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MARX

*Early Political
Writings*

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'Critical Marginal Notes on "The King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian"': I, 2, 445-63.

'The German Ideology. Chapter One': *Probeband*, 33-117 (with close consultation of Hiromatsu's edition).

We used the 1927-32 *MEGA* (or *MEGA*¹) with its section, vol., and page numbers for the following:

'Points on the State and Bourgeois Society': I, 5, 532.

Notes 'On Feuerbach': I, 5, 533-5.

The *MEW* edition, vol. and page numbers given, was the basis for:

Address 'On Poland': 4, 416-17.

For the *Poverty of Philosophy* (excerpt) we used Karl Marx, *Œuvres* vol. 1 (1963), pp. 134-6.

The excerpts from the 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right' and the entire 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right Introduction' are revised versions of material first published in Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, ed. J. O'Malley, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

In doing our translation we consulted at times English versions of David McLellan, Martin Milligan, and W. Lough, and throughout we consulted the French versions of Maximilien Rubel.

From the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (1843)

[Hegel's Mystification of the State]

[In §262 of *The Philosophy of Right* Hegel says that] the manner and means of the state's mediation with the family and civil society are 'circumstances, arbitrary will, and personal choice of vocation'. Accordingly, the rationality of the state has nothing to do with the division of the material of the state into family and civil society. The state results from them in an unconscious and arbitrary way. Family and civil society appear as the dark natural ground from which the light of the state emerges. 'Material of the state' here means the *business* of the state, i.e. family and civil society, in so far as they constitute components of the state and, as such, participate in the state.

This development is remarkable in two respects.

(1) Family and civil society are conceived of as *spheres of the concept* of the state, specifically as spheres of its *finiteness*, as *its finiteness*. It is the state which *divides* itself, which *presupposes* them, and indeed *does* this only in order to emerge from its ideality and become *infinite* and actual spirit for itself . . . The so-called 'actual Idea' (spirit as infinite, actual) is described as though it acted according to a determinate principle and toward a determinate end. It divides itself into finite spheres, and it does this 'in order to return to itself, to be for itself', and it does this such that things turn out exactly as they are.

Here [Hegel's] logical, pantheistic mysticism is clearly evident.

The *actual* situation is this: 'the allocation' of the material of the state 'to the individual is mediated by circumstances, arbitrary will, and personal choice of vocation'. This fact, this *actual situation* is expressed by speculative philosophy as *appearance*, as *phenomenon*.

These circumstances, this arbitrary will, this choice of vocation, this *actual mediation* are merely the *phenomenal* side of a *mediation* which the actual Idea undertakes with itself and which goes on behind the scenes. Actuality is not expressed as itself but rather as another reality. Ordinary empirical existence does not have its own spirit but something alien for its spirit, while on the other hand the actual Idea does not have an actuality developed out of itself, but rather has as its existence what is ordinary and empirical.

The Idea is made into a subject and the *actual* relationship of family and civil society is conceived to be its *inner imaginary* activity. Family and civil society are the presuppositions of the state; they are what is really active; but in speculative philosophy it is reversed. But if the Idea is made subject, then the actual subjects – civil society, family, ‘circumstances, arbitrary will, etc.’ – become *unreal* and take on another meaning, that of objective moments of the Idea.

[(2)] The ‘circumstances, arbitrary will, and personal choice of vocation’, through which the material of the state is assigned ‘to the individual’, are not clearly said to be things that are genuine, necessary, and justified in and for themselves; they are *as such* not declared rational; but then again they are so declared, but only in so far as they are presented as the phenomena of a mediation which leaves them as they are but allows them to acquire the meaning of a determination of the Idea, a result and product of the Idea. The difference lies not in the content, but in the way of considering it, or in the *manner of speaking*. There is a two-fold history, one esoteric and one exoteric. The content lies in the exoteric side. On the esoteric side the interest is always recovering the history of the logical concept in the state. But it is on the exoteric side that the real development goes forward.

Taken rationally, Hegel's sentences mean only the following:

The family and civil society are components of the state. The material of the state is divided amongst them ‘through circumstances, arbitrary will, and personal choice of vocation’. The citizens of the state are members of families and members of civil society . . . Family and civil society are actual components of the state, actual spiritual existences of the will; they are the state's modes of existence; family and civil society make *themselves* into the state. They are the active force. According to Hegel they are, on the contrary, *made* by the actual Idea; it is not their own life's course that unites them into

the state, but rather the life's course of the Idea, which has distinguished them from itself; and they are precisely the finiteness of this Idea; they owe their existence to a spirit other than their own; they are determinations established by a third party, not self-determinations . . . [But] the political state cannot exist without the natural basis of the family and the artificial basis of civil society; they are the state's *conditio sine qua non*; but [with Hegel] the conditions are put forward as what is conditioned, what determines as what is determined, the producer as the product of its product. The actual Idea reduces itself into the ‘finiteness’ of family and civil society in order to enjoy and to bring forth its infinity through their supersession . . . The state is composed of [the mass of human beings], and this, its composition is expressed here as an action of the Idea, as an ‘allocation’ which it undertakes with its own material. The fact is that the state issues from the mass of human beings existing as members of families and members of civil society; but speculative philosophy expresses this fact as an achievement of the Idea, not the idea of the mass of human beings, but as the deed of an Idea-Subject different from the fact itself . . . Thus empirical actuality is admitted just as it is and is also said to be rational, but not rational because of its own reason, but because the empirical fact in its empirical existence has a significance other than itself. The fact, which is the starting-point, is not conceived to be such but rather to be the mystical result. The actual becomes phenomenon; but the Idea has no other content than this phenomenon. And the Idea has no other than the logical aim, namely ‘to become infinite and actual spirit for itself’. In this [§262] is contained the entire mystery of the Philosophy of Right and of Hegelian philosophy in general.

[On Sovereignty, Monarchy, and Democracy]

The activities and functions of the state are attached to individuals (it is only through individuals that the state acts), but not to the individual as *physical* but as *political*; they are attached to the *political quality* of the individual. So it is ludicrous to say, as Hegel does [in §277] that it is in an ‘external and contingent’ way that these offices are linked with ‘particular personalities’. On the contrary, they are linked with them by a *vinculum substantiale*, by reason of an essential quality of particular personalities. These offices are the natural action