Amidst this militant atheism there was, however, a kind of religious fervour and even faith. For Dézamy spoke of 'this sublime devotion which constitutes socialism', and he urged proletarians to re-enter 'the egalitarian church, *outside of which there can be no salvation*'.

Dézamy's arrest and trial in 1844 inspired German communists in Paris such as Arnold Ruge, Moses Hess and Karl Marx, and Hess began to work on a German translation of Dézamy's code, under the encouragement of Marx, who proclaimed the code 'scientific socialist, materialist, and real humanist'.[18]

9.5 Notes

1. Most of the Protestant groups, on the other hand, held the very different, and essentially correct, view that the Norman Conquest imposed state-created feudal-type landed estates on an England which had been much closer to being an idyll of genuine private property.

   Engels and other historians and anthropologists also saw original early communism, or a Golden Age, in primitive, pre-market tribal societies. Modern anthropological research, however, has demonstrated that most primitive and tribal societies were based on private property, money, and market economies. Thus, see Bruce Benson, 'Enforcement of Private Property Rights in Primitive Societies: Law Without Government'. *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, 9 (Winter 1989), pp. 1–26.
2. Something should be said here about the most prominent of these radical groups, the Fifth Monarchists. While not necessarily communists, they were akin to the Anabaptists of the Reformation in that they were post-millennialists who believed that only they, the elect, would be saved. Further, they believed that it was their historical mission to destroy everyone else in the world, so as to liberate the world from sin, and usher in the imminent Second Coming of Jesus and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.
3. We are simplifying here from the often daunting complexities of millennial thought. For example, in the highly developed pre-millennial doctrines of twentieth century 'fundamentalism', the period of the tribulation will be a very hectic seven years, the 'seventieth week' of the *Book of Daniel*, in which not only the Anti-Christ ('The Beast'), but also 'The Dragon" (the Anti-God), the 'False Prophet' (the Anti-Spirit), 'The Scarlet Woman', and many other evil beings will be overcome. Thus, see George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 58–9.
4. In his day and later, Mably was often referred to as an 'abbé', but he had left the clergy early in life.
5. Quoted and translated in Alexander Gray, *The Socialist Tradition* (London: Longmans Green, 1946), p. 87.
6. Ibid., p. 88.
7. Ibid., pp. 90–91.
8. Ibid., pp. 62–3.
9. On Saint-Martin, Eckartshausen and their influence, see the revealing article by Paul Gottfried, 'Utopianism of the Right: Maistre and Schlegel', *Modern Age*, 24 (Spring 1980), pp. 150–60.
10. James H. Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), p. 73.
11. For this phrase and other translated quotes from the *Manifesto*, see Igor Shafarevich, *The Socialist Phenomenon* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), pp. 121–4. Also see Gray, op. cit., note 5, p. 107.
12. Billington, op. cit., note 10, p. 75. Also see Gray, op. cit., note 5, p. 105n. As Gray comments, 'what is desired is the annihilation of all things, trusting that out of the dust of

destruction a fair city may arise. And buoyed by such a hope, how blithely would Babeuf bide the stour', Ibid. p. 105.

13. Except that the important 'class struggle' contributions of the Saint Simonians will be dealt with below.
14. Cabet (1788–1856) had been a distinguished French lawyer and attorney-general of Corsica, but was ousted for radical attitudes toward the French government. After founding a radical journal, Cabet fled into exile in London during the 1830s and virtually became an Owenite. Despite Cabet's nationality, the book was originally written and published in English, and a French translation was published the following year. A peaceful communist rather than a revolutionary, Cabet tried to establish utopian communes in various failed projects in the United States, from 1848 until his death.
15. Billington, op. cit., note 10, p. 243.
16. Billington, op. cit., note 10, p. 257.
17. Billington, op. cit., note 10, p. 251.
18. See J.L. Talmon, *Political Messianism: the Romantic Phase* (New York: Praeger, 1960), p. 157.

10 Marx's vision of communism

10.1 Millennial communism

The key to the intricate and massive system of thought created by Karl Marx (1818–83) is at bottom a simple one: *Karl Marx was a communist.* A seemingly banal or trite statement set alongside Marxism's myriad of jargon-ridden concepts in philosophy, economics, history, culture et al. Yet Marx's devotion to communism was his crucial point, far more central than the dialectic, the class struggle, the theory of surplus value, and all the rest. Communism was the goal, the great end, the desideratum, the ultimate end that would make the sufferings of mankind throughout history worthwhile. History is the history of suffering, of class struggle, of the exploitation of man by man. In the same way as the return of the Messiah, in Christian theology, would put an end to history and establish a new Heaven and a new Earth, so the establishment of communism would put an end to human history. And just as for post-millennial Christians, man, led by God's prophets and saints, would establish a Kingdom of God on Earth (and, for pre-millennials, Jesus would have many human assistants in establishing such a Kingdom), so for Marx and other schools of communists, mankind, led by a vanguard of secular saints, would establish a secularized kingdom of heaven on earth.

In messianic religious movements, the millennium is invariably established by a mighty, violent upheaval, an Armageddon, a great apocalyptic war between good and evil. After this titanic conflict, a millennium, a new age, of peace and harmony, a reign of justice, would be established upon the earth.

Marx emphatically rejected those utopians who aimed to arrive at communism through a gradual and evolutionary process, through a steady advancement of the good. No, Marx harked back to the apocalyptics, the post-millennial coercive German and Dutch Anabaptists of the sixteenth century, to the millennial sects during the English Civil War, and to the various groups of pre-millennial Christians who foresaw a bloody Armageddon at the Last Days, before the millennium could be established. Indeed, since the immediatist post-mils refused to wait for gradual goodness and sainthood to permeate among men, they joined the pre-mils in believing that only a violent apocalyptic final struggle between good and evil, between saints and sinners, could establish the millennium. Violent, worldwide revolution, in Marx's version made by the oppressed proletariat, would be the instrument of the advent of his millennium, communism.

In fact, Marx, like the pre-mils (or 'millenarians') went further to hold that the reign of evil on earth would reach a peak just before the apocalypse. For Marx as for the millenarians, writes Ernest Tuveson,

> The evil of the world must proceed to its height before, in one great complete root-and-branch upheaval, it would be swept away...

> Millenarian pessimism about the perfectibility of the existing world is crossed by a supreme optimism. History, the millenarian believes, so operates that, when evil has reached its height, the hopeless situation will be reversed. The original, the true harmonious state of society, in some kind of egalitarian order, will be re-established.[1]

In contrast to the various groups of utopian socialists, and in common with religious messianists, Karl Marx did not sketch the features of his future communism in any detail. Not for Marx, for example, to spell out the number of people in his utopia, and the shape and location of their houses, the pattern of their cities. In the first place, there is a quintessentially crazy air to utopias that are mapped by their creators in precise detail. But more importantly, spelling out the details of one's ideal society removes the crucial element of awe and mystery from the allegedly inevitable world of the future. In the same way, science fiction movies lose their glamour and excitement when, in the second half of the film, the mysterious, powerful and previously invisible monsters become concretized into slow-moving green blob-like creatures that have lost their mysterious aura and have become almost commonplace.

But certain features are broadly alike in all visions of communism. Private property is eliminated, individualism goes by the board, individuality is flattened, all property is owned and controlled communally, and the individual units of the new collective organism are in some vague way equal to one another.

This millennialist emphasis on the collective is a long way from the orthodox Christian, Augustinian, stress on the individual soul and his salvation. In orthodox, a-millennial Christianity, the individual does or does not achieve salvation, until Jesus returns and puts an end to history, and ushers in the Day of Judgement. There is no millennium on earth; the Kingdom of God remains safely, and appropriately, in heaven. But millennialism's emphasis on achieving a Kingdom of God *on earth* inevitably stressed – especially in the required human agency of the post-millennialists – the inevitable collective march toward the Kingdom in and through history. In what we may call the 'immediatist' version of post-mil doctrine, as we have seen in Volume I in the Brethren of the Free Spirit, the coercive Anabaptists of the Reformation, in Christian communists and in a secularized version in Marxism, the object is to seize immediate power in a violent revolution, and to purge the world of sinners and heretics, i.e. all who are not followers of the sect in question, so as to establish the millennium, the precondition of Jesus's Second Advent. In contrast, the *gradualist* post-mils, in less violent and precipitate fashion, who would seize control of most of the Protestant churches in the northern United States during the nineteenth century, wanted to use state power to coerce morality and virtue and then establish the Kingdom of God, not only in the US, but throughout the world. As one historian penetratingly concludes about

one of the most prominent post-mil economists and social scientists of the late nineteenth century – a passage that could apply to the entire movement:

> In [Richard T.] Ely's eyes, government was the God-given instrument through which we had to work. Its preeminence as a divine instrument was based on the post-Reformation abolition of the division between the sacred and the secular and on the State's power to implement ethical solutions to public problems. The same identification of sacred and secular...enabled Ely to both divinize the state and socialize Christianity: he thought of government as God's major instrument of redemption...[2]

Gradualists or immediatists, all millennialists have caused grave social and political trouble by 'immanentizing the eschaton' – in the political philosopher Eric Voegelin's infelicitously worded but highly perceptive phrase. As an orthodox Christian, Voegelin believed that 'the eschaton' – the Final Days, the Kingdom of God – must be kept strictly out of earthly matters and be confined to the other-worldly realms of Heaven and Hell. But to take the 'eschaton' out of Heaven and bring it down into the processes of human history, is to create grave problems and consequences: consequences which Voegelin saw embodied in such immanent and messianic movements as Marxism and Nazism.

In common with other utopian socialists and communists, Marx sought in communism the apotheosis of the collective species – mankind as one new super-being, in which the only meaning possessed by the individual is as a negligible particle of that collective organism. One incisive portrayal of Marxian collective organicism – what amounts to a celebration of the New Socialist Man to be created during the communizing process – was that of a top Bolshevik theoretician of the early twentieth century, Alexander Alexandrovich Bogdanov (1873–1928). Bogdanov, like Joachim of Fiore, spoke of 'three ages' of human history: first was a religious, authoritarian society and a self-sufficient economy. Next came the 'second age', an exchange economy, marked by diversity and the emergence of 'autonomy' of the 'individual human personality'. But this individualism, at first progressive, later becomes an obstacle to progress as it hampers and 'contradicts the unifying tendencies of the machine age'. But then there will arise the third age, the final stage of history, communism, though not as with Joachim, an age of the Holy Spirit. This last stage will be marked by a collective self-sufficient economy, and by

> the fusion of personal lives into one colossal whole, harmonious in the relations of its parts, systematically grouping all elements for one common struggle – struggle against the endless spontaneity of nature...An enormous mass of creative activity...is necessary in order to solve this task. It demands the forces not of man but of mankind – and only in working at this task does mankind as such emerge.[3]

The acme of messianic communism appears in the frenzied three-volume phantasmagoria by the notable German blend of Christian messianist and Marxist–Leninist–Stalinist, Ernst Bloch (1885–1977). Bloch held that the 'inner truth' of things could only be discovered after 'a complete transformation of the universe, a grand apocalypse, the descent of the Messiah, a new heaven, and a new earth'. As J.P. Stern writes in his review of Bloch's three-volume *Principle of Hope*, the book contains such remarkable declamations as '*Ubi Lenin, ibi Jerusalem*' ('Where Lenin is, there is Jerusalem'), and that 'the Bolshevist fulfillment of Communism' is part and parcel of 'the age-old fight for God'. There is also more than a hint, in Bloch, that disease, nay even death itself, will be abolished upon the advent of communism.[4]

In contrast, there is no more eloquent championing of orthodox Christian individualism and revulsion against collectivism, than G.K. Chesterton's critique of the views of a leading Fabian socialist, Mrs Annie Besant – in which Chesterton swats Mrs Besant's pantheistic Buddhism:

> According to Mrs Besant the universal Church is simply the universal Self. It is the doctrine that we are really all one person; that there are no real walls of individuality between man and man... She does not tell us to love our neighbor; she tells us to be our neighbors...the intellectual abyss between Buddhism and Christianity is that, for the Buddhist or theosophist, personality is the fall of man, for the Christian it is the purpose of God, the whole point of his cosmic idea.[5]

Let us turn to some of the main features of communism. In the typical communal millennial future, an epoch of bliss and harmony, *work*, the necessity to labour, becomes de-emphasized or disappears altogether. Labour, at least labour in order to maintain and advance one's living standards, does not ring true with very many people as a feature of utopia. Thus, in the vision of Joachim of Fiore, perhaps the first medieval millennialist, no work would be required to disturb the endless round of celebration and prayer, because mankind would have achieved the status of immaterial objects. If man were pure spirit, it is true that the economic problem – the problem of production and living standards – would necessarily disappear. Unfortunately, however, Marx, being an atheist and materialist, could not exactly fall back on a Fiore-like communism of pure spirit. How could solidly material human beings solve the problem of production and of maintaining and expanding their living standards?

There was method in Marx's refusal to treat the communist stage in any detail. His utopia was shadowy. On the one hand, Marx assumed and asserted that goods in the future communist society would be superabundant. If so, there would of course be no need to refer to the universal economic problem of scarcity of means and resources as applied to ends. But by assuming away the problem, Marx bequeathed the puzzle to future generations, and Marxists

have been split on the question: will communism itself bring about this magical state of superabundance, or should we wait *until* capitalism brings superabundance before we establish communism? Generally, Marxist groups have solved this problem, not in theory but in practice (or 'praxis') by cleaving to whatever path would allow them either to conquer or to maintain their power. Thus Marxist vanguards or parties, on seeing an opportunity to seize power, have been invariably willing to skip the 'stages of history' pre-ordained by their Master and exercise their revolutionary will. On the other hand, Marxist élites already entrenched in power have prudentially put off the ultimate goal of communism ever further into a receding future. And so the Soviets were quick to stress hard work and gradualism in persevering toward the ultimate goal.[6]

There are several other probable reasons for Marx's failure to detail the features of ultimate communism, or, indeed, of the necessary stages to achieve it. First is that Marx had no interest in the economic features of his utopia; a simple question-begging assumption of unlimited abundance was enough. His main interest, as we shall see, was in the philosophic, indeed religious, aspects of communism. Second, communism for Marx was an inverted form of Hegel and his philosophy of history; it was the revolutionary end to Marx's neo-Hegelian version of 'alienation' and of the 'dialectic' process by which the *aufhebung* (transcendence) and negation of one historical stage is replaced by another and opposing one. In this case: the negation of the evil condition of private property and the division of labour, and the establishment of communism, in which man's unity with man and nature is achieved. To Marx, as to Hegel, history necessarily proceeds by this magical dialectic, in which one stage gives rise inevitably to a later and opposing stage. Except that to Marx, the 'dialectic' is material rather than spiritual.[7] Marx never published his neo-Hegelian *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in which the philosophic basis of Marxism was set forth, and one essay of which, 'Private Property and Communism', contained Marx's fullest exposition of the communist society. One reason for his refusal to publish was that, in later decades, Hegelian philosophy had gone out of fashion, even in Germany, and Marx's followers were interested more in the economic and revolutionary aspects of Marxism.

10.2 Raw communism

Another important reason for Marx's failure to publish was his candid depiction of the communist society in the essay 'Private Property and Communism'. In addition to its being philosophic and not economic, he portrayed a horrifying but allegedly necessary stage of society immediately *after* the necessary violent world revolution of the proletariat, and before ultimate communism is to be finally achieved. Marx's post-revolutionary society, that

of 'unthinking' or 'raw' communism, was not such as to spur the revolutionary energies of the Marxian faithful.

For Marx took to heart two bitter critiques of communism that had become prominent in Europe. One was by the French mutualist anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, who denounced communism as 'oppression and slavery', and to whom Marx explicitly referred in his essay. The other was a fascinating book by the conservative Hegelian monarchist Lorenz von Stein (1815–1890), who had been assigned by the Prussian government in 1840 to study the unsettling new doctrines of socialism and communism becoming rampant in France. Not only did Marx show a 'minute textual familiarity' with Stein's subsequent book of 1842, but he actually based his concept of the proletariat as the foundation and the engine of the world revolution on Stein's insights into the new revolutionary doctrines as rationalizations of the class interests of the proletariat.[8]

Most remarkably, Marx admittedly agreed with Proudhon's, and particularly Stein's, portrayal of the first stage of the post-revolutionary society, which he agreed with Stein to call 'raw communism'. Stein forecast that raw communism would be an attempt to enforce egalitarianism by wildly and ferociously expropriating and destroying property, confiscating it, and coercively communizing women as well as material wealth. Indeed, Marx's evaluation of raw communism, the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat, was even more negative than Stein's: 'In the same way as woman is to abandon marriage for general [i.e. universal] prostitution, so the whole world of wealth, that is, the objective being of man, is to abandon the relation of exclusive marriage with the private property owner for the relation of general prostitution with the community.' Not only that, but as Professor Tucker puts it, Marx concedes that 'raw communism is not the real transcendence of private property but only the universalizing of it, not the overcoming of greed but only the generalizing of it, and not the abolition of labour but only its extension to all men. It is merely a new form in which the vileness of private property comes to the surface'. In short, in the stage of communalization of private property, what Marx himself considers the worst features of private property will be maximized. Not only that: but Marx concedes the truth of the charge of anti-communists then and now that communism and communization is but the expression in Marx's words, of 'envy and a desire to reduce all to a common level'. Far from leading to a flowering of human personality as Marx is supposed to claim, he admits that communism will negate it totally. Thus Marx:

> In completely negating the *personality* of men, this type of communism is really nothing but the logical expression of private property. General *envy*, constituting itself as power, is the disguise in which *greed* re-establishes itself and satisfies

> itself, only in *another* way ...In the approach to *woman* as the spoil and handmaid of communal lust is pressed the infinite degradation in which man exists for himself.[9]

All in all, Marx's portrayal of raw communism is very like the monstrous regimes imposed by the coercive Anabaptists of the sixteenth century.[10]

Professor Tucker adds, perhaps underlining the obvious, that 'These vivid indications from the Paris manuscripts of the way in which Marx envisaged and evaluated the immediate post-revolutionary period very probably explain the extreme reticence that he always later showed on this topic in his published writings.'[11]

But if this communism is admittedly so monstrous, a regime of 'infinite degradation', why should anyone favour it, much less dedicate one's life and fight a bloody revolution to establish it? Here, as so often in Marx's thought and writings, he falls back on the mystique of the 'dialectic' – that wondrous magic word by which one social system inevitably gives rise to its victorious transcendence and negation. And, in this case, by which total evil – which interestingly enough, turns out to be the post-revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and not preceding capitalism – becomes transformed into total good.

To say the least, Marx cannot and does not attempt to explain how a system of total greed becomes transformed into total greedlessness. He leaves it all to the wizardry of the dialectic, now a dialectic fatally shorn of the alleged motor of the class struggle, which yet somehow transforms the monstrosity of raw communism into the paradise of communism's 'higher stage'.

10.3 Higher communism and the eradication of the division of labour

The Hell of the first, or lower, stage of communism has been vividly expressed by Marx. What of the Heaven of the higher stage, of the 'positive humanism' of ultimate communism? Unfortunately, Heaven's features are vague and murky indeed, perhaps too insubstantial, if Marx had published his *Manuscripts*, to overcome the all too palpable horrors of raw communism. The key is that man is supposedly freed from the necessity of labour. The elimination of private property frees him from greed, succeeding the orgiastic culmination of greed achieved during raw communism. In particular, man is freed from the division of labour, from specialization, which prevents him from developing 'all' his faculties for the sheer joy of it, and 'forces' him to work for others – either in the market, or under the despotic power of feudalism, or oriental despotism, or under the dictatorship of the proletariat in the first stage of communism. Without the division of labour, and with the evil of exchange of goods and services at last eliminated, man is now freed from the 'alienation' of not consuming his own product. This alienation is not, as many Marxists seem to believe, the result of the capitalists' alleged

extraction of the 'surplus' produced by the workers. More deeply, this alienation is the product of the division of labour and of specialization itself. That division eliminated, man, in the neo-Hegelian mystique of Marx, will return 'to himself', will be united with 'himself', and alienation will then be ended.

All this makes a kind of sense only if one realizes that, for Marx as for Hegel, 'man' is a collective and not an individual organic entity. For Hegel and for Marx, the history of 'man' is the history, the ups and downs, of what amounts to a single collective organism. If, for Marx, there is a division of labour, specialization and exchange, this means that 'man' is tragically split within 'himself', so that the process of achieving the higher stage of communism, the end of human history in the same way that the Kingdom of God on earth had been an end, is a process by which man is no longer alienated from his collective 'self' and achieves unity with himself. At the same time, 'he' also achieves unity with 'nature', for in the Marxian system the only 'nature' is that which has been created by centuries of man's labour and activity. Thus, as Robert Tucker points out, Friedrich Engels's famous statement about communism has been misinterpreted widely, not least by Marxists unfamiliar with the philosophical nature of their own system. Friedrich Engels (1820–95) wrote, in his *Anti-Dühring*:

> The whole sphere of the conditions of life which environ man, and which have hitherto ruled man, now comes under the dominion and control of man, who for the first time becomes the real, conscious lord of Nature, because he has now become master of his own social organization...Man's own social organisation, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by Nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces that have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself... It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.[12]

As Tucker points out, to the reader unfamiliar with Marxian philosophy, this passage might well be construed as referring to man's mastery of nature via technology. However,

> in actuality, it refers to the mastery of technology as man's own nature outside himself. The kingdom of necessity is the alienated world of history, the realm of object-bondage. The 'extraneous objective forces' over which man is to become lord in the kingdom of freedom are understood as the externalized forces of the species-self. The nature to which man will no longer be subservient is his own nature.[13]

In short, as in many other places in Marx, a passage which at least superficially seems to contain at least a modicum of sense – although fallacious – turns out on deeper study to be but a part of the mumbo-jumbo of Marx's neo-Hegelian philosophy.

Particularly important for Marx is that communism does away with the division of labour. By being free of specialization, the division of labour, and working for others (including the consumers) man as labourer is freed from all limits. Thus liberated, 'man produces in order to realize his nature as a being with manifold creative capacities requiring free outlet in a "totality of human life-activities"'.[14] Or, as Engels put it in his *Anti-Dühring*, the disappearance of the division of labour will mean that productive labour will give 'each individual the opportunity to develop all his faculties, physical and mental, in all directions and exercise them to the full'.

The idea of everyone developing all of their faculties 'in all directions' is mind-boggling, and conjures up the absurd picture of a world of autistic dilettantes, each heedless of social demand for their services or products, and each dabbling whimsically and sporadically in every activity. This image is confirmed by Marx's most famous passage describing the communist system in Part I of his 'The German Ideology', an unpublished essay written in 1845–46. There he writes that communism 'corresponds to the development of individuals into complete individuals and the casting off of all natural limitations'. How are 'all natural limitations' cast off? – a tall order indeed. Let Marx explain. As soon as the division

> of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him...He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.[15]

One of the most apt comments on this passage is the witty *mot* of Alexander Gray. 'A short weekend on a farm might have convinced Marx that the cattle themselves might have some objection to being reared in this casual manner, in the evening.' More broadly, Gray remarks 'that each individual should have the opportunity of developing *all* his faculties, physical *and* mental in all directions, is a dream which will cheer the vision only of the simple-minded, oblivious of the restrictions imposed by the narrow limits of human life'. 'For life', Gray points out, 'is a series of acts of choice, and each choice is at the same time a renunciation...'. The necessity of choice, Gray perceptively reminds us, will exist even under communism:

> Even the inhabitant of Engels' future fairyland will have to decide sooner or later whether he wishes to be Archbishop of Canterbury or First Sea Lord, whether he

> should seek to excel as a violinist or as a pugilist, whether he should elect to know all about Chinese literature or about the hidden pages in the life of the mackerel.[16]

The abolition of the division of labour meant also that all differences – and hence 'opposition' – between town and country had to be eliminated, with industry somehow equally diffused throughout the country (the world?). As a result, all large cities would have to be destroyed. As Engels said in *Anti-Dühring*: 'it is true that in the huge towns civilization has bequeathed to us a heritage which it will take much time and trouble to get rid of. But it must and will be got rid of, however protracted a process it may be.'[17]

It is not surprising that the Soviet authorities did not take a very favourable view of Marxian communism. Marxian pieties can go just so far. Thus, the Soviet Communist Party's theoretical journal *Kommunist* referred favourably to the unpublished work of a Soviet economist, V.M. Kriukov, who wrote that

> An unintelligent person and philistine might form his own picture of communism approximately as follows: you rise in the morning and ask yourself, where shall I go to work today – shall I be chief engineer at the factory or go and head the fishing brigade? Or shall I run down to Moscow and hold an urgent meeting of the presidium of the Academy of Science?

Kommunist adds the warning: 'It will not be so.' No doubt, and quite sensibly. But of course the Soviet authorities did not acknowledge the fact that by repudiating this 'unintelligent' notion they were renouncing the key to the whole Marxian system, the point and goal of the entire struggle.[18]

More importantly, the Soviet authorities jettisoned the basic goal of Marxism by abandoning the idea that communism will eliminate the division of labour. The revision began with Stalin's last work in 1952, shortly before his death, and intensified after that. Evading and sometimes falsifying the writings of the Founders, the Soviet revisionists were relatively sound in realism and economics but weak on the Marxian heritage. Sometimes, the Soviet experts simply and sharply stated the facts: 'A man cannot do literally everything'; 'In the system of Communist production relations, the division and specialization of labour will remain essential'; and 'It is absolutely obvious that Communist society would be unthinkable without a constantly developing and intensifying division of labour'. Substitute the words 'modern' or 'industrial' for 'communist' and the Soviet economists were right on the mark. But in what sense is this 'communism' any longer?[19]

Six years before *Anti-Dühring*, moreover, Engels betrayed the entire Marxian vision in the course of a bitter polemic against the anarchists. In defending the idea of authoritarianism under communism, Engels reminded the self-styled anti-authoritarian anarchists that 'a revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population

imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets, and cannon–authoritarian means...'. But more importantly, Engels jeered at the idea that there will be no authoritarianism, and hence no division of labour, in a communist factory. Engels pointed out that factory production requires both, and also demands that the workers subordinate themselves to technological necessity. Thus: 'keeping the machines going requires an engineer to look after the steam engine, mechanics to make the current repairs, and many other labourers whose business it is to transfer the products...'. Moreover, he pointed out, technology and the forces of nature subject man 'to a veritable despotism independent of all social organization'. 'Wanting to abolish authority in large-scale industry', Engels warned, 'is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself, to destroy the power loom in order to return to the spinning wheel'.[20]

Refreshingly sober words, no doubt, but totally alien to the spirit of Marxism and certainly to all that Marx said or wrote on the topic, as well as most other writings of Engels. To Marx, all labour in future communism is not economic, but *artistic*, the free and spontaneous creativity allegedly typical of the artist. For Marx in his economic *magnum opus*, *Capital*, communist man has been transformed from an alienated man into an aesthetic man who regards everything in artistic terms. Thus, on the factory, industrial production under communism will have no authoritarian direction but rather unity will be achieved as with musicians in a symphony orchestra.

Engels, however, was an interesting case. A bit more of an economist than Marx, and the man who introduced his friend and partner to British classical economics, Engels was capable of alternating the wildest utopian fantasies of communism with a suddenly perceptive insight into its economic difficulties. Thus, even in *Anti-Dühring* Engels at one point admits that 'the task of economic science', as capitalism moves forward rapidly and inexorably to its collapse, is 'to uncover amid the changes of the economic transition the elements of the future new organisation of production and exchange which will remove the previous malfunctioning (of the capitalist economy)'. It was never a task, however, that either Engels or Marx would ever bother to take up.

Furthermore, in 'The Principles of Communism', an essay written in late 1847 that became the first draft for the *Communist Manifesto*, Engels laid bare one of the crucial, usually implicit, assumptions of the communist society – that superabundance will have eliminated the problem of scarcity:

> Private property can be abolished only when the economy is capable of producing the volume of goods needed to satisfy everyone's requirements...The new rate of industrial growth will produce enough goods to satisfy all the demands of society...Society will achieve an output sufficient for the needs of all members,

This superabundant production somehow will have been achieved by a wondrous technological progress that would eliminate the need for any division of labour.

Engels, however, in the midst of this bold assumption, felt compelled to waffle, and to admit that this communist millennium could not be achieved 'immediately', or 'at one blow'. For 'it would not be possible immediately to expand the existing forces of production to such an extent that enough goods could be made to satisfy all the needs of the community'. During the transition period, at least, says Engels, 'industry will have to be run by society as a whole for everybody's benefit. It must be operated by all members of society in accordance with a common plan...Private property will also have to be abolished and it must be replaced by the sharing of all products in accordance with an agreed plan'.[21]

Any believer in the labour theory of value who tried to set forth a scheme of economic calculation under socialism would likely fasten on the idea of setting prices, and paying wages, in accordance with the labour time expended on production. The issue of labour-time tickets was precisely the plan proposed by Robert Owen, by the Ricardian individualist-anarchist Josiah Warren, and by the German Ricardian socialist Johann Karl Rodbertus (1805–75). One of Friedrich Engels's most penetrating economic insights came in the course of demolishing the labour-ticket money utopian socialism of Rodbertus, a beloved figure in Germany at that time.[22]

Engels denounced the Rodbertus doctrine in a preface to the first German edition of Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy*, the year after Marx's death (1884). Here Engels had the impudence to condemn Rodbertus's labour money as 'childishly naive', and to press on to scorn Rodbertus for overlooking economic law and the competitive market process:

> To desire in a society of producers who exchange their commodities, to establish the determination of value by labour time, by forbidding competition to establish this determination of value through pressure on prices in the only way in which it can be established, is therefore merely to prove that...one has adopted the usual Utopian disdain of economic laws.

Engels goes on to assert that competition, by 'bringing into operation the laws of value of commodity production in a society of producers who exchange their commodities', creates the only possible organization of social production 'in the circumstances'. Engels goes on to engage in a scornful and perceptive critique of socialist attempts at calculation (at the very least of the Rodbertus variety):

> Only through the undervaluation and overvaluation of products is it forcibly brought home to the individual commodity producers what things and what quan-

> tity of them society requires or does not require. But it is just this sole regulator that the Utopia in which Rodbertus also shares would abolish. And if we have to ask what guarantee we have that the necessary quantity and not more of each product will be produced, that we shall not go hungry in regard to corn and meat, while we are choked in beet sugar and drowned in potato spirit, that we shall not lack trousers to cover our nakedness while trouser buttons flood us in millions – Rodbertus triumphantly shows us his famous calculation, according to which the correct certificate has been handed out for every superfluous pound of sugar, for every unsold barrel of spirit, for every unusable trouser button, a calculation which 'works out' exactly, and according to which 'all claims will be satisfied and the liquidation correctly brought about'.[23]

Engels adds that 'If now competition is to be forbidden to make the individual producers aware, by the rise or fall of prices, how the world market stands, then their eyes are completely blinded'.

Professor Hutchison's comment on this performance by Engels is all too *à propos*:

> Mises and Hayek could hardly have made the point more forcefully. What is most extraordinary is the combination of penetrating critical insight regarding the vital function of the competitive price mechanism as applied to the Utopian notions of Rodbertus together with the totally uncritical, purblind complacency regarding his own and Marx's Utopian assumptions (as he himself had earlier revealed them in his 'Principles of Communism' in such irresponsible vacuities as 'the joint and planned exploitation of the forces of production by society as a whole')....The hordes of infallible Prussian officials and 'the Prussian State Socialism', for relying on which Engels so castigates Rodbertus, would inevitably be required (and, of course, have been deployed) many times over for Engels's and Marx's own Utopian 'planning'.[24]

But such few perceptions on the part of Engels come under the category of what he himself once called 'howlers'. Apart from them, ultimate communism was naively to achieve the transcendence of both work and the division of labour. But that is not all. Along with the transcendence and negation of private property will come the negation of virtually all aspects of modern civilization, which Marx also considered 'subsidiary modes of production' alienating man from his supposed true nature. Thus:

> Religion, the family, the state, law, morality, science, art, etc., are only *particular* modes of production, and fall under its general law. The positive transcendence of *private property*, as the appropriation of *human* living, is, therefore the positive transcendence of all alienation and thus the return of man from religion, the family, the state, etc., to his *human*, i.e. *social* existence. (Italics are Marx's)[25]

But if all these cherished institutions are to be rudely stripped from man, what then remains to this poor, 'liberated' creature? For make no mistake,

these post-Marxian creatures would be deprived of all human interrelations that make up a society. These 'complete' individuals would be deprived of law, family, custom, religion, and, of course, of all exchange of goods and services, i.e. they would be complete, hermetically sealed creatures each isolated from everyone else. Ironically, then, leftists who habitually though falsely denounce individualist thinkers for advocating a world of isolated 'atomistic', hermetically sealed individuals, themselves worship a theorist whose vision of the ideal future is precisely of such a monstrous world. At the same time, of course, each will have the consolation of knowing that they are all trivial particles in a mighty collective organism now united with 'itself' – and that any vagueness or inconsistency in this picture will be resolved by the sorcery of the 'dialectic', in which all contradictions transcend their negations into a higher unity.[26]

What will allegedly be left to man under communism is a new and bizarre form of art or aesthetics. Man will be stripped of wealth and possessions, but he will be far 'richer' in another sense: unalienated, and fulfilling himself in all directions, he will approach his own creations rich in the appreciation of beauty. He will be, in the words of Marx in 'Private Property and Communism', a '*rich man profoundly endowed with all the senses*', he will realize his natural tendency to arrange all things 'according to the laws of beauty'. Until communism man's appreciation of beauty had been sullied by greed and possession. But, for Marx, *having*, possessing, implies the 'simple alienation of all the [physical and spiritual] human senses...'.

Professor Tucker, who has done much to explicate Marx's vision of communism, concludes that 'economic activity will turn into artistic activity...and the planet itself will become the new man's work of art. The alienated world will give way to the aesthetic world'. But, if ultimate communism abandons and eliminates all sense of having, of ownership, in order to liberate man for purely aesthetic creation and contemplation, then communism *itself* must be transcended, since even communism implies some form of having or possessing. As Tucker points out, 'Consequently, the final condition of man will be beyond all ownership, beyond the property principle, and in this sense *beyond communism*'.[27] Hence Marx ends his fullest discussion of communism (in 'Private Property and Communism') with these faintly ominous sentences:

> Communism is the position as the negation of the negation, and hence the *actual* phase necessary for the next stage of historical development in the process of human emancipation and recovery. *Communism* is the necessary pattern and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism as such is not the goal of human development – the structure of human society.[28]