but these quantities do not appear among our numbers.

To pose the problem of progressive reproduction we must first ask ourselves - this was the point that worried Luxemburg - whether the fictitious society we take as a model is closed, or open. In the first calculation both the accounts in money and the accounts in quantities of commodities must break even in the market. In the case of an open society we can imagine that with a margin of money remaining that is not invested internally, or possibly not used to buy subsistence, it is possible to 'buy' instruments and subsistence in foreign fields. According to the doctrine of the great Marxist Rosa Luxemburg only under such a condition of the existence of markets peripheral to the capitalist circle can Marx's schemes of extended reproduction be made conclusive; Bukharin denied the necessity of such a condition for further accumulation.

41. Model and reality

This question is certainly not simple and cannot be dealt with without establishing the limits of the problem under discussion. Here we are dealing with the typical capitalist society, which however cannot be reduced, as Bukharin would like, to a social world of only industrial capitalists and wage-earning workers, for it must include the profiteers, be they the monopoly owners of land and other natural resources and forces, be they groups of super-capitalists controlling key sectors, be they the super-capitalist state itself. This model is certainly introduced for the purpose of building science, the only true science of capitalism and its economy, but also for polemical, combat and party purposes.

It is in fact the apologetic school of the capitalist system, and it is the party of bourgeois conservation, which assume that by organising the whole of the present real world on the fundamental type of wage production, the imbalances would disappear and the 'inequalities' of the problem would be resolved. And so they claim to account for all the phenomena of the model and also of the real society of today by presenting its magnitudes and laws differently: starting from price and not value, from the market and not production, considering the addition of value in each cycle not as given by labour but by three sources: labour, capital and land. In conclusion, they deny the need to discover a function of production and study market and exchange functions, but in reality arrive at a distorted function of production, in which the bourgeois privileges of enterprise and monopoly are justified by a sold science.

We - without ever neglecting that vast field of interpretation in which we follow, throughout the inhabited world, the play of the succession of great modes of production and revolutionary struggles of every degree - show that the laws of the abstract model developed in such a way as not to conceal but to highlight the passage of value from class to class - the extortion of class against class, the domination of class force over class - present tendencies and movements, recognisable in highly capitalist real societies, at the end of which there is not compensation but irreconcilability and rupture.

Since it is a question of contrasting our classical approach with that of the self-styled official economic science and its various ancient and recent attempts to turn its gaze away from the coming revolution, it was necessary to recall its outlines, characterise the model on which one works, the nature of the quantities employed, the expression of the relations deduced from them.

In historical stages, all this is compared with what is happening, but after depriving ourselves of the convenient loophole that, after having 'recorded' unforeseen developments, we are ready to dismodel the model, barter the quantities, and tinker with the formulae, as we have seen done for a century by exponents of groups who - also a highly experimental and materialistic verification - quickly move on to the apologia of the same dictates, which the official wise men of the bourgeois world adore against us.

42. The monstrous FIAT

We choose to close this first part and to balance, also in the fatigue of those who follow, the use of theoretical models and schemes with a concrete case, one that is of interest for reasons of locality and topicality. We are in Piedmont and here we live in the light or, if you like, in the shadow of FIAT, the largest industrial complex in Italy and one of the most quoted in Europe and the world: while only a few weeks have passed since the shareholders' meeting and Prof. Valletta's report on the 1953 balance sheet.

FIAT in Turin with its vicissitudes is linked to the history of proletarian struggles in Italy, and to the transition from the traditional and courtier Piedmont to the most modern forms of capitalist organisation. It can be said more: that it is closely linked to the history of the communist party, and to the birth of that tendency that allowed itself to be influenced by the lines of the structure and hierarchy of a large industrial production complex, to the point of making it,

without being too aware of it, the model of the organisation of the proletariat in class and of the proletarian state itself, of the future society. Perhaps the origin of the deviation that then reached its extreme limits lies precisely in the fact that urban Turin, with FIAT, and without Palazzo Carignano by now, can present itself as a true model type of capitalist society, and lend itself to rapidly developing the data of the proletarian class struggle and to thinking itself on the eve of the 'workers' state', even for groups that in their immature political-ideological evolution are not yet out of a 'constitutional' and in a certain sense 'utopian' understanding of the proletarian state, which is not - he - our model, it is not a system, it is not a new city to be founded, but a simple historical expedient more or less filthy that we must take out of the hands of the bourgeoisie, as one tries to take the knife out of the hands of the delinquent without having founded a party of knifemen for it.

The fact is that these groups, as soon as they got their noses out of the tidy and shiny sheds of the Turin car factory, and made contact with the less industrially concentrated part of Italy, the agrarian and backward plains, the peasant and regional problem, they suddenly fell into a defence of the same positions as the more discoloured petty-bourgeois parties of half a century earlier, and were no longer concerned with revolutionising Turin, but with bourgeoisising Italy, so that it would all be worthy of bearing the mark of the Turin factory, and be administered and governed in its impeccable style.

43. Budget figures

It is useful for us to compare the FIAT figures with the presentation model of model capitalism precisely because it serves to identify what we want to destroy and replace it with an economic organisation that is at the antipodes of it.

If we ask on the stock exchange what the capital of FIAT is, we will be answered with the figure of the total number of shares held by the shareholders. The history of this figure is touching: it rises with the fortunes, no less than with the shenanigans of Italy for two reasons: because the factory physically grows and its production is exalted, and because the lire in which the shares are expressed and their total amount depreciate in great stages.

The Fabbrica Italiana di Automobili Torino was founded in 1899 with capital of 800,000 (say eight hundred thousand) lire in shares of 25 lire, and thus 32,000 shares. Since then, it has climbed a significant ladder. In those years of tremendous economic euphoria, which prepared for Giolittism - another Piedmontese product no less, by the current leaders of the so-called communist party, elevated to a social model, yesterday against Mussolini, today against Scelba, and against every future derriere in a cadre - shares with a nominal value of 25 lire were quoted on the stock exchanges at over 1,700! It was the time when government bonds were trading above par and the exchange rate was above par with gold.

Soon the present-day anonyne was formed with a capital of 9 million in shares of 100 lire. The capital increases before the First European War were: 1909, 12 million; 1910, 14 million; 1912, 17 million. With the war, an excellent business for such industries, they continued: 1915, 25 and a half million, 150

lire shares; 1916, 30 million, and then 34 million, 200 lire shares; 1917, 50 million; 1918, 125 million. The war ended but the devaluation continued for the currency: 1919, 200 million; 1924, 400 million. In 1926, a debenture loan was resolved in 10 million gold dollars (worth 19 lire) fully repaid in 1938.

Let us start again from 1938. Capital, as we know, for the entire period between the two wars, 400 million. After another war and new inflation, in 1947 the capital was increased to 4 billion, partly with free shares for the old shareholders, partly with new shares.

With further 'revaluations' and absorption of other minor companies, we are in 1952 at 36 billion lire, in 1953 at 57 billion lire. The ratio as of 1938 is therefore 142.50, much higher than the currency devaluation. If this were between 50 and 60, one could say that the real value from 1938 to 1953 had increased to two and a half times: but this is as the nominal value of those pieces of paper that are shares: in any case an accumulation at a frightening rate.

44. What interests us

The remuneration of the shareholders does not concern us too much, it is but one of the areas of distribution of surplus value between the holders of shares, who are after all departing money lenders, directors, captains of industry, the state, and similar shrewd gobblers of all kinds. However, in 1952 out of 36 billion, a profit of 10% was distributed, in 1953 4.5 billion out of 57 and therefore less than 8%.

But in the last Valletta report, we find the figure of the magnitude we need, which we must then break down into the various terms of the production function. In 1953-54 (while the dividend per share was 63 lire out of 500 and thus 12.6%) production (turnover) was 240 billion.

A distribution profit of only Lire 7.3 billion and a declared profit of only Lire 9.574 billion, if they are high compared to the conventional figure of capital in shares, are very low compared to the product. They would be 16.7 per cent in the first case, but only 4 per cent in the second: and that is the measure of the profit rate, roughly, in Marx's sense.

But let us try to break down the 240 billion in revenue to the market, with a jump of 40 billion from the previous year's 200 billion. First of all, we should note the sensational statement that new investments, thus drawn from profits and surpluses, amounted from 1946 to 1952 to around 100 billion, and that we are moving towards a programme of 200 billion, allocating more than 50 billion to it in 1954. This means that from the 240 billion one could, after all expenses had been paid, take away 10 billion in profits for the shareholders and at least 50 billion to reinvest (extended reproduction), and thus 60 billion. The expenses would thus have been 180 billion. We have to divide this between constant capital and variable capital.

Without going in search of budgetary details, which in any case are of very questionable certainty, we have noted that the personnel consisted of 57,278 workers and 13,832 clerks (far too many, FIAT is largely a protection

bandwagon for business and electoral clientele, and a good part of these, each of whom controls an average of 4 real workers, are pimps in turn of others' surplus labour, especially in high rank). We consider the average pay of these 71,000 employees to be about one million per year (we are in Turin!) and then the variable capital is 70 million. Our breakdown is done, albeit very wholesale.

Constant capital 110 billion, variable capital 70 billion, profit 10 billion, surplus 50 billion. Product 240 billion: $110 + 70 + 10 + 50 = 240$. With these figures, the essay of actual profit is 10 divided by 180 or 5.5%; but the essay of surplus-value is 60 divided by 70 or 86%.

The order of our magnitudes appears to be well respected.

45. Heritage and capital

How much is FIAT worth? Let us suppose that you want to buy on the stock exchange all the shares that are nominally worth 500 lire and are 114 million: thus the well-known 57 billion nominal last. Since the shares have reached a price of 660, you have to spend more: 75 billion.

Quite a comfortable investment: 60 billion in profit and extra-profits (a real annuity that FIAT has, because it is FIAT, and plays into the hands of the Christian Democrat state and the Communist opposition) gives 80%.

But Valletta will never be so dumb: his balance sheet assets alone mention property and plant worth an estimated 225 billion, over 68 billion in receivables, or around 300 billion against the usual conventional liabilities. Let us stop at the 225 billion and think of the entire city-workshops of FIAT Motori, Lingotto and other departments, on the roofs of which run motor racing tracks. The value will be at least quadrupled and not less than a thousand billion at a guess. Valletta will ask for as much, and it will be invested, in the sense of the land buyers, at 6%, or rather 5% if... everything is leased to Anonima FIAT, just to get it all out of the way.

Does this correspond to the average rate of profit in Italy? Let's start by saying that the ten billion we have considered normal profit in the Marxist sense is profit at the average rate of 180 of capital (constant and variable) at the rate of 5.5%. In that case we would say that the production price of the FIAT cars produced (160,000 according to Valletta) was 190 billion (average 1,200,000 each). But the selling price was 240 and therefore higher than the value (what average Italian doesn't get suckered in by a Fiat?) and to the tune of one and a half million (think small cars and big cars).

Our calculation of value comes from: constant capital 110, labour 70, profit at the average rate 10: total 190.

46. National profit

A simple reference to the average profit rate of non-privileged enterprises throughout Italy. We would need to know: how much is the entire annual industrial product - how much the expenditure for raw materials and consumables - how much the expenditure for personnel.

Let us start from the fact that the Italian national income in the official way is now 10,000 billion lire, to be divided into income from capital, property and labour. The division is not easy. There are about 7 million people employed in industry and their compensation, at a somewhat lower rate than that of FIAT, is 5,000 billion. Let the constant capital be in a higher ratio of composition, at least 3 and therefore 18,000 billion. This approximately 25,000 billion at our installment of 5.50 would give the profit mass of 1,500 billion. Of the national income, another 2,500 billion would remain to be attributed to income from non-industrial agriculture, public services, and others. A division made by a very coarse survey, but one that is certainly not unfavourable to the weight of the industrial economy in the country, and which we have exaggerated in this sense precisely in order to prove that the average profit rate is not high: and this should be the subject of further research on statistics, always to be read cum grano salis.

It is enough for us to conclude that with the magnitudes of the Marxist model and the relations of the function of production we can see with sufficient fidelity how things go in class relations, in a colossal industrial company that we have no nostalgia to inherit, and in an industrial country, as we know, less than half statistically, but whose velleities of bourgeois modernity are sufficient to wish for the drastic cure of the dictatorship of the proletariat, when it will be possible to sing funerals to the great electoral parties.

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Second Part: Greatness and Laws in the Theory of Capitalist Production

1. Enigmas of Marxism?

An old song is that of Marx's obscurity, of the difficulty of grasping the true sense of his theses, of the alleged contradiction between the various parts of his work and the different expositions of the same question; And many of the critics - we return to the aforementioned monograph by Arturo Labriola not because of the special importance of the work, but because its positions, which are particularly different from the scope of Marxism in our presentation, are particularly useful for the clarification of essential things - linger to insinuate that almost by default the most notable statements are given in digressions, or sometimes thrown in one of the famous, and indeed almost always formidable, footnotes. This would be an almost sadistic tormenting of the reader, asking too much of his 'generosity', that is, not so much of his culture, preparation and patience, but of his capacity for continuous and tenacious effort.

It is well known that we, without likening 'Capital' to a comic novel, maintain instead that, in addition to the absolute coherence of propositions between all parts of the work, even in the mathematical sense, and the absolute absence of hesitations, oscillations, swayings or amphibologies, there is absolute evidence, beyond any doubt, of the content of what was enunciated, by the mighty writer-labourer Karl Marx, in the historical phase in which only he could and should have enunciated so much, so that the same evident certainty concerns what the hand and pen of the person Karl Marx had no way of stopping, all constituting the heritage of doctrine of the great, unitary, over

continents and generations, party of the revolutionary proletarian class. As for Labriola, it cannot be contested that he is a generous reader, for he has certainly studied the text at length and compared and contrasted passages with passages from Marx's works, and the same with ample literature from all sources; yet he has never gone to the bottom, even when he richly cites the very passages that should have resolved the point under investigation in a decisive and luminous manner. So generous, Labriola and some of his peers (most do not understand Marx because they do not understand... a damn thing), at the work table and in the political agon, where he has not been able to deny himself any flag or any colour, wherever he has found little tunes to sing, emblems to place in his buttonhole, flowers to casually pluck in the meadow, on the path therefore opposite to the one we follow.

2. The pestilential "cousins"

We have said many times, and we must recall it here too, that the totalitarian enemies of Marxism do not do so much harm as those who claim to consider it well and then - in a hundred ways - accept certain parts of it while rejecting others or twisting them in their own way. It is, after all, the former and not the latter who have understood something about it: they have at least understood this, that to set one part against the other, one face against the other, of the Marxist corpus, is the same as ascertaining the collapse of the whole, as demonstrating the failure of the entire construction. To claim to start out with Marx, and then leave him by the wayside where one would realise that one can set the course better than he can; or not wanting to set out on his track, vainly claiming to find oneself at his point of arrival, theoretical and practical, historical or political, is far worse than rejecting the whole of the grandiose path, declaring it to have fallen, from the premises on which it was founded to the conclusions it drew.

While the group of total deniers, such as, for example, a father Lombardi, the more strength, preparation and shrewdness they deploy in wanting to smash our massive war machine to pieces, the more they are subject to our presentation of the historical struggle as a clash of incompatible blocs of forces, each made up of bodies, arms, weapons and theory, it is their boisterous and equivocal contradictors who dare to defend Marxism by dragging it into the folds of obnoxious concessions, which have ruined and are ruining the strength of theory and revolutionary motion.

This will only resume in the historical phase in which with a supreme effort he will summarise what has been done for decades and decades - first and giant on such a path himself, Marx - to debunk and shame the 'kindred', the famous 'cousins' of the political camp, to denounce not only the de facto alliances with them in the various historical periods of revolutionary strategy, but above all else the doctrinal fornication, the 'trade in principles' that was reproached - for the umpteenth time with prophetic propriety - at Erfurt and Gotha to the Germanic social democracy, the first sick person to die of majority elephantiasis, of unitary cretinism.

Nothing in fact is more insidious, more poisonous, in its effects even if perhaps not in its intentions, than a method such as that of the doctrinaire Labriola, Sorel, Graziadei, who first turned the pillars of the system, of the

Marxist edifice, upside down, vainly attempting to shake the columns of the temple, then, then, having cooked the theoretical soup in their own way, exalting certain ingenious positions that Marx arrived at, departing, they say, from gross oversights and scientific ducks, they slyly defend him from the underestimation of honest enemies, and want to make themselves glorious by trying, still falsely, to sing with his immense voice the final psalm. For in the way of them stood a hundred others, panderers by the dozen and men by the mint, who had no muscles for pillars even of papier-mâché, yet had jaws - albeit donkey jaws - to consume the offering bestowed on the corrupters and renegades.

3. Philosophy or science?

It is worthwhile, insofar as we must make use of the writing of a "promarxist" of the type of Labriola, also because it is not recent, but old by now of the usual half-century, it is also worth cutting off the breath of the very modern "adjusters" who with the same spirit, and believing they are doing it for the first time, have dared to propose dragging the vessel of Marxian construction in their dry docks, incapable of hosting a tugboat. If in fact they have no other way to recover from the claim of seeing what a Marx did not see, they will be deflated to nothing by the realisation that they have only discovered oldies already poured into the lead for fifty years, they, the fans of the last printed issue, of the last bookshop wrapper.

For it is difficult for one of them, when it comes to the verbigraphy of digesting - where one needs a stomach that is not generous, but physiological and not eroded by bourgeois ulcers - one of the laws of Marxism such as that on the profit rate, not to deviate from chewing the argument to the general philosophy of method, to the theory of human knowledge, to the scope of historical materialism, and do not impute Marx's 'discovered' flaws to his derivation from the idealist Hegel, to his unconscious mysticism or at least mythicism, denouncing (one never quite understands) or admiring his alleged voluntarism and practicalism, pragmatism even, as premises of scientific doctrine; it is well that all these troublemakers learn how these soliloquies have been ringing in the ears of Marxists not having the hair of doubt and the mania for personal creation in their brains for a long time.

It has been a question ever since of making these two theses walk together: Marx was a historical genius and a political leader of the first magnitude, and the movement that succeeds him cannot disregard his work; Marx, when he wanted to do economic science, lined up a series of assertions that were all wrong and all disproved by the study of actual contemporary and later economic facts. The way out of this frightening imbroglio is obvious, worse as it is said than the theses of those who claim that Marx was an aberrant theorist and an unwise and criminal social agitator.

Since it cannot be denied that Marx dealt with economic science, expounded the previous schools of political economy, and explicitly proposed a new scientific theory of economic facts that was to supplant the previous ones; and since it is desired that, while incensing the greatness of Marx's thought, the contemporary "generic" economic research, i.e. that which makes its way among university chairs, examination texts, and scientific treatises, may continue to be considered valid, we resort to the old trick: Marx spoke and wrote about

economics, but he did not do economic science, but rather.. what on earth? .. what ever? philosophy. One does not understand Marx as an economist, because one looks to him for economic science, in the light of which he aligned - according to their professors - serious nonsense, allowing himself to be outdone by many lengths by dozens of modern scientists, but one understands everything if one reads Marx as a philosopher, and admits that he, wishing to write as such, deliberately did not hesitate to expound economic facts and laws in a false way. So Karl Marx in his economics exam fails his eighteen and is sent back, but, considering him a great philosopher, the one in the chair steals so much of that glittering philosophy as to erect himself outside the faculty as a leader of the people and above all to reach the parliamentary and senatorial seats.

Nothing could be more stupidly empty than such excursions on the mockery.

4. Derivation from Hegel?

It can certainly not be denied that in order to deal with subjects such as the one before us, it is useful to have and use complete data not only from the history of economic doctrines but also from the history of philosophical thought, and to establish which was the material of knowledge that Marx brought with him from the scholastic training he received, and which was the other that he provided himself with under the impulse of the events of life in which he was engaged.

The error lies in seeking in such an investigation the decisive element to make this or that "version" or "reading" of Marx's work prevail, and to go back to those sources to ask them for the deciphering of the alleged enigmas, the solution of the alleged doubts, which would be found in the text of the elaboration that Marx, even with those materials, and many times even in spite of and against those materials, had to reach. The research must be done, where it is necessary to explain passages and chapters that seem and sometimes are arduous, in the history of the epoch in which Marx lived, in the peculiar social relations of that period of transition, not because it chronologically coincided with Marx's biographical curriculum, but because it was the one in which, around the powerful membranes of a new force in history, the working class, a new, original, dissimilar theoretical superstructure was being crystallised - by necessity and even if Marx had not been born, or was a figure of legend - around the powerful membranes of a new force in history, the working class.

Hegel and before him the entire modern school of criticism, and Kant, to whom even some would like to trace the 'critical' method used by Marx, can be explained precisely by the transition from feudal to capitalist society. The critique of the German idealists or the reason of the French materialists, like the sense of the English empiricists, all express a superstructure of the struggle against the powers of divine right, and establish the freedom to subject revealed and theological truths, imposed from above and from sacred texts, to the verification of reason and experience.

Marx and the Marxists explain themselves with the undermining, in turn, of the democratic and popular power of the bourgeois states, founded on the

'conscience' of the individual and free citizen. Just as there are undoubtedly historical links and derivations between the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the old regimes, and the struggle of the working class against bourgeois power, so there are historical links and derivations between the two superstructures, relating to the two great transitions between modes of production. Thus, the doctrine of the modern proletariat must study itself and clarify itself by taking proper account of those precedents played out in the way collectivities think. Criticism, enlightenment, experimentalism: Marx always shows the relative derivations, and from the French encyclopaedia, English political economy, and so on.

The wrong way is to ask who was the philosophy professor of law student Karl Marx, from which student circles did he emerge, what books did he keep on his bedside table, and how did he express himself in his more youthful writings: apart from the fact that if one reads them with the spirit of one who tidies up and does not disarrange the whole process, one can see with certain clarity the new and independent position.

5. The method of exposition

It is strange how, in order to demonstrate that the whole of Capital, and at least Book One (the usual legend that this says different things from Book Three) is a critical-philosophical work and not an economic-scientific one, we start precisely from the second preface of 1873, in which Marx settled accounts with Hegel. The classic distinction between the research procedure and the expository procedure is quoted from it. One even quotes a passage from the Russian review that Marx himself quotes, to make it his own. And with this material, an attempt is made to endorse this absurd thesis: Marx would not have wanted to make a scientific description of the real laws of the capitalist economy and its development, but would only have wanted to expound the data of the 'economic consciousness' proper to the men of capitalist times. Marx himself knew (!) that *'economic research does not require the intervention of this bizarre notion of value'*, but he was aiming *'at something else: at remaking the process that unconsciously leads men to construct the (illusory) notion of value'*. This method of Marx's, which studies not the facts but the illusions men have about the facts, is elegantly called 'social illusionism'. We will then see who 'men' are, old and new. And who is the subject of unconscious consciousness.

Let us premise that, according to the correct position, the aim of Capital in all its parts and volumes is to give the theory of the facts of the capitalist economy, as they really are, and in such a way that the deductions are experimentally verifiable: it does not see them therefore as the contemporary economic consciousness of the bourgeoisie or 'men', but it sees them as the theoretical knowledge of the class party that in the capitalism of today, represents the communist, and aclassist tomorrow.

But since the main 'foil' for Marx's definition of the character and purpose of his work is the aforementioned preface, let us see in order what is drawn from it, and we will see at once that the whole thing does not make a wrinkle.

Marx reviews the critics of the first edition. The *Revue Positiviste* in Paris reproached him, on the one hand, for treating economics metaphysically

(Labriola was not saying anything new in 1906 either), and on the other hand, for limiting himself to a critical analysis of the given elements, instead of prescribing recipes for the inns of the future. Attracted by the first accusation of metaphysics, Marx neglects (perhaps also for publishing reasons) to respond to the second in any other way than with the ironic phrase of the trattorias, and with the (Comtian?) parenthesis. Augustus Comte was the leader of French positivism, to which in politics corresponded a vague social reformism: not here does Marx deign to point out that in every line he introduces a revolutionary programme. He responds to the metaphysical lie with the opinion of the Russian Sieber (already quoted as a theoretical socialist) who says that *'Marx's method is the deductive method of the whole English school'*, and of the German Block, who speaks of analytical method and places the author *'among the most eminent analytical spirits'*.

6. Self-identification

The important passage is the one about the Petersburg 'European Messenger'. This had said that the method of investigation is rigorously realist, but the method of exposition 'gauchely German-dialectical'. Marx quotes this passage first:

"At first sight, that is, if one judges from the outward form of exposition, Marx is an extreme idealist and that in the German sense, that is, in the bad sense of the word. In reality he is infinitely more realist than all his forerunners in the field of economic criticism.... One cannot in any way call him an idealist'. Marx is not obscure. Marx is a fighter, and even as a writer he is of those who do not give satisfaction, never demagogically yielding to the demand for the banal answer, which he gobbles up effortlessly. He does not say: it remains therefore established that I am analytical and not metaphysical, realist and not idealist: he says that he could not better answer than with some other extract from the same review, which is then followed by the other clear statement: 'describing with such precision my true method (...) what has the author defined if not the dialectical method?'"

And so we know from an authentic source what the method is; and in what the dialectical method consists, for Marx.

Let us quote the salient sentences:

"Only one thing is important for Marx: to find the law of the phenomena he is investigating (...) but above all the law of their change, of their development (...) For this it is quite sufficient that he demonstrates, at the same time as the necessity of the present order, the necessity of another order, to which the first must necessarily lead: it does not matter whether mankind believes or does not believe this, whether it is aware of it or not."

Here a moment: first of all there is, quoted from Russian language published under the most police-like regime of the time, the answer of the case on the 'inns of the future' that certainly escapes those who read 'cup-cup'. Then there is the blow to the conscience of humanity, to which Marx plants the official visa. And it is then strange that the posthumous Labriola quotes the following passage: *"Marx regards social movement as a process of natural history governed by laws, which are not only independent of the will, conscience and intentions of men, but which, on the other hand, determine their will, conscience*

and intentions (...) If the conscious element plays such a subordinate part in the history of civilisation, it is to be understood that criticism, the object of which is civilisation itself, can in no way have as its basis any result of conscience." And Labriola, nonchalant: of course one must mean individual, concrete consciousness.

What individual, concrete?! The text in which Marx recognised his own photograph spoke of the consciousness of humanity and 'men', of 'any' result of consciousness, not just the individual.

But the text goes on to do justice to the claim that Capital studies not economic facts, but ideological views of them:

'It is worth saying that not the idea, but only the external phenomenon can provide (criticism) with its starting point. It criticism is limited to comparing and contrasting a fact not with the idea but with other facts (...).'

One must unfortunately jump.

'By proposing to examine and explain the capitalist order from this point of view, Marx is merely formulating in an exact manner the task incumbent on every rigorous scientific investigation of economic life'.

Ah, art of quotation!

7. Accounts with Hegel

In writing, Marx does not give you satisfaction, and rightly so. But you should know that he leaves 'nothing for the road'. He remembered at the right moment to set the pupils of Comte 1871 (or rather of Stalin 1952?) on the tirade of cold description that leaves behind any proposal for social change. Now, after having dotted all the "i's" with the Russian's own words, and having ascertained which subject to investigate, and which method of investigation, he remembers well that they imputed to him a Hegelian impecuniosity as to method of exposition.

What a Hegel of Egypt! Ten words strung together with the rigour of an algebraic formula, and they too, as we were saying, quoted by the crooks of straight backs:

"Certainly the mode of exposition must formally (original italics) distinguish itself from the mode of research. Research must make the subject matter its own in detail, analyse the different forms of development and trace their intimate connection. Only when this work has been accomplished can one move on to the exposition of the actual movement that corresponds to it. If one succeeds, so that the life of matter is reflected in its ideal reproduction, one may seem to be dealing with an a priori construction."

This was not discovered by Hegel, but by all the early treatisers of the results of modern experimental research (and even some classical writers such as Lucretius). Kepler gives the various laws of planetary motion, deduced from analytical readings made in the sky with thousands of observations by Tycho Brahé. Newton expounds the same thing (with a little more nationalistic

Hegelian, Marx and Engels delight in Hegel's demonstration that deduces with a few mathematical steps English Newton from Germanic Kepler) but starts from a hypothesis, which those laws and those readings confirm, namely his law of universal attraction. And it is science, purely experimental, empirical, as one likes to say, and not speculative, as much Tycho's long list of angles as Newton's first short proposition and figure in which a moving point revolves around a fixed one (planet and sun).

What more? In all high schools, 'experimental physics' is taught, which is also explained to young people in the laboratory, using the deductive method, i.e. starting from three principles that are then only one, that of Galileo, and from which everything descends, 'as if it were - but it is not! - a priori construction'.

As for Hegel, and as for the vital part of the question, which does not concern the way of expounding (a point on which we have yet to see a line in which Marx's excellence is challenged: if he really says false things in substance, what magical propagandistic power has caused the world to be soaked in it after almost a century, in joy or terror?) but precisely the object of the research and the ways to lead it to success, Marx in this and all other points is decisive. The path taken by Hegel led nowhere. *'My dialectical method is not only fundamentally different from Hegel's, but is in fact the opposite'*.

And here the series of formulae so often quoted. Hegel: Thought, the Idea, are creators of external reality. Marx: The ideal is nothing but the material transported, translated into man's brain. Hegel: Dialectics rests on the head. Marx: Dialectics must be overturned and made to rest on its feet.

8. Criticism and empiricism

When these two abused words celebrated a marriage, it was Lenin the Marxist's turn to go into battle against the new (or rather rancid, as he proved) system of knowledge.

If we want to explain the two methods in humble terms, we could say that empiricism, better known as experimentalism, seeks truth by looking around, and endeavouring to order the manifestation of phenomena of the external, objective world in the best way possible. In this field would operate the generic economic science of the professors, whose prerogative would be to always be ready to record and accept every new datum and every result, without preconceptions and preferences of any kind (a brief analysis of modern official science would suffice to show that this is not the case at all, but things go the other way round, conscious falsification having become the daily bread in all 'scientific' circles).

Criticism, on the other hand, seeks solutions not from outside, but from within. Of what? The terms are at your disposal: of the subject, of the thinking self, of the spirit, of the brain, and, as Marx puts it to give the usual brushstroke, of the head, the skull box. This would be the 'speculative science' in which, however, Hegel believed, in which modern idealists believe, in which Labriola also shows belief, in the pages in which he claims that this type of science was what Marx was working on.

Marx would therefore have proceeded like a Newton, who had only imagined in his head, for his own subjective amusement, the law of gravitation, in that form or another, writing, for example, that two bodies are attracted by a force inversely proportional to their distance (and not to the square of it) and then deducing the strange orbits of the planets according to this hypothesis, and putting the Tycho-economist at the door, who had knocked and said to him wait a minute, master, the planet is not there tonight, at the rendezvous, but elsewhere, its trajectory is not that, but another. .. the capitalist has not grown fat, but is in desperate thinness, while his workers have bought a villa in the Crimea.

Newton would have said: philosophically, and even mathematically, my system is coherent, and any effort at speculative criticism finds no logical fracture in it; what do you want me to care about the planets if they contravene the rules of circulation, and the extortionate surplus-value starved?

This and nothing else means that Marx has done critical and unscientific work, even in the experimental sense, that he has merely woven into an immense web relations that are not of facts but of the illusions of consciousness alone. Of consciousness, then, found in its manifestations, that is, in the language of men, in their common meanings, in their general illusions, in their daily act of faith. Work, then, the only criticism that can be done by internal means, the speculation of the subject within the subject, on words that link to other words, not on things, on facts, on measurements and surveys of things and facts.

Investigation not on reality, but on the consciousness of reality, which would logically pre-exist it, as in Hegel's system, as in the one to which Marx turns his back. But, and here is the point, consciousness of WHICH man, of WHICH men?

9. Consciousness, individual and class

Marx therefore does not look at the object, but at its image on the retina-spirit, according to them. However, it is recognised that he has, while dealing with impressions of facts and not actual facts, taken a step forward: the imprint is not on the individual. This first ghost has finally been put away.

Thus, although it is an illusionism, it deigns to discard as a source the datum of individual consciousness, because Marx - a philosopher - is acknowledged that individual consciousness is illusory.

And so Marx would have sought the laws not of the 'true' or 'physical' economy, but of the projection of the economy into the super-individual consciousness. The first that presents itself is 'class' consciousness. But this too is immediately discarded. In a sense, a second concession is made to 'serious' Marxism. In fact Marx, Lenin, and all consequential and radical Marxists, never liked the expression class consciousness, even when applied to the proletariat. This notion as we have said so many times contains implicitly the condition that revolutionary consciousness in all members of the exploited class must precede their revolutionary action. This notion, seen from the bottom up, is the most

conservative one that can be given: and this was amply stated in the Rome and Naples meetings of our movement, and depicted in explanatory diagrams which appeared in the Internal Bulletin, while others are being prepared for publication in time and place, and which aim to indicate the various schematisations of workerists, syndicalists, ordinovists, stalinists, and libertarians, with these abscissas: individual, class, party, society, state, and the ordinates: interest, action, will, consciousness.

But, remaining with the theory of Marxist illusionism, which unfortunately may have air in its sails from the deplorable fraudulent theoretical monopoly by today's Stalinist communists, it is unclear whether Marx (declared impotent to pose it in the world of real facts) sought it, for the purposes of myth-mongering, in the notions prevalent in the bosom of the working class, or the bourgeois class. Rather, one seems to be referring to the bourgeoisie; and then Marx would have exposed the economic system of prevailing opinions in the bourgeoisie. But then Marx only had to write the fourth volume of Capital, the history of economic doctrines. Less so: since he so often states that Ricardo is the theoretical exponent of the class of the great industrial capitalists, the work was nice and done copying Ricardo. So why so widely point out where he went wrong, and substitute his development curves for the very different ones found by Marx, for his compensation, crisis and revolution? Is it therefore also these visions that the bourgeoisie dreams of?

10. The "social" conscience

One must go further. Given that Marx is condemned to write the poem of a consciousness, and that this does not belong to the individual, nor to the class, one must go to 'society'. According to the critic in question, Marx would have arrived at this notion, of the consciousness of the 'society' of a given epoch, in the species of his own, of ours, and would have set out in his 'system' the backbone of this 'social consciousness' that strangely unites not only all individuals, but the social classes, and is common to them despite their contrasting interests and economic conflict! Indeed, Marx would not have arrived at this datum, but would even have started from it as the foundation of all his constructions. In the meantime, he would have dealt with value, insofar as this datum is in that consciousness. In this sense alone he would have spoken of surplus value, and of the reduction of the former and the latter to labour time, knowing that this was scientifically nonsense.

It would be of little importance to chase such things from an old book by Labriola, if they were not hidden under many of the Marxist degenerations that have paraded and are paraded in the history we live through, in the history of the proletariat's difficult struggle for communism; if they were not enunciated here in a way that is not at bottom despicable, sometimes suggestive, but such as to lend themselves to clarifying concepts not by the dozen and to make an effective cleaning in the arsenal.

Labriola certainly does not ignore or contest the theory of the historical class struggle and the antagonisms that break capitalist society, this should be noted, and at least he did not contest such doctrines at the time he wrote such a text. On the contrary, it relates the vehemence with which Marx felt social

insolidarity to this discovery of a social conscience, the connective tissue common to different groups and classes.

We need not devote ourselves to showing the irreconcilability of such a risky thesis with the notion of the class struggle and with the doctrine, equally admired as powerful, of historical materialism, because the text itself will lead us there.

11. Society and exchange

Not forgetting that the professors have worked on the cold statistics of prices and the vicissitudes of circulation, and must have done solid science, Marx has given sculptural laws of the production process, and must for these gentlemen have only staged illusions and stirred up incandescent myths, we shall see at once where this consciousness, in which are written - in mockery - the laws that Marx in the giant work has outlined, has its foundation. In society then, in 'economic society'. We have never read such words in Marx: but that, in his critique (of Hegel precisely), of 'civil society', and that in the doctrine of the state, and we will soon go into that.

What then is 'economic society'? The answer is simple: economic society is exchange!

And so a contraposition, which deep down and with dialectical law may be ours, the one we work towards in this report: production versus exchange! Struggle versus social pacification! Volcano that promises the coming social eruption, versus dead gora that would swamp the revolutionary force in the mercantile mire.

And indeed hear:

'Exchange posits agreement, where production posits antithesis. "The proper environment of the idea of solidarity is exchange". 'Thus we see that the notions of struggle and solidarity each have their own environment'.

In this foolish version, which could equally be lent to Joseph Stalin, who died younger than Labriola, Marx's critique would lead to the apologia of full mercantilism, would go to extinguish the flames of the revolutionary fire in the fetid sludge of the pecuniary exchange of commodity-goods.

In fact, the thesis that a socialist society could have an economy governed (by Our Lady! in reality and not just in illusion!) by the law of equivalent value, i.e. market exchange, is the same one we find in the false syllogism of the text under review. After all, the trade unionists of Sorel's day dreamed (this is a true and insulting myth) of a society in which the intact law of equivalence was in force in the exchange between 'groups of producers': it matters little if in Sorel's there was no state, but only a constellation of cooperative unions; in Stalin's, a monster-state plays the shopkeeper-in-chief.

Here is the lame syllogism: Marx said that value is not an individual but a social creation. But value is a datum not of reality, but of consciousness: hence social consciousness. There is no society nor social consciousness except in exchange. Exchange will live forever.

Since for us not exchange, but production is already a social fact, and as a social fact it arises from the relationship of different classes, we define value before and without exchange, as a real, scientifically known datum of the transient economy of capitalism. And now all that remains is to easily reduce the thesis of the 'sanctity of exchange' to a flat apologetic for bourgeois society, and counter-revolution. Capitalist production ends with a revolutionary order that has only one connotation: no more mercantile exchange. This is where Marx arrived, and history will arrive.

["il programma comunista" n. 17, 16-30 settembre 1954]

12. Two irreconcilable lessons

We have therefore benefited from following a far from recent redaction for a good focus on old and new issues, especially issues that the evolution of 'contemporary thought' will never resolve. The ever more cumbersome garble of it must die out before it goes any further.

The critique we have been keeping up with (intellectual property: Labriola prof. Arturo, Naples) starts from the point of establishing that Marx's work is not a science of economic processes, but is a task to be classified in the field of philosophy, i.e. the search for data of 'consciousness' regarding economic facts. Why was Marx interested in presenting these data, and not an objective theory of the present economy, and preferring them even if they contradicted the results of positive observation, to the point of deliberately constructing a system of social illusions? Because - according to this criticism - Marx, an idealist, voluntarist, 'activist' (today they say), underneath the materialist rind, needed to arrive at a programme of overthrow of the capitalist order to be implemented by the masses 'enlightened' by the theoretical leader; and if an illusory notion is better suited for this purpose than a scientifically valid one, it is the former that is to be preferred.

In this cerebral and literary construction, therefore, a will is sought that will change the social (and economic) world; it is believed that such a will can only be aroused by disseminating the data of an internal, speculative 'consciousness' of real economic life; it is imagined (claiming that Marx imagined this) that, once this task has been carried out by the theoretical genius, the will - will be followed by the bursting action of the masses. After that it will be what it will be, since it is not at all necessary for such thinkers to have the advent of a social structure, as Marx had shown himself to expect.

We are very interested in contrasting this 'reading' of Marx with a very different one of our own. Marx makes sure and objective research of the laws of economic development and to express them he uses mathematical notions and quantities not injected from outside into reality, but discovered in it. However, Marx does, yes, such gigantic work, only to arrive at the revolutionary programme and the theoretical and practical opposition of a new social order to the old, but - the immense material with which Marx distinguishes himself from the utopians would suffice here to decide the question of interpretation - this programme is not felt, chosen, desired by Marx the subject, but itself found at the outpouring of positive and scientific research. Stalin's error - among many

others - lies where it is said that in the pages of Capital one reads only the description and critique of bourgeois economics, not the definition of the cardinal lineaments of communist economics. The programme, and thus the struggle for it, dominates, but its strength lies in resting on the real analysis of the present economy; it is not a matter of creating a presentation of it, deformed in order to serve the predetermined - where and how? - agenda.

The whole distortion would be underpinned by a misplaced reading of the work on Feuerbach's famous last thesis: philosophers have gone to too much trouble to explain the world, it is now a matter of changing it. The thesis means that if we want to align ourselves on the front of revolutionary change - when and as reality imposes it, and teaches it to those who know how to read it - it is a case of retiring the philosophers, who speculate within themselves in search of the rules of the world's becoming; laying a different bridge, not speculative and idealist, between doctrine and combat. And instead, in the drafting we follow, we arrive at this, which is quite the opposite: Marx is not an economist because as such he would have explained, yes, but confirmed, the capitalist world: being instead dedicated to subverting it he became... a philosopher!

13. Bourgeois consciousness, that's all

We have patiently followed the investigation into the location of that mysterious consciousness, where Marx would have drawn the basic notions, the typical figures of his exposition, of what thus truly becomes - to the fragile consolation of all conservatives - a 'sacred representation' of legendary characters. It is a question of knowing what is the fertile ideal subsoil in which Marx dug up value, surplus value, profit, surplus profit, the price of production, which would not be - exact magnitudes commensurable with each other and susceptible to links that form scientific laws, but illusions in which the conscience firmly believes, and nothing else.

To recapitulate: the individual is not, it is too fragile a base for a consciousness from which to derive even illusory figurations - the class is not either (which we endorsed from our opposite shore. But then why? Probably because, for ideologues such as those in question, class above all is an illusory figure of Marx's puppeteer...) - and thus, as we had to come to terms with, the famous 'economic society', a mash-up at once of all individuals and all classes, whose potential to possess a common vision of social data is based on the factor of 'exchange', the connective tissue that would hold together all the most diverse elements and groups of the social magma.

Here we come to the point. The society contemporary to Marx and his fickle interpreters is modern bourgeois society, shaped in general forms precisely by the dominance of the exchange, market economy. Before its advent, one could never have spoken of a, albeit nourished by fallacious myths, social consciousness. Only where every object of use has the form of a commodity and arrives on the market, and the figure of its price universalises its effect on any component of human society, only then, when the limits of the small closed islands of production and consumption, and therefore of life, have been broken, can this butterfly chase of 'illusions valid for all' take place, as customs, culture, opinion, begin to circulate on a vast scale in the guise of commodities. In pre-bourgeois societies, where we cannot yet speak of exchange and

mercantilism (see here those of you who still have the chance to read precious passages from Marx, our almost daily food, quoted copiously and regularly read backwards) and where irregular oases intermingle different and heterogeneous 'modes of production', we certainly cannot speak of an 'economic society'. Where would an 'economic society' be, when there is still no 'social' economy, i.e. there is not even a national economy, having only a patchwork and in any case a conglomerate of 'local economies'? Where a common political and state organisation begins to appear, a 'civil society' in Hegel's sense can appear. Thus in ancient Athens or Rome and the empire there was a civil society - only the whole mass of slaves and semi-slaves was 'outside social civilisation'. Economic society (a term we reject in line with good doctrine) means only this: bourgeois society, this given and peculiar product of history in which the same 'economic law' applies to all citizens.

14. Apologetics of capitalist civilization

So Hegel, like all the other forerunners of 'modern critical thought', and with them all these adulterated Marxists, are on the same ground: the establishment of bourgeois constitutionality, of the democratic state, is as original as it is decisive in human history, insofar as making the environment of civil society universal is worth having founded, thanks to the irrepressible virtue of Exchange, this authentic fetish: the Economic Society.

And if Marx had searched the data of the general consciousness of such a society for the types, figures, and structures of his exposition, he would have been left only with the notions - which he powerfully demolished - of liberty, equality, and, as in the famous quotation from Bentham, unlimited capitalist liberalism, where in essence the classical syndicalists drown, Sorel at the head.

Who does not remember the final page of Chapter IV: Transformation of Money into Capital?

"This sphere of simple circulation (...) is the one from which the free-trader vulgaris borrows his conceptions, his ideas, and even the model of his judgement on Capital and Wages."

"The sphere of the circulation of commodities, in which the sale and purchase of labour power takes place, is really a true Eden of the natural rights of man and citizen. What dominates there is only Liberty, Equality, Property and Bentham!"

There is therefore no need to beat about the bush to show what this claim of the existence of a general consciousness in mercantile society, and Marx's extraction from its bosom of all parts of his model of capitalist society, boils down to. It resolves Marxism into a section of bourgeois ideologies, binds the proletarian class and its organisations to pay homage to the ideological cornerstones of the bourgeois order and the achievements of the bourgeois revolution, and makes this an insurmountable limit to its action. As, moreover, in the conception of almost all libertarians, one inherits and enthusiastically accepts from the modern bourgeoisie its realisation of fundamental 'civil' rights - which is identified with the foundation of a mercantile economic society; and only wishes that after this bestowed civil liberty and on its foundations, social liberty would

eventually come, i.e. the utopia of free-trade equality between employer and worker.

This is worth failing to see how Marx himself brought down such a bulwark, denounced - by constructing his model, implanting his function of production - the deception according to which capitalist and worker are both free, equal, owners of their respective commodities, and operating for subjective individual Benthamian utility, 'because they enter into relation with each other except as owners of commodities, and exchange equivalent for equivalent'.

15. Party and theory

All this wandering about to find a subject for the mine-consciousness, after having discarded the individual and discarded the class, and introducing this strange social support based on the common mercantilist atmosphere that binds the components of modern societies, is all a turning of the nose to reject the only logical holder that can be assigned to the 'consciousness' and, better, to the theoretical knowledge proper to communism, to anti-capitalism; after having in various ways tolerated, admitted, applauded, that intellectual genius enters history as a decisive factor. This sole holder of revolutionary consciousness is the 'class party'. But this one word alone inspires horror in the libertarians and syndicalists of the old mould, as well as in the more recent opportunists and centrists of all kinds, and even in the aspirants of many errant little groups who claim to be orthodox and opposed to the Stalinist corruption of the proletariat, and who flatter themselves with the words vanguard, revolutionary leadership, study circle, and so on.

The Marxist theory in its entirety, as a scientific economy, as an interpretation of the human historical course, as a programme of revolutionary action, and as a definition of the claim of the communist society, cannot be taken as the data of a collective consciousness of groups of men, or even of proletarians. It has for its bearer a very limited collectivity, even when the precise boundaries in convulsive moments become not easily identifiable, namely the party, in which above space and time, borders and generations, revolutionary militants gather and connect. In a certain sense, the party is the anticipated repository of the secure consciousness of a society yet to come and also subsequent to the political victory and dictatorship of the proletariat.

Nor is there anything magical in this, since the phenomenon is historically ascertainable for all modes of production and for that of the bourgeoisie itself, whose theoretical precursors and first political fighters carried out the critique of the forms and values of the time by affirming theses, which later became of general significance: while in their surroundings the authentic bourgeoisie themselves followed the old and conformist confessions, not recognising in the theoretical enunciations even their palpable material interests.

16. The defeatist virus

It is no less customary in the correct exposition of Marxism to say that with particular clarity such an 'anticipation' of future social forms is historically possible for the working class, which arose with the capitalist world and flourished within it, than for the old revolutionary classes and the bourgeoisie itself.

But precisely because of this, the whole doctrinal baggage, proper to the class party of the communist workers, must particularly be kept free from the constraints of subjection to enemy and above all bourgeois ideologies. We would venture to say that this need for doctrinal incompatibility, sector by sector and line by line, would also arise - nor do we fear being misunderstood here - if our avowedly distinctive party theses had for a moment more than the certainty of a scientific result, the value of a collective revolutionary illusion. The fruit of detailed scientific research cannot be passed on without a generous simplification in the demanding body of theses, which the party must give with strong and decisive lines to itself. And only in such a sense - and with close relation to what has been said in the previous parts of this discussion on the impurity of capitalist societies and the class situations of the proletariat - could the not lacking in intuition or flashes of intuition Labriola allow himself, be it Marx or the convinced followers, the use of a one per cent ingredient of revolutionary illusionism, as one does not deny the most heroic soldier a shot of cognac before the collision.

This is, however, in the direction of the absolute originality and independence of the party theory from those of bourgeois society and 'current consciousness'. But if, on the other hand, one draws the norms of action and theoretical models, as with the use of solidarity in exchange and similar misrepresentations, from the canons and directives of today's dominant class society, then one practices the opportunist defeatism of a thousand well-known historical episodes of recent decades, then one perpetrates not the revolutionary illusionism attributed to Marx as the sole source of doctrine, but a hundred per cent bourgeois illusionism in the ranks of the working class. And so it happens that to this its own principles, its original programme, the goal of its historical action, are concealed at the most decisive and crucial stages, and it happens that, as even today, oblivious to all this it is ready to fight for the bourgeois positions: fatherland, democracy, constitution, sanctity of the existing state and social institutions.

17. Marxism and "categories"

We are about to leave behind one of the various texts from the opposite shore that are provident in our justification of the use of the models of capitalist society, with equal passport regularity as scientific and theoretical work and as a party battle order. The model has nothing to do with the illusion of consciousness: as we have shown, the latter is the passive effect of the formidable forces of the external physical and social environment on the fickle and corrupt heads of men, in the succession of historical events that they act out but cannot understand; the first is instead the spontaneous and organic way in which the transmission of relations between facts is presented in that arsenal of real tools and technological methods forming a heritage of notations, registrations, writings, algorithms, which the human species has painstakingly secured through a long series of struggles; a result that is absolutely not personal and not class-based, and which we will deign to call a social result only in the distant future when there will be society and no more classes. Which by the way is also conditioned by the formula: no more exchange, no more production for exchange. Social production for social need.

And it is only at the end of this not brief discussion that we will send out the word with which one wanted, and wants in so many cases, to push Marx and his corrosive material truths back into the fringes of the dream, whether delinquent or generous it is called: the word category.

Marx would in fact, not have identified economic quantities and their material measurement and calculation, but introduced 'categories' into economics, just as philosophers have always worked on their introduction into logic, that is, into the general science of the laws of thought.

The value therefore of a commodity, its production price, would not be truly determinable properties of the commodity in question, like its weight or its price at a given place and date. They would be categories, that is, general notions of the thought or language of all men who are interested in or discuss commodities, nor would Marx have given those and all other similar notions a different and greater scope.

In the Marxist system, which lays the foundations for an original and different solution to the question of knowledge, there are no categories whatsoever.

A conception such as, for example, Kant's, of which, as we have said, Marx is sometimes seen as a follower (!), is all about hunting down irreducible elements of thought contained in it prejudicial to any relationship with the external world; and while overthrowing many ancient idols, and long centuries of philosophical illusionism, it ends up stopping at three cornerstones at least, which cannot be deduced from physical and empirical experience. They are the 'a priori intuitions' of space and time, the premises of every science of nature. And in the sciences of society, they are the 'categorical imperatives' that, inherent in each individual, show him right and wrong and command him to follow the path of duty and morality.

This is not the place here to develop our references to the Marxist position on physical knowledge and the age-old object-subject debate: it is certain that official science has at least already shown that the two intuitions of space and time can be reduced to one.

But certain is the extraneousness and incompatibility of Marxism with any system, be it religious or idealist, founded on the regulation of individual behaviour as the foundation of the proceeding social mechanism.

Marxism would be nothing if it were not for the reduction of these categorical 'values', in matters of ethics - and also of aesthetics, i.e. of the sense of the beautiful or the ugly - to the establishment of laws of external material facts which, according to the quantities of objects and forces at play, determine the economic factors and make it possible to show how much variability the ethical, and aesthetic results fluctuate from century to century, from country to country.

Marx, if not by him, did not devote himself to founding new categories of thought, but to attacking the few that remained standing and demolishing their irreducible absoluteness; and economics was not the field in which he led his

philosophical flair to wander, but the one on which he solidly founded himself to dislodge the primordially of moral, aesthetic, and even legal and political values, anatomising their scarce consistency and incessant mutability.

And if not by him, all the remaining categories of classical thought will be resolved and broken down, like nebulae with large telescopes, to complexes of various physical accidentalities, in the society whose laws of formation Marx traced.

18. We serve fresh stuff

We believe that our readers have not tired of the use made of texts that are anything but recent and of the traditional method of setting things straight by combing theses (counter-theses) put forward not by blatant enemies, by declared opponents of Marxism, but put forward by amphibious types who themselves declare themselves socialists, pro-proletarians, and if necessary revolutionaries. Classic examples are the Lassalle, the Bakunin, the Dühring (of whom there is no lack of praise and claims of seriousness in the now closed book against Engels' dismissal), the Proudhon, the Rodbertus and so on.

Let us come, however, to a few sources that are not only very recent and thus present themselves as 'in the know' of all modern positions and schools, but which moreover belong unequivocally to the open and official defenders of the capitalist system: it will be interesting how coming half a century ahead, and moving from the vague social-populars to the avowed capitalists, exactly the same bells ring, and the same blows are struck, at us obstinate and immovable Marxists.

To this end, we use a series of serial articles inserted in 1953 and 1954 in the 'Organizzazione Industriale', i.e. in the ebdomadary organ of the General Confederation of Italian Industry. Freshness therefore of date, unexceptionable authorship: nothing to say. The author, G. B. Corrado, is a professor of economics, but where, we do not know.

We use in particular the series: Concept of value and the currency that expresses it - Money and mathematics - Money and time. We are immediately confronted with a decisive presentation of modern mercantilism and capitalism as a system of 'eternal' and 'natural' laws, from which mankind will not and could not escape, for that would be to suspend production, hence consumption, hence life, and to make a collective hara-kiri. Although all the encyclopaedias published up to now in all languages are used here, not without occasionally inconveniencing God himself, and all the latest findings on nuclear physics and the most modern concepts of the mechanometry of the universe and matter are recalled, we note, as usual, that Karl Marx had read Conrad, since he responds to Conrad and watches from the stratosphere the passages of all the Corradi.

19. The coin fetish

A few quotes will suffice to show how the 'demiurge' of all such a theory is the 'coin', which existed in the beginning, around which one turns, to which one always returns, while constantly defining it as an 'unknown'. Not an unknown in the sense of algebraic analysis, i.e. a quantity that is 'written' with the symbol x and called an unknown, but rather an unknown in this other sense: that there

may be inflation or deflation, low purchasing power or high purchasing power, valuable money or depreciated money, it does not mount: money exercises its miraculous function just the same; woe betide if it were to disappear: everything would come to a sudden halt and the human species would die.

A little strange is this attempt at mathematical economy in which money is defined as an unknown, defined as a number, defined as a constant. What the author means is that the number-currency attached to a given sign, or banknote, can correspond in the course of time, and from market to market, to changing quantities of one good or another, one commodity or another. It therefore varies as a medium of exchange and also as a 'title' to goods. The word constant is then used not in a mathematical sense, but in a historical sense: mathematics and history come out badly from all this. Listen to this:

'Currency in progress presents itself as a constant of changing value and perpetual motion'.

Now for the mathematician, quantities are either constant, if the value is fixed, or variable, if the value is indeed changeable.

But here everything wants to lead to the eternity of money, which would be as eternal as production and life, keeping silent that there was production without money (early communism, barter) and life without production (early communities of wandering and frugivorous men).

"Production - the equivalent of money - there was and always will be (...) There will therefore always be money because it is an indispensable instrument for the services of production and thus of the eternal needs of man, God's creature".

There we are with God, now back in fashion to endorse claudicant doctrines. But are not animals God's creatures, who consume and do not produce? And did God not create Adam to consume without working? In fact, things were not like that: as the myths tell us, the inventor of production (hence of money, according to Conrad) was Satan in the guise of a serpent; for the pagans, communism was captained on earth by Saturn, symbol of all wisdom; money was invented by the grim Mammon, greedy for bloody holocausts. Again:

"The nature of economic goods, possessing the properties of the infinitesimal and the infinite... [let us buffer ourselves with our little schooling in theology and history, then we will come to the mathematics of which a different government is made] will always have an absolute and unavoidable need for the number of money, which is the indispensable instrument of such exchanges."

Hence eternal money backwards and forwards, and therefore *'money is a constant insofar as it responds to a constant need of humanity'*. This "fetish" character of money, analogous to that of the commodity, dealt with in Marx's celebrated paragraph, which forever unveiled its secret in a forced labour-value displacement relationship between men and men, is evident in that instead of giving truly historical and experimental demonstrations, supernatural factors are resorted to at every step:

"Papyrus becomes more and more indispensable to production, which becomes more and more synonymous with exchange (!), and it becomes more and more synonymous with exchange because the Creator has set as a technical condition of the satisfaction of the interests of the individual the satisfaction of the needs and interests of his neighbour."

It takes no less than the All-Father to assume that an individual's interest in eating does not coincide with the interest in fasting another or many others, in regimes both historically prior to and posterior to exchange and currency.

20. Heartwarming similarities

Does it therefore matter so much that this writer defends with such commitment the eternity of the mercantile mechanism, its natural immanence to the economy, to the life of social animals? Undoubtedly: one writes, one speaks from a journal devoted solely to the direct defence of industrial, capitalist interests, and one has here proof that capitalism cannot counter our thesis of its certain not distant disappearance, and replacement by other forms of production, which desperately link production with mercantile exchange and the mercantile law of value, of exchange between equivalents.

For this, linking us with the "Dialogue with Stalin", allows us by scientific means to deduce that the Russian economy is mercantile insofar as it is capitalist, that the claim of Stalin's famous last theoretical writing on socialism respecting and applying the law of value, serves as rigorous proof of the in fact non-socialist character not only of the real Russian economy, but also of that government's economic policy.

These are the actual 'a posteriori' proofs of indisputable validity in research, which are valid even when the exposition presents itself, for ease of dissemination, as an 'a priori' construction. Whereas research itself loses all credence, and falls back into 'a priori' constructions by its very essence, when the decisions of a god are resorted to in order to prove a fact disproved by empirical observation (eternity of exchange).

No less suggestive is that the way of beating into the breach our Marxist deduction of value, and its laws 'before exchange', has the same lines as the one we found in one of the many defectors of socialism, such as the one used before. Listen to a few more passages.

"Those who give value to things are men... therefore it is absurd to speak of homogeneity and constancy of values.... The philosophical notion that the value of a thing, and its very existence, is not what it is in and of itself (i.e. how it could be in the eyes of a being as perfect as God), but what we believe it to be, is the expression of the most common and recurring realities.... Here too the immaterial dominates the material, the spirit transforms matter and our own reactions... God has made man in such a way that there is a maximum number of things that can please him... and this explains, even physiologically (!), the effectiveness, the value, the usefulness of advertising..."

We hear this argument at every turn (another example of our earthy goings-on in retrospect): are you a perfect being like a god? No, then screw you, you can't claim to know what the 'thing itself' is and calculate its value; I'll take it from here, and build my science and my practice on the statistics of how I

made fools of those who listened to me. The only possible science is my own! The science, purportedly - kill them! - written by Marx, of how men allow themselves to be deluded.

21. Mathematics and economics

We are at the usual point of the foundation of an economic science with quantitative methods and thus with the use of mathematical calculation. There are many theories from the bourgeois field, but all of them tend to establish that one can attempt to write down the function of prices and the function of exchange, but one must not dare to introduce and attempt to deduce with mathematical laws the quantity: value.

The business of applying mathematics to science, in the physical field, half a century ago walked 'comme sur des roulettes' and it was only a question of putting similar wheels under physiology, psychology and sociology. But before it had come to that, those who occasionally like to go off the rails and bring to the fore - often more irreverent than us crazy materialists - the divinity, the immateriality of the spirit and other ancient or modern astonishments did a certain deal: the matter of the link between mathematics and physics has been raising disparities and difficulties of no small importance for some decades, but above all such that the gossiping cultural-journalists have been able to superimpose sensational campaigns on it, like those fashionable in beach scandals.

Now, to say something on the subject as poor men (the citizens of Poveromo, a locality in the Apuan Alps), let us begin by establishing that the matter is cheated if one considers mathematics as a construction of pure thought, abstract and prior to any application to nature. For us, it is a tool of mankind like all others, therefore always more complex but never definitive and perfect, which is deformed in its use, and which is transformed by those who use it each time a new one is forged: and for us, it is not the use of an individual, even an excellent one, but of a collective species.

And so, rather than following speculative lucubrations on small and large numbers, on the infinite and the infinitesimal, we follow, in order to shed a little light as poor lighthouse-bearers (among so many dazzling beacons), the history of mathematics used in successive epochs by human society, which also (bind against blasphemy, be still) reflects the succession of modes of production.

Perhaps you remember how topography came into being before geometry, and at its origin was the art of field-terminators after the fertilising floods of the Nile receded: yes, gentlemen, let us be impartial, we owe the private ownership of land to Pythagoras' theorem and Euclid's books, and we do not say this (it would be PCI) to pull all the gymnasians to communism.

We won't go that far! Let us come to the end and to Corrado 1954. What he seems to be sketching would be called a 'quantum economy'. Not only quantitative, but based, like Plank's physics, on economic quanta.

The quantum is a fixed, tiny portion of energy, of light, as the corpuscle (atom, smaller particles that the atom is now said to compose) is of matter. All

quanta are equal to each other, and are 'undetectable'. So light varies 'in jerks', always by so much. I suppose that the quantum of light has been identified, and that it is not the photon, but our miserable intellectual snot. I want more light, I cannot add half a snot or two thirds of a snot: either nothing or a second snot equal to the first: two snot. Then not two and a third, not two and a half, but three, four, and so on. The illustrious light that emanates from a writer who is not like us fossilised, but continually updated, who acquires the dictates of modern progress and keeps up with editions and academies, let it be measured as a thousand, a million of our quantum-snotters: it is not allowed to blind us with nine hundred and ninety-nine and a half snotters.

If nature works by quanta then the mathematics to be applied is reduced, it is clear, to the theory of whole numbers. Between three and four, for example, a void is formed, we no longer need decimals: fractions, and the infinite irrational numbers that it was possible with certain devilry to insert between two fractionals differing by one thousandth, and less.

Students, do not shout for joy: only arithmetic, not algebra, calculus, analysis, but the other arithmetic will make your veins and wrists shake: your thoughts and brains will move much more laboriously than before.

22. Mysteries of the infinite

In the economic mathematics constructed in order to make concrete value an immeasurable and elusive thing, we see a great deal made of infinite and infinitesimal measures of currency: billions of billions of dollars, and billionths if you like of Brazilian reis. But what use are these abstrusions if not to desperately defend the phoney secret of the fetish-currency, its unknowability as a value? Not a little confusion has occurred.

Let us see a little. For millennia, when men need mathematics, they have used two apparatuses, which are called the discretum or the continuum. Asking whether nature is made (created...) according to the discretum or the continuum makes no sense at all, since it is only a question of seeing how the human species has, in given phases of its physical life, realised advantages by using the two tools for complex data of material relations of the surrounding environment: discretum computation and continuum computation.

We do not therefore see much evidence for the ... button attached to a jacket button, which to our senses appears to be made of a continuous material, but which according to modern physics consists of invisible molecules, these of atoms, the atoms of nuclei and electrons, the nuclei of protons, neutrons, and so on. Don't worry, not even those of the Confindustria carry uranium buttons, but the usual inert tablets without salt or pepper of radioactivity. Shall we therefore also break down the low price of the button into intangible economic molecules, even though the kids on the pavement play with buttons, precisely because they are the only thing that is priceless to them, and they find them everywhere without currency?

First of all, if we use a quantum apparatus, or a discrete apparatus, or an apparatus of only integer numbers, we will indeed have in play the law of large numbers (which in this case does not embarrass us, since if the working time,

for example, does not allow us to establish the price of that single object, it allows us to search for millions of similar objects on the market...) but it will no longer be the case that we are talking about finite quantities: not infinite, nor infinitesimal. Everything is measured by a number: it cannot be smaller than one, which is finite, and it can be very large, but it can always be marked by a series of figurative figures. Hence such an infiniteness is, in the matter of mercantile value, nothing but farrago and bogeyman, whatever the universe and the button may be.

In any case, the use of the discrete mathematical tool is not only ancient, but precedes the other: Dedekind's postulate of continuity characterises social production in the bourgeois epoch. But it had already appeared earlier, with the great Greek dialecticians, and this by analogy with the possibility of defining a capitalism (certainly a mercantilism) in the classical world.

Pythagoras still conceived the geometric line according to the discretum: it is a row of invisible grains of minute sand. Between two points (grains) on the line, there must be a finite number (as large as one likes) of intermediate points. Pythagoras applies his theorem to the famous mason's triangle: three, four, five: three metres on one side, four on the other at a square, five on the diagonal. Nine plus sixteen twenty-five is verified (the most illiterate mason does not verify, but does so by tracing the house's elevation). But if the triangle were (without going too far) three and three... the 'hypotenuse' would no longer be given by an exact number: this would have infinite decimal places. The thinking tool had to take a great leap. The Pythagoreans were still a pre-critical stage in the thinking of the Greek ruling class: they relied on theosophy, on the transmigration of the soul; they excelled in music, which supremely employs mathematics, but with the tool discretum: rigid finite numbers give the vibrations of the strings in unison or in tune with each other.

23. The arrow and the turtle

In a theocratic society, mysticism and music may be enough to direct a people of farmers, it is not enough in a society of advanced artisans and in a certain sense industrialists (albeit with slave and non-salaried production). Here it is necessary to measure, to weigh, to define measures and quantities of goods embarking for distant markets, albeit still Mediterranean.

Zeno goes beyond Pythagoras. If the arrow, from the hunter's bow to the aimer, travels along its trajectory through so many little points, then when it is in one of them it is stationary, and does not move, but goes from one end to the other. And so: proof that motion does not exist? This was the trivial reading: the powerful dialectician Zeno of Elea demonstrated instead that, given that motion exists (because if you doubt experience, I'll have you try to configure the arrow in your mockery), it is necessary to conclude that on the - finite - trajectory the points are infinite, and that the arrow travels through 'evanescent' spaces in 'evanescent' times, but nevertheless the relationship of these 'evanescent' spaces to these 'evanescent' times gives speed, a concrete and finite concept.

Such is the birth of the infinitesimal: with which infinity was born (in man's head). The thirty metres of the arrow's stroke I can divide into thirty precisely, into three hundred decimimetres, into three thousand centimetres,

into thirty thousand millimetres, but I have also learnt to divide them into such short dashes, that their length is like nothing, and their number goes beyond three thousand, thirty thousand, and three followed by a thousand zeros. Delighted to meet you; honoured, Mr. Infinity. And I, homo sapiens.

Now if economics were quantum as Corrado shows us to believe, there would be no reason to apply to it not only the calculus of probability and the law of large numbers, but also algebra, the commensurability of the parts of value, and calculus, an apparatus that germinated in the bourgeois age (Leibnitz, Newton) from the Greek seed. And then there would be no reason for so much noise about infinitesimals of value. But we are only interested in the infinitesimal calculus as a means of finding finite quantities in our formulae about constant capital, wages, profit, rent, just as Zeno was interested in something finite and concrete: the speed of the arrow.

Zeno is then famous for the Achilles, who in his version of sophistry (sophistry was not straw man but a revolutionary and critical motion against the religious and autocratic traditionalism of the oligarchs) said: the swift-footed Achilles cannot reach the tortoise. The little story is nice. Achilles starts off handicapped, i.e. a thousand metres from the tortoise. He runs the thousand metres, but the one in front of him has run a hundred. He runs the hundred, but that one is at ten. He flies the ten, but the other one is one metre ahead. He crosses the metre, but that one is ten centimetres away. The reasoning goes on and on, but the tortoise is always a certain way ahead: it has won the race. The solution is that by adding up infinite strokes run by Achilles we have a finite and exact length (if you are interested, it is ten thousand divided by nine, i.e. metres 1,111, comma one, one...) after which the tortoise is caught up. This finite length is the sum 'of infinite small lengths'.

All the Confindustrial reasoning about the eternity of exchange is worth Zeno's sophism (in the bourgeois bogus lecture). Since money and exchange are eternal, the proletarian Achilles will never catch up with the capitalist tortoise. Mathematical economics has not integrated the question, we, with Don Karl, have: we will soon put it on the spit.

["il programma comunista" n. 18, 1-14 ottobre 1954]

24. Effort and result

It has been useful to present how, in a direct organ of industrial capitalist profit, the attempt to prove that in economic matters the determination of the value of commodities and of money itself eludes human and scientific knowledge has its rightful place - with inexhaustible and confused use of theology, history and mathematics. It is in fact an immediate class interest to maintain that in the field of economics one cannot set up and solve problems of quantitative relations between the efforts employed and the results obtained, as has been the case in applied science since modern bourgeois society came into being. Modern society developed decisively with the steam engine, and the calculation of the power of the heat engine and its measurement in horse-power was a decisive historical step for it (see Engels in "Conditions of the Working Classes in England", although, at least in the translations, there appears to be some error in the

theoretical terminology between force and energy, which is also the case today in the language of the practical).

The horse-steam is almost the expression of the leap between a humanity that could only add the force of the animal to the muscular force of man as a further means of production (apart from some natural energy such as river water and wind) and a new society that added the force of heat, i.e. the transformation of thermal energy into mechanics.

From the very beginning, the new social organisation considered the problem of efficiency to be of prime importance: obtaining as much mechanical motive power as possible from a kilogram of fossil coal. Quantitative research established, at the great turning point in which modern thermodynamics, a perfect and finite theoretical apparatus, arose, that not only was there an insurmountable limit in the mechanical equivalent of heat (an aspect of the law of conservation of energy), but that yield 'one', i.e. the maximum, would never be reached because it is possible to obtain a quantity of (mechanical) work to become all heat, but the opposite is impossible: with Clausius, theory and experiment proved to the applied technologists that, with any fluid and any cycle, only a part of the heat energy can become mechanical energy: the rest goes to heat a small piece of the ambient universe (hence, generalising, the assumption that one day the universe will be a large 'motionless pond' with a constant temperature). Now on such a conclusion one has to tread lightly, but the quantitative issue between coal burned, and better, with real rigour, between steam produced in the boiler and work rendered by the pistons or turbine, is indisputable.

25. Science and technology

The whole questioning of the very modern physical-mathematical concepts in order to establish the quantitative unknowability in economics, the impossibility of these 'yield diagrams' as first obtained by the watchmaker Watt with his indicator (see Engels again), in the social machine that consumes labour and produces consumer objects, and the flashing of infinitely large and infinitely small, is pure blandishments of a class that closes its eyes in order not to see and above all not to open the eyes of others.

We have recalled the two conceptions of the discretum and the continuum, i.e. of matter thought of, roughly, as sand, or as glass, to say that it makes no sense to wonder whether in 'rational thought' abstract quantities or pure space should be discrete or continuous. These lucubrations are only affordable by the historical route. The two opposing suppositions have been tested from time to time, with useful results: they are not properties of thought, but transitory, contingent, conventions between men and men.

For example, in the same grandiose epoch of Hellenic culture, the concept of the continuum (and therefore of the calculation of infinitesimals) was applied, as seen in Zeno's graceful 'sophisms', to the theory of sensible physical effects (the speed of furniture), and with Democritus and Epicurus, who belonged to the same school, which is indeed 'rationalist' but also certainly 'materialist', the subdivision of matter into atoms in continuous motion was affirmed: even glass, even water is like sand; and they did not have a microscope. So mathematical

continuum and physical discretum were good friends. With the great renaissance of bourgeois science, the continuum served to explain earthly and celestial mechanical motions and forces in a grand manner, and the discretum to found chemistry, the science of the quality of bodies existing in nature and their combinations.

Thus the infinitesimal calculus gives full account of the connection between the temperature and pressure of steam and the work that can be obtained by its expansion; on this the engineer and the machinist have since then relied fully. Let us suppose that for the purpose of deciphering other optical, electromagnetic and corpuscular physics problems it can be usefully written that temperature and energy vary not by infinitesimal continuities, but by very small finite variations, or quanta, not for this reason in their field those technological relations will lose their certainty and precision of use, and Clausius will descend to foolishness.

The theory of large numbers, or that of evanescent quantities, is therefore of no use whatsoever to suggest that the social mass of production and consumption cannot be subjected to quantitative and performance tests.

26. God's work

In order to save the incessant reproduction of a mass of goods, of wealth, of values, of actual objects of consumption and services, which certain social classes take from the social mass for their own benefit without having made labour contributions, the round and round of these contemporary economists is reduced to adding other sources to labour as the source of value.

They are standing firm on positions already demolished by Marx with the mighty critique we have now and elsewhere drawn on extensively. They pretend again, with a recoil from Ricardo, that capital is not only accumulated labour, but also 'found' labour, and that therefore land is also capital, that money is also capital, not as a 'civil' title to capital, but as a source of fruit by its own virtue, analogous to that of land. Indeed, it must be said that these 1954 versions are less scientific than the mercantilist and physiocratic versions of two centuries earlier.

Hear for the last time our fabricators' ebdomadary.

"The application of a mathematical law to the economic value of things is as rational as the wish of that madman who wanted to take the train to Genoa by sitting on the roof of Milan's central station. If it were possible to fix the value of goods, this would imply not only the halting of the evolution of mankind, but its crystallisation (!) and thus by biological consequence would lead to its extinction'.

How long have we, the Marxists, been saying that for the ideology of the ruling bourgeoisie, the end of its privilege (virtually contained in the theoretical discovery of the class-exploiting class relationship) can mean nothing other than the end of the world?

And so we see how those who know how to be 'rational' reason. This is after having allowed him to regale us with the Rothschild story, well known to our great-grandparents, but which today applies to the American billionaire (of

course), with which he would like to explain the law of large numbers. The driver grumbles about the few cents in tips: with five million dollars you have! He says: I have ten, not five, but do you know how many men there are on earth? No? I'll tell you: two billion. Your share would be half a cent: I gave you 25! You want the answer? It even lies in the Civil Struggles of the good De Amicis, as Marxist as a honey milk cake.

But let's look at the apex of science dated 1954, the supreme theorem of elusiveness, which should make us give up 'grasping' economic value like Ferravilla in the duel with sciur Panera: if it moves, how do I stab it? There you have it:

'Like the physical world, the economic world also moves continuously; the goods produced by God's labour and man's labour (capital) undergo an uninterrupted process of transformation from the moment they are born (production) to the moment they apparently die (consumption) and cannot be produced or consumed except by constantly moving from one place to another'.

Here there is no other God respected but Mercantilism, for which the essence of both consumption and production is exchange-transport: God therefore does not work when the primitive tribe, or the modern farmer, eats his grain.

Just as therefore mathematics and history are not used rationally, neither could theology itself be used less rationally: in this we will never find God's work, but only God's grace. God does not work, he does not produce and he does not consume; at least until it turns out that he too has become a labourer, and dependent on Confindustria.

Anything goes, and in the most diverse fields one fishes, in order to escape the straitjacket of recognising that all value in circulation in the capitalist and mercantile world arose from the work of men for men, and that neither divinity, nor nature, nor the magic capitalist formula by which Rothschild inherited the billions of his ancestor, who in the year zero gave the 25 cents of the story as a gift: compound interest, spilled it into the circle.

27. Party and academy

After the Genoa meeting, which was dedicated to a critique of the western economy and in particular the American economy, demonstrating its inexorable contradictions between increased labour productivity and refusal to decrease working time to replace it with the exaltation of domestic and foreign consumption of the frighteningly increasing amount of goods produced, a young comrade wrote a letter to the speaker asking for a refutation of the theories he had heard expounded in the course, conscientiously followed, of the Genoa Academy (home of the Confindustria as well as of the higher teaching of economics and trade disciplines). He said he was well convinced of the Marxist positions but asked for a refutation of the formulas of various schools, of various authors, tending to express the market value of goods. He quoted Kinley, Del Vecchio, Wieser and stopped at Fisher's equation, which is in fact called the 'exchange equation' and which makes the price of a commodity depend solely on supply and demand factors: quantity of goods existing on the market on the one

hand, quantity of means of payment existing on the same on the other hand, and speed of circulation of the same.

Now this is indeed a quantitative theory, since it is expressed with a mathematical equation, but it is at the antipodes of our research in that it does not attempt to express the value of the commodity according to given production results, but makes it vary purely according to market circumstances. This is one of the many versions of official economics, ever since it historically recoiled from the 'classical' or Ricardian position of labour-value, and dispersed into the rivulets of mercantile registration.

To this young comrade we confined ourselves at the time to sending in reply a quotation from Marx where these salaried researchers receive the appropriate floggings, and which also dismisses those, today holders of professorships, who when Marx wrote were yet to be born. We wanted by this means to highlight the different ground on which the question is set and the impossibility of the naive demand to 'reconcile' those ultimate achievements of academic science with our own, solidly entrenched for almost a hundred years.

The passage from Marx is taken from the "Storia delle dottrine economiche", Tomo VIII, ed. Lacoste, p. 184 ff.

28. Economy and vulgarity

Thus Marx replies:

'Classical economics endeavours to bring back, by analysis, the different forms of wealth to their internal unity and to strip them of the form in which they stand close together, indifferent to each other'.

Here Marx recalls the reduction of rents and interests to parts of profit, surplus value.

"It is radically different for vulgar economics, which only develops when by its analysis classical economics has destroyed its own conditions, or at least severely shaken them, and the struggle already exists in a more or less economic, utopian, critical and revolutionary form; for the development of political economy and the resulting contradiction goes hand in hand with the real development of social oppositions and the class struggle contained in capitalist production. It is only when political economy has reached a certain development, after Smith, and has given itself certain forms, that the element which is but the reproduction of the phenomenon in which these forms are manifested, that is to say, the vulgar element, detaches itself from it to become a separate theory."

"What is more, vulgar economics, in its first attempts, did not find the matter completely worked out or elaborated, it was therefore forced to collaborate more or less in the solution of economic problems. This was the case with Say. Bastiat does not yet represent the apogee. He still displays ignorance and has only a superficial tinge of science that he arranges as best he can in the interests of the ruling classes. In him, apologetics remains passionate and constitutes his real work, as he draws on others for his economy according to his needs. The last form is the professorial form; it proceeds historically and, with wise moderation, sprinkles everywhere what is best; little matter the contradictions, it is only a matter of being complete. All systems lose what used to be their soul and strength, and all end up blurring on the compiler's table. The

warmth of apologetics is tempered here by wisdom that casts a look of benevolent pity on the exaggerations of economist thinkers and is content to dilute them in its lucubrations. Since this sort of work is only done when political economy has, as a science, completed its cycle, we find in it, at the same time, the grave of this science. Needless to add, these men think themselves equally well above the ravings of socialists. Even the true ideas of a Smith, a Ricardo, etc., seem here empty of meaning and become 'vulgar'. A master in this genre is Professor Roscher who modestly announced himself as the Thucydides of political economy. His identity with Thucydides comes perhaps from the fact that he figures that the Greek historian always confuses cause and effect'.

29. Price schools

At this point in Asti's exposition, another young comrade present, from Messina, asked the speaker to give him the relevant papers, in order to draft an answer, drawn from studies he had also done on university treatises by bourgeois economists. This comrade prepared a note, in turn accompanied by quotations from Marx, in which the refutation of those various theories and questions on the intrinsic and conventional value of money are emphasised. This note examines the trio of theories, which it is useful to remind readers of here, subject to further special treatment of money.

1. The "objectivist" theory of value, which relates it to the cost of production, of the classical or scientific school. This is the theory of Ricardo from which Marx started; but he considers as the cost of production only the expenditure for constant capital and capital wages: Marx adds the profit to the average wage and has the price of production, which we propose to call production value, since in Marx it is equal to the exchange value of the classics.

2. The 'subjectivist' theory of the psychological or Austrian school. As the bourgeoisie 'realises' that its claims are class claims and not of the whole of society, it leaves objectivism behind in all fields and returns to subjectivism. It is the theory of marginal utility, which is in relation to the individual's need, i.e. it takes into account his personal satisfaction: it would be worth millions a glass of water in the middle of the Sahara, nothing the most exquisite dessert for those who were nauseated by the consummated banquet.

3. Theory of 'economic equilibrium', of the so-called mathematical school. This school, as we said, does not use mathematics to find causal laws in the genesis of production value, but only to deduce the market price from the market's quantitative data. It wants to explain why not only the price of individual commodities fluctuates, but also that of the general equivalent commodity, money. Inflation or deflation would depend on the scarcity or abundance of money, taking into account its velocity, or capacity to serve in given time successive exchanges.

In Marx's considerations, without his having read this little people - contained both in Capital, Book One, and in the Critique of Political Economy - the demonstration is already definitive that these factors of subjective necessity or satiety, like those of width or narrowness of signs of value and monetary species, can only determine secondary variations in nature and extent, and that they balance out on average around the value deduced from the data of the

social process of production; and all the more so as mercantile capitalism - the social type of production - extends.

The way in which the value of commodities is, therefore, calculated with respect to conventional and forced paper currencies, even if the numbers representing it vary enormously, does not affect the scope of the law of production value.

All this research by the various mercantile economists therefore follows a blind alley, the bottom of which we have known for a long time, and it no longer concerns us.

We will find the bourgeoisie, whether they want to or not, on the high road of the production function. Then we will argue with them about the 'limit' of the function. For them it is continuous, and has no sharp turns, for us it presents a 'singular point', where the direction of the gentle curve breaks; all directions are at the same time possible, like the rays of fragments from a central explosion. The social revolution.

30. The "welfare" economy

The word Welfare means wellbeing, prosperity, high standard of living, and it is fashionable in America, lined up around it all the defenders of the current trend of things: euphoria, ever more spending, ever more production, and the claim to prove that average wellbeing is constantly increasing.

Many interesting things are presented by this trend, and we make use of a very recent paper by J. J. Spengler, of the University of Durham, which is entitled: Welfare Economics and the Problem of Overpopulation.

The doctrine it deals with is decidedly opposed to Marxist doctrine, yet its approach is of the utmost interest to us because it comes to show that the theoretical adversary must now accept open combat and badly closes in the farrago of subjectivism or of swaying and deliberately elusive mercantilism.

Mathematically and historically speaking, the defence of capitalism comes with this very modern doctrine into a more enlightened zone.

First of all, by giving the greatest importance to the famous index of 'individual income' in relation to 'national income' - and the relationship between them is precisely the rough problem of demographic growth - the economists of capitalism come to the terrain of production, and recognise that there are no mercantilist tricks to escape the comparison between productive force and the social number of consumers. We will see that for these theorists, prices are no longer uncontrollable 'natural' facts above the social will, but they argue that if the capitalist economy is to resist, it must come to shape the 'price structure' according to given plans. Let's say right away that this is the price level in various consumer sectors, and we will see them conclude by high food prices, low manufactured goods! Well we knew that.

These no longer seek Fisher's exchange equations, but implant - in their own way - a production function: Spengler adopts Douglas Cobb's, whose

meaning we shall see, while not being able to exaggerate the mathematical apparatus, to clarify; at the same time contrasting it with Marx's production function. Of course in the 'Welfare' one, classes are not in evidence, as in the quantities we used; but the reasons are clear.

Historically, then, it is interesting how this author, without polemising with Marx, whom he neither names nor cites, goes further back than him, and openly links the very recent welfare school with none other than Malthus and his well-known works that appeared around 1830 on Political Economy and the Principle of Population.

Malthus had, according to Spengler, glimpsed the solution to adjusting food to population; or even to improving the former index with respect to the latter. He had outlined two models: the first responds to the phase in which a society succeeds in increasing production in proportion to the number of its members, the second in which it succeeds in even improving the ratio; thus overcoming in both cases his famous formula (considered more literary than scientific) that population grows in geometric proportion, food production in only arithmetic proportion.

31. That good Malthus

So here is the old figure also elevated to the status of a benefactor of human welfare! His real theory was not that births should be reduced by moral restraint, i.e. by chastity dictated by reasoning and asceticism, nor that the population should be compressed at all costs. For him, the population could also remain constant or grow slowly, and sufficient products could be had; his proposal was clear: make the products that serve food needs difficult to access, and keep the working class uncomfortable, make luxury items cheaper and more accessible.

So much so, that it is better to have it said by the unbridled admirer a century later. This parallel is precious to us: it confirms our thesis that at a given turning point class theories are defined and opposed, and that social science advances in great secular bursts and not by tiresome drip-feeding of academic learnings and sloppy compilations which, as Marx said, usurp the name of scientific research.

Malthus, like Ricardo, and like Marx, writes at a decisive turning point in history: capitalism takes shape and a clear profile against the old feudal economic systems; proletarian socialism already sketches the theoretical critique of the transition from the latter to the former and the development of the new bourgeois society.

Here is how Spengler reports on the doctrine of the rediscovered Master:

"While Malthus seems to have been aware of the magnitude of the changes in the price structure, he did not clearly specify their origin; probably because he had model equilibrium 2 (average standard of living rising in spite of increasing population) in mind and because he did not attach too much importance to the possible effects of such a change in model conditions 1 (constant average standard of living with increasing population). He was apparently aware that a substitution effect would be determined against (or in

favour of) the generation of many children, as a consequence of a change in the price structure that would result in a relative decrease or increase in the price of those products that enter into the costs of reproduction and child-rearing; and a corresponding decrease or increase in the prices of other product groups. He (Malthus) describes it as 'desirable' that 'the habitual nourishment' of the people 'should be dear' and that the price of comforts, articles of comfort, and luxuries should be low enough to extend these customs among the population. Presumably, having the conditions of model 2 in mind, he assumed that the introduction of this type of price structure would compress the birth rate, stimulate consumption, generate needs, and sustain income per head in the face of demographic pressure, thus delaying the transformation of model 2 conditions into model 1 conditions'.

32. Our response

Before any other development and in order to show that Malthus is worthily presented and rightly followed by the modern super-capitalism of America, we only wish to quote words already written by Marx, many generations before the Spenglers and their 'cynical optimism'.

The truly classic and decisive passages are to be found in the French 6th tome of the History of Economic Doctrines:

"This theory of Malthus gives birth to the whole doctrine of the necessity of unproductive consumption without ceasing to increase, a doctrine which this apostle of population control by lack of nourishment preached with such insistence."

"All these conclusions flow from Malthus' fundamental theory of value. This theory, moreover, fitted remarkably well with the aim pursued: the glorification of the English welfare state with its landlords, state and church, pensioners, tax collectors, tithes, public debt, stockbrokers, cops, priests, lackeys, everything that Ricardo's school fought against as useless and prejudicial remnants in bourgeois production. Ricardo is the representative of bourgeois production insofar as it signifies the unbridled and regardless development of the social productive forces, whatever the fate of the producers, capitalist or worker, may be. He defended the historical right and necessity of this degree of development. As much as he lacks historical sense where the past is concerned, he shows as much for his era. Malthus, too, wants the freest possible development of capitalist production, insofar as the misery of the working classes is its condition; but he demands that this production be adapted at the same time to the consumption needs of the aristocracy and all that complements it in church and state, and serve as a material basis for the outdated claims of the representatives of the interests bequeathed by feudalism and absolute monarchy. Malthus admits bourgeois production insofar as it is not revolutionary, does not constitute a historical element, and simply provides a broader and more comfortable material basis for the old society."

"We have, therefore, on the one hand, the working class, which, according to the principle of population, and because it is always too numerous in proportion to the subsistence intended for it, constitutes over-population for under-production; then the capitalist class, which, according to the same principle, is always able to resell to the workers their own product at such prices that they cannot buy any more than is purely necessary in order not to starve; in addition the enormous category of parasites and idlers, masters and servants, who freely appropriate, by way of annuity or otherwise, a considerable mass of

wealth, while paying for these goods below their value with money taken from the capitalists themselves; and the capitalist class, driven to production, represents accumulation, while the unproductive represent, from the economic point of view, nothing but the simple instinct of consumption, dissipation. On the other hand, this is the only means that exists to escape overproduction, which exists since there is overpopulation in relation to production. The disproportion between the working-class population and production disappears by the fact that a part of the product is consumed by non-producers, by parasites; and the imbalance of capitalist overproduction is corrected by the overconsumption of the rich gavellers."

33. Spengler is not alone

It is not only Spengler who follows in the footsteps of Malthus. The nostalgic feudal English bishop and the modern 'spokesmen' of high capital have in common the historical law that in order to have an increase in product and a decrease in consumers, it is necessary to keep the working mass low in consumption, especially of basic necessities, but at the same time to keep the whole product high. And so for the consumption of the extra product, Malthus's solution is the parasites of the pre-bourgeois court; the solution of the ultra-modernists is the 'price structure'. The structure advocated in the two distant times is the same: few foodstuffs, many goods for 'differentiated', luxury consumption.

The ultra-modernists replace the parasitic band of nobles and their cohorts with the same indistinct mass of national consumers, forcing them to consume like imbeciles: little food, much equipment for fictitious needs.

They believe that a highly aroused and drugged but poorly nourished mass will have fewer children and their famous per capita product will keep high. We have been responding for over a hundred years, ever since we adopted the classic word proletariat, which comes from prole. The fatigued and exploited mass makes too many children, and the law does not go towards compensation, but towards decompensation and revolution. The two laws are in direct contrast.

All modern ruling-class thinking agonises over the demographic problem. It is not only Spengler who sees salvation in hunger. Dr Darwin junior predicts five billion men in a century, and frightening figures beyond that, predicting the crisis of destruction of the species. Prof. Hill is resolutely fighting against the application of scientific advances to save lives. India grows five million every year. He proposes that penicillin and DDT should not be used in India as a demographic brake, regretting that country's historical fearful epidemics and famines.

The demographic 'optimists' such as the Englishman Calver and the German Fuchs, on the other hand, think that with population growth comes an improvement in living conditions, and show that they stick to the hypocritical formula of 'freedom from want' and the fight against misery. Fuchs sees not five but eight billion years from now and claims that up to ten billion we will be able to eat.

But Mr Cyril Burt, another Briton, gives us a 'stupid theory'. He notes that the wealthy classes are having fewer and fewer children, the poor more and

more, and the same relationship runs between advanced white peoples and savage peoples. He therefore predicts that the course is moving towards the increase, by heredity, of the uncultivated (for him worker equals stupid) and the increase of non-white peoples who will overwhelm us Europeans. He claims with long studies to have ascertained the increase in social stupidity for forty years. Not a word more: he is right.

They all lock themselves into a dead end because they want to discover the meaning of the course by a priori admitting that everything must remain as it is today: division of society into classes, and mercantilism. We say that as soon as the class division is socially overcome, i.e. the mercantile connection between production and consumption is abolished, the problem will solve itself with reduced production, ultra-low social working time, reduced and in some cases reversed population growth.

Consumption structure not 'stupid'. It is, you are right gentlemen, the fools who give birth, and today they make you sweat shirts so that the per capita figure does not fall into your hands.

The true defence of the species is also against the inflation of the species. But it has only one name: communism. Not mad capital accumulation.

Historically, the two opposing positions are well understood. But we will need to see them in the rough 'production function'.

That will be our last stop.

["il programma comunista" n. 19, 15-20 ottobre 1954]

34. The production function in the "welfare" economy

It is imperative to give reasons for Douglas Cobb's production function adopted by the 'modern Malthusianist' Spengler, which we have discussed, doing everything possible to make the sense of the mathematical formula that expresses it accessible. Having ascertained that in the 'theoretical class struggle' between revolutionary doctrine and official science, the latter considers itself snubbed by the winding lanes of mercantile price theory, and forced to accept battle in the fierce field of production, we cannot fail to address the comparison between the radically opposed 'Marx function' and 'Malthus function'.

We had a formidable chance in our arduous task of arguing that Marx (to put it bluntly) knew far more than those who have studied and written after him, and to this day, overcoming the idiotic, and unfortunately widespread even in the proletarian ranks, awe of 'modernism' and 'aggiornamentoism', because the adversary had to make two moves that indicate his dangerous strategic situation to move from the market to production; and to raise against our flag, unchanged for a century, the hundred-and-fifty-year-old palandrunk whip of the Anglican bishopric.

This struggle of cold formulas is therefore, like it or not, highly political, and only those for whom politics is a matter of talk and hype can turn their

mouths at the bitter chalice of mathematical expressions, which at most we will try with our much patience and little dexterity to sugar the edges.

A 'sugar' in earnest would be to give Marx's note on Malthus and Protestant pretense that you can read (it is two pages long) in the Avanti! edition, pp. 581-82 (Ch. XXIII, para. 2). The early work on the Principle of Population that made such a fuss is from 1798:

"Though an Anglican pastor, Malthus took a vow of celibacy, a condition for being a fellow at Cambridge"

...
"This circumstance depicts favourably for him in comparison with other Protestant pastors who, having broken the Catholic commandment of celibacy, have claimed as their special mission the fulfilment of the biblical precept 'grow and multiply' to such an extent that they everywhere indecently contribute to the increase of population, while preaching to workers the principle of 'birth-limitation'. It is characteristic how this delicate point of theology has been monopolised by the Protestant church lords, this economic disguise of original sin, this apple of Eve, the 'stinging lust', the 'obstacles aimed at ticking off Cupid's arrows', as the Reverend Townsend hilariously puts it..."

This is followed by an amusing remark on the fact that political economy, studied by philosophers and statesmen in the early days, then interested priests. And here Marx quotes the vigorous Petty, who wrote:

'religion flourishes where priests suffer the most deprivation, as law where lawyers starve'.

He advises Protestant pastors, since they do not want to mortify their flesh in celibacy, as St Paul dictated, not to generate more priests than the 12,000 benefices included in the English budget of the time.

I leave it to you then to read how the Protestant bishops lashed out with no less foolish phrases against Adam Smith who, an admirer of the great philosopher David Hume, had boasted of his stoic atheism with the detail that on his deathbed, after a life exemplifying virtue, he serenely read Lucian and played whist. *"Laugh then on the ruins of Babylon, praise Pharaoh, hardened in vice!"* You who on Hume's words believe that *"there is neither God nor miracles!"*

Since we were weaned we have always said that there is something more detestable than a Roman Catholic priest: and that is a Reformed priest.

35. Here we go: the formula

We must come to the bitter. In the production function adopted by Spengler and the entire 'Welfare' school, the quantities of value contributed by fixed capital, wages, and surplus-value do not appear in each commodity, in the product of a company, or in the entire social product. The national product of a year, the labour-power, and the capital-wealth of the nation do appear, but only as 'indices', i.e. as numbers representing their variation with respect to a starting year, for which the three quantities contemplated are set equal to one, or, as is more often done in statistics, to one hundred.

Whereas the relation given by Marx is simple, constituting an addition, and thus in mathematical language is a 'linear function' (as we know in common parlance we say linear something that is immediately understood by all); Douglas Cobb's relation is 'exponential', since it includes elevations to powers, and these are not with an integer exponent, like the square or the cube that everyone knows, but with a fractional exponent, which would embarrass a mature high school student without a revolver. Let us get out of this.

With the letter Y we denote 'national income', or rather the index of national income with respect to a comparative year. In Italy we are roughly told that national income in the first post-war period was six thousand billion, today it is ten thousand. If the base 1946 is one hundred, today's index is 167.

By national income we mean the sum of all incomes of citizens, whether they are workers, clerks, direct producers, traders, owners, industrialists. It is generally calculated from the taxed incomes of labour, employment, capital, property: let us accept it as they give it to us.

This quantity now comes from the bourgeoisie, and is an obtorto collo colloquial concession to Marxist truths, also defined as value added by labour in production (see Dialogue with Stalin, Day Three).

Then there is the letter L, which represents the labour force index. This index refers to the number of people. It should be the number of people employed in production, but it is taken by the authors we refer to as the population index. This implies the assumption that it is always the ratio of the productive population to the total (see part one of this report), and it also implies the assumption that the degree of employment and the complementary rate of unemployment of those at work does not vary over the period under study.

The third letter K represents, again as an index, 'income-producing wealth'. Here it must be clarified. K is not just capital, but the whole complex of industrial, commercial and financial capital and real estate assets. Moreover, K is not (as in our linear function) the capital-merchandise, the capital-product that comes out of production in a year, the famous 'turnover' of the pure capitalist firm, but all the value of the production plants, even that very large part that at the end of the annual cycle of work remains reintegrated in its value. K would thus be the index of the 'national patrimony' rather than of the 'national capital': for now, let us not ask how statistics provide such a measure.

Here is the formula reduced to the simplest expression:

$$Y = L^m K^{(1-m)}$$

The full formula is still a little more complex. We have removed a first coefficient A which can serve to balance the monetary units of measurement in their oscillation, and which is admitted to be equal to one, so it is deleted. Finally, there is another factor that affects the index, and that is R, which should mark the index of the variable 'technical productivity of labour' and is raised to a coefficient t indicating the number of years passed: it can be taken out of the

way assuming for the moment that the social technique is unchanged. We will say more about this later: it does not eat babies.

However, we must make it less scabby by using numbers instead of letters. The cheating lies in that m small exponent. Let us say at once that for the authors of the theory it equals 0.75. Wholesale, the labour index affects the income index not with exponent one (i.e. the way m did), but with an exponent reduced to three quarters. The other quarter? We find it exposed on the upper right-hand side of K, attributed to capital-wealth: for if m is worth 0.75, it is easy to see that 1 - m is worth 0.25.

The doctrine begins by saying: let us pose this formula. Then it is argued that empirical research on statistics has led the many authors of the school to calculate m from 0.70 to 0.80 in various countries, and 0.75 is taken. Adopted.

Let us now see the practical deduction.

36. More edible numbers

At the starting year, the indices Y, L, K are all 100. The formula says in that case:

$$100 = 100^{0,75} \times 100^{0,25}$$

Well, this is arithmetically correct, since the two exponents add up to one.

The counting is a little troublesome, and anyone who knows how to use logarithms can do it. He will find the innocent little figures: $31.623 \times 3.1623 = 100$. We are standing at the starting post, and we need not worry.

We must beg you to take our word for it when we go to tell you that the conclusion does not change, for minor variations in the indices, if we substitute an approximate and (thank God) linear form for the exponential form, which is this: $Y = 0.75 L + 0.25 K$.

Then verify without logarithms that at the start $100 = 0.75 \times 100 + 0.25 \times 100$. Lapalysian.

We begin to see the sense of the opposing thesis: in order to increase prosperity, work counts for three quarters, and for the other quarter wealth counts. We would have got away with it soon enough (but the comparison later): $Y = L$, and you K go ahead and get screwed.

Be good now, children. The year begins to roll on and.... the Protestant priests to daughter. If the population grows every year by one per cent (they don't just make it in Naples and Tokyo) the L index will go from 100 to 101 after one year. What will have happened to Y, if capital stopped at 100?

We will see with both formulas (we recommend holding to the second in stormy weather):

$$Y = 101^{0,75} \times 100^{0,25} = 0.75 \times 101 + 0.25 \times 100 = 100.75$$

We would have said: there was one per cent more labour force, and the value of income went up by one per cent, and it is 101: no sir; it is only 0.75 per cent more.

But before arriving at the higher concept of prosperity, our author is concerned with another essential index, the index no longer of overall national income, but of per capita income, of individual income; whether this is obtained by dividing by the number of inhabitants, of able-bodied at work, of employed workers, here nothing changes. These have, however, grown from 100 that they were to 101 (just as Malthus's priests racialise and do not preach) and so $Y: L$ which was 100: 100, and therefore 1, one, becomes in our hands 100.75: 101 which, if you please, makes 0.9975, a decrease of 0.0025 or (don't worry) a quarter per cent. If the population grows, welfare decreases. It is not we who say this, but the text:

'if the ratio of labour to capital increases by one per cent, the remuneration of the individual worker decreases by about a quarter per cent'.

Understood.

Remedy then, to decrease workers in numbers? Giammai: this is not only something we violently contest (elsewhere and out of formula our response! What do you do with the index of daily working time, gentlemen?) but neither does Malthus, shepherd 1800, nor the sheep - with wolf's claws - of capitalism 1954 say it seriously. The remedy - at-ten-ti! - is called by the fiery words: capital accumulation.

And indeed, come here poor goody-goody numbers, for Lucifer, Cupid and the shepherds' god to be appeased, along with the population, 'national' wealth must also rise; and so must K rise in turn. Good. Go up to 101. Avrassi:

$$Y = 101^{0.75} \times 101^{0.25} = 0.75 \times 101 + 0.25 \times 101 = 101.$$

Interesting fact for mature students: the calculations are sometimes both rigorous.

And so the national income did not just go, with bated breath, to 100.75; it frankly went up to 101 as well. Yay! But wait a minute, the text asks, what about individual income? Simple: 101 divided by 101: it is still ONE as before. In other words: if the population grows, capital must grow to the same extent, if welfare is to remain stationary!

But these gentlemen are at least as progressive as a palm tree. Per-capita income must, for all heck's sake, rise, when the population rises, by one per cent a year too: otherwise where does prosperity and Christian-bourgeois civilisation go? Hey, numbers!

Let's see how to do it. Let's try to make capital go up by two per cent. We are not there yet, since

$$Y = 0.75 \times 101 + 0.25 \times 102 = 101.25.$$

But this total of 101.25 has to be divided, don't forget, by 101 banquet participants: the single income has become, from 1, only 1.0025, and has only gained a quarter per cent.

Let us burn the steps. Assuming that in one year labour-power has risen by one per cent, capital has risen by five per cent:

$$Y = 0.75 \times 101 + 0.25 \times 105 = 102;$$
$$Y / L = 102 : 101 = \text{about } 1.01.$$

So if in a country, in one year, the labour-power (population) grows one per cent, as long as the accumulated capital grows five per cent, it can happen that personal income grows one per cent. More numerous and happier.

37. The good Lord by the day?

One moment, please. The numbers to write them down on paper all cost the same, those for lotto and those for sublime calculus. We ordered K to go up to 101 and then to 105. But how can this happen in reality? In only one way: accumulation; with equivalent term: investment; with equivalent term: saving. Mind you, we are not deducing, but faithfully following the statements of the opposing text.

The one per cent of national wealth K can only be derived and added if we consume less on the previous year's income! But mind you: for these gentlemen, capital is not only the value of the product, but that of the entire social machinery, including nature! So they do not ask the increase in wealth to the miracle and 'god's work' (like the ineffable monetarist of our acquaintance from the Italic Confindustria) but to savings, i.e. to the work... of the fool.

According to the authors in question, the value of income-generating wealth is four to five times that of national income. Thus the whole of Italy would be worth today, with income at ten thousand billion, just fifty thousand billion. We do not deny that with the U.N.R.A. formulae they got it even cheaper, nevertheless this figure corresponds to about one million six hundred thousand per hectare: pass for the summit of the Gran Sasso, but not for the Duomo in Milan or the Fiat motors.

Go, however, for ratio 5, discovered by the prosperists. For they say that in order to set aside one per cent of accumulation one must save 4 or 5 per cent of income.

Then again. If we are not good savers, going up from 100 to 101 we lose prosperity. We want to keep it stable: we need to save enough to bring K even from 100 to 101, that is one per cent of the total wealth, hence 4 per cent on each individual's income. Or even 5.

More progressive than that, you enter PCI. To avoid the trouble of my annual personal budget losing a quarter per cent I have an infallible recipe: I do without consuming five per cent. I eat four and a half per cent less, but general prosperity is saved! And my own personal!

However, I want to be able to read in the newspapers that income has risen by one per cent: we saw that K must go to 105. Very well: it is enough for the individual producer-consumer to put aside 20 if not 25 on his income, which was one hundred. The conclusion is as brilliant as ever: the worker who cannot make a living and still wants greater prosperity, aspires to increase his individual income, his share of the national income, by one per cent per year: he gets there easily, if he and everyone else agrees to consume 80 instead of 100! The advantage they will have in the coming year will be to go not from 100 to 101, but from 100 to 81!

It is said that mathematics is not an opinion, but even with trivial mathematics one can do tricks: the reader may believe that we are joking, that we have turned the tables on the professors in question. We need to quote: they say so themselves.

"Scientia" magazine, April 1954 issue, p. 130:

"With population and labour force stationary, increasing output per worker one per cent per year would entail a saving rate of about 16-20 per cent per year".

'With population and labour force stationary, increasing output one per cent per worker per year would entail a saving rate of about 16-20 per cent per year'.

The text calculates for $L = 100$ and $K = 104$; we have done so for $L = 101$ and $K = 105$.

38. Welfare from other sources

Before moving on to the criticism of the law hypothesised by the welfare economists, we do not want to say how much they would respond to this strange prospect of improvement. There is the continuous increase, due to new technical-scientific resources, of the productive force of labour, which allows the same labour force to produce more wealth. According to school textbooks in recent decades and in the most developed countries this effect, which was denoted by the factor R_t , would be 1.01 t : this means that every year there would be an increase in income of one per cent over the previous one; with the same labour-power and previously accumulated wealth.

Let us assume this rate of progress, taken as a maximum. It means that the single income 100, to rise in one year to 101, would need nothing, if the population were stationary. But if this grows by one per cent, the only effect of technical progress will be precisely that the individual income will not need to save, in order to remain stationary. If, however, according to the dictates of prosperity, it must grow by one per cent, this will be as before demanded of savings: this will decrease by four, or by five, and will be 16 instead of 20, or 20 instead of 25 per cent.

The whole result changes in this: the worker who wants to raise his income from 100 to 101 will have - with everyone else - to consume not 80 but

84. In other words, he will reach parity not after 20 years, but after 16, given that nothing interrupts the automatic progression of productivity.

Up to this point we have considered the pecuniary income, but here comes the true Malthusian finesse of the welfare doctrine. Other, it states, is output, individual revenue, other is true welfare. This is affected by the way one divides one's consumption. For the same amount of income spent - it is understood that the number one use is always saving, i.e. not consuming, but investing with a gentle supply to the accumulating capital - welfare can rise or fall. This depends on the 'tastes' of the individual or those prevailing in a population (advertising in all forms helping) and also on the famous 'price structure', i.e. facilitating certain consumption with reduced price, and decreasing certain others with increased price.

It is certainly not possible for us here to carry out all the analyses and diagrams to represent them, in order to solve the famous question of the optima population. We have already said that the conclusions of most of these economists tend towards the restoration of Malthus' dictate: high price structure and low consumption of foodstuffs; low price and high consumption of the whole other series of goods and services, from clothes, to the cinema, to the motorbike, etc.

The conclusions of this school are that even in densely populated areas there can be a development of 'welfare' even though the population continues to increase at the significant rates observed in recent times. There is, however, no disguising the serious concerns for many modern countries that are running towards overpopulation, i.e. they tend to go beyond the much sought-after optimum of population, causing both the numerical optimum and the manipulated and drugged modern 'welfare' to be ruined.

39. The welfare society

We have already several times shown the differences between our presentation of modern capitalist society and that contained in the formulae now discussed. But some others must be insisted upon. We seek above all the classes and the division of the produced value between these classes: we give the formula for a 'model' bourgeois society in which there are three classes: workers who receive wages, entrepreneurs who receive profit, owners who receive rent. Our formulae distribute the social product, and social income, among the three groups.

In the peculiar society to which the formula of labour power L and wealth K applies, we reason as if all members of society were workers and as if wealth K were social, i.e. all inhabitants participated in it. If in fact one does not deny that the overall distribution of income among individuals is certainly not uniform (indeed, one applauds Malthus to the hilt in his observation that transferring part of the income to the relatively poorer constitutes a diversion from large capital formation - in fact, those wretches would be able to eat everything, and not 'save' anything), one reasons on the index L as if it contained all the members of society, i.e. all were workers - in the usual ratios of age, sex, etc.

And when one is asked to save a given tax rate - our writer concludes that for the happiest countries (read America) this must not be less than 10 or 12 per cent - one calculates it by referring to the whole L-number without any exclusion, even a minority one. One therefore considers national income as the sum of homogeneous individual incomes of one type.

So these Malthusians of today do not only bring out the rentiers and their courtiers and priests, but not even the entrepreneurs. Theirs is a society in which one imagines that the 'patrimony' of each company belongs to all its citizens or at least to all its employees. Everyone gets to share in how much of the income jumps out of the labour force (three-quarters!) and the national, or corporate, social wealth. When he then saves, it is clear that he receives in return co-interest shares in his own company, which have the character of a sharing in the national 'capital' income.

This rigged super-capitalism, which shines through in all the indecent Digest apologia for felix America, is based on giving the workers a few shares in the factory, and giving them 'in instalments' a good share of the products of the factory or of similar companies in other sectors of the 'consumer structure'.

Such a system, in its fundamental, inexorably mercantile gearing, in fact harnesses the producer-consumer, the productive worker, to underwrite instalments of his future work - a new and more vile form of slavery - imposing on him to have one body and two souls, to add to his being a worker who bears a living part of the social burden the livery of a non-productive consumer. And over all this towers the imbecile equation between prosperity and freedom.

40. Comparison with Marx

If I were a capitalist, and a defender of the historical utility of the accumulation of capital, a fact positively affirmed throughout an epoch, which for the West is behind us, but for the East lives on with absolute right and unstoppable efficiency, I would equally prefer to calculate accumulation with Marx's formula and not with this one, cloaked in science but intimately unreal and imbecile, of Welfare.

In Marx, accumulation is demanded of surplus value and not of wages: it is therefore borne by profit and annuity, never by the worker's remuneration. Dividing society into the three classes, it is of no interest or sense to make averages out of the patchwork of low wages for millions of men, and high incomes for company bosses and big landowners.

The worker receives his wage and consumes it all. In the beginning, it is barely enough to make a living; with increased productivity, it grows, but at a much slower rate than this: it raises his standard of living, but does not even dream of reaching the euphoric levels at which one can say to him: 'set it aside!'

The capitalist and the landowner have the alternative between consuming personally or with their little retinue of parasites profit and rent, or consuming less, and perhaps being sober up to the level of the conventional average 'per capita income', which outstrips the best wages and salaries, devoting the rest to further investment, for the progressive accumulation of capital.

In other words, Marx's capitalist, the character of our bourgeois model of society, is far less indecent as an exploiter and speculator than the one - or the anonymous company, or the anonymous state-capitalist - whom I meet in the false and non-existent social model of the Welfare people.

Marx's capitalist can lightly admit that he is a machine for taking value from the labour of his workers and allocating it to the social function of increasing technical-productive equipment to an extent that non-capitalist economies could never achieve. He acts in a class society, but at the same time he comes to realise the historical achievement of transferring production from the individual to the social level.

Spengler's society (an imaginary model) is nothing but mercantile egalitarianism, which many confuse with socialism. It can be rigged in this way, disguising the extra-profits of the super-industrial countries, in that it does not dissociate and emphasise the pure model of the corporate society, but dilutes it in the mixture of today's societies containing a mass of at least half of the petty-bourgeois and middle classes. It can thus play on the misunderstanding of statistical averages. But the result is very meagre. Imagining that the income from work and the income from wealth rains down on everyone, and that everyone with savings contributes to accumulate for new investments, one arrives, after having imposed on the lowest incomes the heavy savings percentage of 12, 16, 20 and even 25%, at nothing more than an instalment of capital stock growth of one per cent per annum, and, marrying this with the increase in productivity, of 2%. These are ridiculous rates: in a century, the annual increase of one per cent only leads to between double and triple the initial capital!

With two per cent you would have that in the hundred years of capitalism's life, social wealth would have just multiplied by seven! And the public in the homeland of billionaires drinks these things!

41. Accounts according to Marx

In the course of this study (No 15 of Programme) we gave the figures of Marx's famous framework of simple reproduction, extended to the ternary society, which were summarised, out of 10,000 of product, in the following parts: Constant capital 6,000, wages 1,500, profits 1,500, rents 1,000. In such a society what is called the national income would be 4,000. Suppose that in the starting year this society consists of one hundred persons, and consider one landowner, two capitalists (in each of the two sections) and 97 workers.

The average individual income is evidently 40. But it results for the landowner 1,000, for the two capitalists 750, for the wage-earners 1,500: 97 or 15.45.

The bourgeois overlords have admitted that one can operate on social models, that one has the right to use as a unit of values a contingent monetary unit despite the fact that it tends to oscillate, and, with their gearing up from a mathematical hypothesis on the laws that govern the model, they have lost any

right to call Marx's construction a tautology, i.e. to brand it as arbitrarily assuming what one wants to find and prove.

Now, which of the two models do you think most resembles the society in which you live?

Let us continue, and promise not to give more formulae, but just a few figures.

In Marx's society, let us pose Spengler's problem: the population grows in a year by one per cent, and yet you want the per capita income not to decrease, but in turn to gain one per cent. How much does one need to accumulate?

The landowner is always one, the entrepreneurs always two, the proletarians rise to 98. Income per inhabitant falls from 40 to 39.65, if everything remains as before, in which case nothing changes for landowners and capitalists; only wage earners fall to 1,500: 98 or 15.30.

But we demand that the average income rises to 40.40, and out of 101 inhabitants that is about 4,080 lire of 'national' income. If the ratios remain the same, it will be divided into 1,020 of income, 1,530 of profits, 1,530 of wages. The workers will have 1,530: 98 or 15.60, earning precisely one per cent.

But whereas in the previous year capitalist advances had been 6,000 for constant capital and 1,500 for wages, i.e. 7,500, they will have to rise to 6,120 plus 1,530 i.e. 7,650. So one will have to save and invest 150 on the previous year's yield.

Who puts out 150? The workers? Never; Marx did not paint the world of capital so gloomy. It will be the capitalist gentlemen who will consume not all the profit of 1,500, but only 1,410 (90 less, six per cent); and the landowner who will consume not 1,000, but 940 (60 less). They will not go into bad health, however their consumption will go up six per cent, while that of the workers will go up one per cent. However, in the coming year the capitalists will gain 1,530 and thus will have lost only 4 per cent, the landowners 1,020 with the same effect.

If this were Marx's plan of progressive reproduction, we would go very slowly. It is evident that with our accumulation formula, the pace is greatly accelerated. It is sufficient to suppose that - by devoting themselves to the famous abstinence - capitalists and owners consume only 85% of their pingy incomes, in order to have a saving of 15% out of 2,500 and thus 375 lire to be brought to capital, as an increase of the 7,500 they started with. The annual rhythm thus rises to 5%. With such a rhythm in a century, the capital becomes 132 times greater.

But it is not at all difficult to save and invest twice as much, 30% profit-return, and bring the instalment to 10%. In that case in a century the capital becomes 4,140 times greater. Things start walking.

42. The word to them

One moment, Spengler and co. will say. You Marxists have the big nail in your coffin of calling capital the annual product, and indeed the annual advance for wages and materials consumed. But in investing for more production, it is not just the extra workers and raw materials you have to pay for, but you have to, at least proportionally, increase all your plant, buying extra machines, extra buildings and so on. According to that ratio you have to set aside five times more.

This is but a play on words that Marx easily gets rid of in his demonstration of progressive accumulation: it serves, as usual, to imply that capitalist assets and real estate figure by their own virtue, beyond that which human labour generates.

However, the objection says nothing. Let us suppose that social wealth is five times the global annual income of the whole of society, which as we know in our example is worth 4,000. We would then have to place savings in relation not to our figure (capital advance, i.e. 7,500) but to this theirs of 5 times 4,000, thus 20,000.

Well, if the gentlemen capitalists and owners set about saving 60 per cent and not just 30 (they will always have a consumption fund of 300 and 400 against the 15 with which those who work live!) they will be able to invest 1,500 a year and calculating the instalment against 20,000 and no longer against 7,500 we will have the annual rate of 7.50 per cent. In a century, capital always becomes 1,380 times greater, a figure congruent with the actual historical course of your magnificent bourgeois society.

But they will say something else. How do you increase the labour force required for the largest investment by 7.50 per cent per year, when the population increases by barely one per cent?

Here their greatest trick comes to the fore: to admit that the labour force is in proportion to the population! The secret of the initial and all subsequent capitalist accumulation was precisely to squeeze more labour power out of the population itself.

At the beginning and at the end of pre-capitalist societies (in which small-scale production prevails even for manufactured goods) the wage-earners, even though they outnumber the selected and skilled craftsmen who need long apprenticeships, are a small proportion of the population. Their entrepreneurs are of course very few, but the average number of workers per capitalist (then personal) firm is still low. Since then, due to the gradual and ferocious expropriation of all the small self-employment facilities of peasants, artisans and petty-bourgeois, the number of proletarians grows, even as a proportion of the population, while the number of capitalists decreases at a rate far faster than the increase in population. Let us be clearer: our 100 inhabitants of the model society were a century ago diluted out of at least a thousand. Today we have at the demographic rate 2,700 'souls', half of them spurious classes, and we are left with the 1,350 that we divide up as follows: the capitalists have gone from 2 not to 28 but let's say to 10, the landowners not to 14 but let's say to 5 (they

are already too many) and the wage earners are 1,335, some 14 times more than at the start. These are symbolic numbers; in reality it goes even further.

As for technical productivity, the increase of one per cent per year is laughable. We refer it to the organic composition of capital. In the beginning each worker processed perhaps twice as much as his pay (in Marx's time, i.e. less than a century ago, it was on average four times as much). Today, in certain industries (e.g. mills) two workers are enough where it used to take a hundred: on average, the processed material is worth at least twenty times the wage, and productivity is at least tenfold. We have already arrived at a labour force 140 times greater, even if we limit population growth to one per cent. This is achieved in one hundred years with an annual increase of just five per cent.

The 'Welfare' model and formula have misfired.

43. Economic history

Marx's classic chapters on primitive accumulation show by which ways the nascent capital satisfied its hunger for labour power. One of them was first the increase to the physical limit of the working day. Then there was the attraction of women and children into the field of work, almost unknown in the artisan ages, made possible by the simplicity of labour acts in collective-labour farms and then in mechanical factories. And finally the emptying of the countryside and urbanism.

One must bear in mind the enormous social differences in production in the countryside and the city. For agriculture, since time immemorial the working population has tended to coincide with the total population, or deviate from it by very little. Not only do men and women work on the land, but also children and the elderly themselves are systematically utilised for suitable even semi-domestic functions. On the other hand, counteracting this totalitarian utilisation of labour power is the limitation of working hours for seasonal reasons and the almost non-existent use of artificial lighting. The working hours in the day fluctuate greatly, but the total annual working hours have a limit that cannot be exceeded.

Corresponding to these conditions, however, the technical productivity of labour has only been able to vary slightly: the very area over which this necessarily extends does not allow the number of workers and subsequent operations to be concentrated in ever smaller spaces.

The phenomena characteristic of capitalism, even considering the introduction of the capitalist enterprise with wage-earning employees in the countryside, could therefore not have the overwhelming rhythm that they had in the city. Much less did co-operative labour and the technical division of labour, which in a short space of time increased the possibilities for the production of manufactured goods a hundredfold.

The latter has thus ineluctably taken labour power away from agriculture, so that all these unfavourable elements end up balancing out the not so much that applied sciences have allowed in terms of production intensity of agricultural commodities, with the same amount of cultivated area.

Hence the classic concerns that, as the general population increases, the volume of food production will not follow - on the contrary, there is nothing to prevent the quantum of production of non-agricultural manufactured goods, products and services from being unrestrainedly exalted. The labour-power made available is sufficient for such overproduction: it would be desirable for the population to increase even more than it does, from the point of view of capital, in order to swallow it up.

The sense therefore of development is for ever greater accumulation of capital, especially industrial capital. With it grows the number of proletarians, both in an absolute sense, and in a relative sense to the total population, forming Marx's great industrial reserve army, made up of nobodies, of men now stripped of all individual reserve, separated from their working conditions, an army that suffers the consequences of the alternating waves of advance and crisis with which historically the general march of accumulation presents itself.

Due to the phenomenon of the concentration of companies, if capital grows, the number of capitalists decreases, and at an advanced stage of the process it decreases both relatively to the population and in absolute value. It is therefore not a sacrifice in the personal standard of living of the privileged that threatens to halt the trend towards accumulation: the social plague, given their small numbers, does not lie in their personal consumption: it was not even when there were many of them, because really then they were dedicated to 'turning the wheel of history forward'.

44. Parasitism and malaise

Today's decrepit capitalism in the West thus has this possibility: to make the consumption of the same generic producer parasitic, by means of the ruffled 'price structure' and 'consumption sectors'.

The accumulation of more capital with the necessary mobilisation of more and more labour power, becoming an end in itself, has meant that every increase in labour productivity, however much it has exceeded all ancient and recent expectations, is aimed at the incentive of producing more.

As long as the economy remains in the corporate and mercantile limit, the solution is not made visible: instead of consuming more in artificial needs, which not only go from necessity to utility, but from this to uselessness, and from this to harmfulness, worse than deprivation, stop saving, accumulating, and reduce the work provided, in the only possible way, that is, by compressing the daily working time.

As has been said in all our propaganda for a century and more, this is the only concrete signification that can take on the liberation, not of the individual, but of the human species from the ruthless necessity determined by the forces of the natural environment in which it moves.

Unable to stop the hellish pace of accumulation, this humanity, a parasite of itself, burns and destroys surpluses and surplus value in a circle of madness,

and makes its conditions of existence more and more uncomfortable and senseless.

The accumulation that made it wise and powerful now renders it mangled and stupefied, until the relationship, the historical function it had, is dialectically reversed.

This shift from 'progressivism', if for a moment the word has any serious meaning, to parasitism, is not of the bourgeois mode of production alone. The feudal mode arose from a useful function of all its classes. The nomad would not have been able to become a farmer, and the already stable one of the classical age would have been swept away and dispersed, if the class of arms wielders had not taken on the task of circumscribing a territory, where they worked and sowed, and defending it from attack until harvest time and afterwards. But in the time of Malthus, this function has historically changed its meaning and the descendants of those ancient leaders do not defend but attack and oppress the wretched labourer of the land.

It is no coincidence that a similar cycle of capitalism has led to the present situation of a monstrous volume of production nine-tenths useless to the healthy life of the human species, and has resulted in a doctrinal superstructure that echoes Malthus' position, invoking, at the cost of asking the forces of hell, consumers who swallow relentlessly what accumulation erupts.

The welfare school, with its claim that individual consumer absorption can soar beyond all limits, swelling the few hours that compulsory work and rest leave to each with equally compulsory steps and rituals and morbid follies, actually expresses the malaise of a society in ruins, and by wanting to write the laws of its survival only confirms the course, perhaps uneven, but inexorable, of its horrible agony.

THE END