Karl Marx

selected writings

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On the Jewish Question

Marx wrote this review article for the *Deutsch—französische Jahrbücher* in Kreuznach before he left for Paris in October 1843. Bruno Bauer had recently published two essays asserting that, in order to be able to live together, both Jews and Christians had to renounce what separated them—religion. Thus it was not only Jews but all men who needed emancipation. Civil rights were inconceivable in an absolute state with an established religion. Religious prejudice and religious separation would vanish when civil and religious castes and privileges were abolished and all men made 'equal' in the sense of the French Revolution or the American Constitution. Marx agrees with Bauer but complains that he has not gone far enough: Bauer subjects to criticism only the 'Christian state' and not the state as such, and thus fails to examine the relationship of political emancipation—that is, the granting of merely political rights—to human emancipation.

Marx goes on to point out that the mere disestablishment of religion does not abolish religious beliefs or the social ills that give rise to those beliefs, and cites the United States as an example. He then examines the relationship of the abstract political state to civil society, and demonstrates how this divides man into the 'citizen' (member of the universal state) and the 'bourgeois' (self-interested member of civil society). Turning from the rights of the citizen, Marx looks at the rights of man or natural rights, and criticizes their basic assumption that man is an essentially selfish creature. His solution is to abolish the gap between civil society and the state by making real in civil society the universal, communal, or 'species' essence of man inherent in the state.

I
On The Jewish Question

By Bruno Bauer

The German Jews seek emancipation. What sort of emancipation do they want? Civil, political emancipation. Bruno Bauer answers them: No one in Germany is politically emancipated. We ourselves are not free. How then could we liberate you? You Jews are egoists if you demand a special emancipation for yourselves as Jews. You ought to work as Germans for the political

emancipation of Germany, and as men for the emancipation of mankind, and consider your particular sort of oppression and ignominy not as an exception to the rule but rather as a confirmation of it.

Or do the Jews want to be placed on an equal footing with Christian subjects? But in that case they recognize the Christian state as justified, and acquiesce in a regime of general enslavement. Why are they not pleased with their particular yoke when they are pleased with the general yoke? Why should the German interest himself in the emancipation of the Jews if the Jew does not interest himself in the liberation of the German?

The Christian state is only acquainted with privileges. In it the Jew possesses the privilege of being a Jew. As a Jew, he has rights that the Christian does not have. Why does he wish for rights that Christians enjoy and he does not have?

The wish of the Jew to be emancipated from the Christian state entails a demand that the Christian state should give up its religious prejudice. But does the Jew give up his own religious prejudice? Does he then have the right to demand of another that he forswear his religion? It is the very nature of the Christian state that prevents it from emancipating the Jew; but, adds Bauer, it is also the nature of the Jew that prevents his being emancipated. As long as the state is Christian and the Jew Jewish, the one is as incapable of bestowing emancipation as the other is incapable of receiving it.

The Christian state can only have its typical, i.e. privileged relationship to the Jew by permitting the separation of the Jew from the other subjects, but at the same time subjecting him to a pressure from the other separated spheres that is all the heavier since the Jew stands in religious opposition to the dominant religion. But likewise the Jew can only have a Jewish relationship to the state and treat it as alien to himself, for he opposes his own imaginary nationality to actual nationality, and his own imaginary law to actual law, fancies himself justified in separating himself from humanity, as a matter of principle takes no part in the movement of history, and waits on a destiny that has nothing in common with the destiny of mankind as a whole. He considers himself a member of the Jewish people and the Jewish people as the chosen people.

On what grounds then do you Jews seek emancipation? On account of your religion? But it is the mortal enemy of the state religion. As citizens? There are no citizens in Germany. As human beings? You are no more human beings than those to whom you appeal.

After a critical review of the way the question of Jewish emancipation was previously formulated and solved, Bauer frames the question in a new way. How, he asks, are they constituted, the Jew who is to be emancipated and the Christian state which is to do the emancipating? His answer consists in a critique of the Jewish religion; he analyses the religious opposition between Judaism and Christianity and explains the nature of the Christian state in a way

that is bold, acute, witty, and thorough, and in a style as precise as it is pithy and energetic.

What, then, is Bauer's solution to the Jewish question and what is the result? To formulate a question is already to solve it. The critique of the Jewish question is the answer to it. Here is a resumé:

We must emancipate ourselves before we can emancipate others.

The most flexible form of the opposition between Christian and Jew is the religious opposition. How is an opposition to be done away with? By making it impossible. How does one make a religious opposition impossible? By abolishing religion. As soon as Jew and Christian recognize their opposed religions as merely different stages in the development of the human spirit, as different snake skins that history has cast off, and recognize man as the snake that used the skins for covering, then they will no longer be in religious opposition but only in a critical, scientific, human opposition. Science is thus their unity, and contradictions in science are solved by science itself.

The German Jew in particular suffers from the general lack of political emancipation and the pronounced Christianity of the state. In Bauer's opinion, however, the Jewish question has a general significance that is independent of specifically German circumstances. It is the question of the relationship of religion to the state, of the opposition between religious prejudice and political emancipation. Emancipation from religion is laid down as a precondition both for the Jew who desires to be politically emancipated and for the emancipating state which itself needs emancipation.

'Fine, people say (the Jew himself included), the Jew is not to be emancipated as a Jew, because he is a Jew, because he has universal human moral principles that are so outstanding; rather his Jewishness will take second place to his citizenship and he will be a citizen in spite of his being and remaining a Jew. In other words he is and remains a Jew in spite of his being a citizen and living in a condition similar to other men. For his narrow Jewish nature always in the end triumphs over his human and political obligations. The prejudice remains even though it is overcome by universal principles. But if it does remain then it would be more correct to say that it is the prejudice that overcomes everything else.

'The Jew would only be able to remain a Jew in the life of the state in a sophistical sense, that is, in appearance only; so if he wished to remain a Jew, the appearance would become what was essential and gain the upper hand. This means that his life in the state would become only an appearance or a momentary exception to the rule governing the real nature of things' ('The Capability of Present-day Jews and Christians for Liberation', *Twenty-One Sheets*, p. 57).

Let us listen, on the other hand, to how Bauer formulates the task of the state: 'France', it runs, 'has recently (Debate of the Chamber of Deputies for the

26th December 1840) given us apropos of the Jewish question a glimpse of a free life, as she does continually in all other political questions since the July Revolution. But she has revoked her freedom by law, thus declaring it to be a sham and on the other hand she has contradicted her free law by her actions' (*The Jewish Question*, p. 64).

'Universal freedom has not yet been established by law in France and the Jewish question still not solved because legal freedom, which consists in the equality of all citizens, is limited in practice since life is still dominated and divided by religious privileges, and this lack of freedom reacts on the law and forces it to agree to the division of citizens wo are in principle free, into oppressors and oppressed' (p. 65).

When, therefore, would the Jewish question in France be solved?

'The Jew, for example, would have had to cease being a Jew if he were to refuse to let his law stop him from fulfilling his duties to the state and his fellow citizens, for example, going to the Chamber of Deputies on the Sabbath and taking part in public debates. Any religious privilege at all, including, therefore, the monopoly of a privileged church, must be abolished and if some or many or even the overwhelming majority still believe themselves bound to fulfil their religious duties, then this must be allowed them as a purely private affair' (p. 65). 'Religion no longer exists when there is no longer a privileged religion. Take from religion its power of exclusion and it ceases to exist' (p. 66). 'Herr Martin du Nord was of the opinion that the proposal to omit the mention of Sunday in the law was equivalent to a motion declaring that Christianity had ceased to exist: a declaration that the abolition of the Sabbath law for the Jews would be equivalent to a proclamation of the dissolution of Judaism would be just as perfectly justified' (p. 71).

So Bauer requires on the one hand that the Jew give up Judaism and man in general give up religion in order to achieve civil emancipation. On the other hand it follows that for him the political abolition of religion is the equivalent of the abolition of all religion. The state that presupposes religion is not yet a true and real state. 'Of course religious ideas afford the state guarantees. But what state? What sort of state?' (p. 97).

It is here that Bauer's one-sided approach to the Jewish question appears.

It is in no way sufficient to inquire: Who should emancipate? Who should be emancipated? A proper critique would have a third question— *what sort of emancipation* is under discussion? What preconditions are essential for the required emancipation? It is only the critique of political emancipation itself that would be the final critique of the Jewish question and its true resolution into 'the general problems of the age'.

Bauer falls into contradictions because he does not formulate the question at this level. He poses conditions that are not grounded in the nature of political emancipation itself. He raises questions not contained within the problem and

solves problems that leave his questions unanswered. Bauer says of the opponents of Jewish emancipation: 'Their one fault was that they presupposed the Christian state as the only true one and did not subject it to the same critique to which they subjected Judaism' (p. 3). Here Bauer's fault lies in the fact that he subjects only the Christian state to his critique, not 'the state as such'. That he does not investigate the relationship of political to human emancipation and thus poses conditions that are only explicable by supposing an uncritical confusion of political emancipation and universal human emancipation. Bauer asks the Jews: Does your standpoint give you the right to seek political emancipation? But we ask the reverse question: Has the standpoint of political emancipation the right to require from the Jews the abolition of Judaism and from all men the abolition of religion?

The Jewish question always presents itself differently according to the state in which the Jew lives. In Germany, where there is no political state, no state as such, the Jewish question is a purely theological one. The Jew finds himself in religious opposition to the state which recognizes Christianity as its foundation. This state is a professed theologian. Criticism is here criticism of theology, a two-sided criticism of Christian and of Jewish theology. But we are still always moving inside theology however critically we may be moving.

In France, which is a constitutional state, the Jewish question is a question of constitutionalism, a question of the incompleteness of political emancipation. Since here the appearance of a state religion is retained although in an empty and self-contradictory formula, namely that of the religion of the majority, the relationship of the Jew to the state contains the appearance of a religious or theological opposition.

It is in the North American states—or at least a part of them—that the Jewish question loses its theological importance for the first time and becomes a really *secular* question. It is only where the political state exists in its complete perfection that the relationship of the Jew and of the religious man in general to the political state, and thus the relationship of religion to the state, can stand out in all its peculiarities and purity. The criticism of this relationship ceases to be a theological criticism as soon as the state ceases to have a theological attitude to religion, as soon as it adopts the attitude of a state towards religion, i.e. a political attitude. Criticism then becomes a criticism of the political state. At this point, where criticism ceases to be theological, Bauer's criticism ceases to be critical. 'There is in America neither state religion nor a religion declared to be that of the majority, nor pre-eminence of any one way of worship over another. The state is stranger to all forms of worship' (G. de Beaumont, *Mary or Slavery in the U.S.*. . . , Paris, 1835, p. 214). There are even some North American states where 'the constitution does not impose religious belief and practice as a condition of political rights' (loc. cit., p 225). And yet 'people in

the U.S. do not believe that a man without religion can be an honest man' (loc. cit., p. 224). Yet North America is the land of religiosity *par excellence* as Beaumont, Tocqueville, and the Englishman Hamilton all aver with one voice. But the North American states are serving here only as an example. The question is: what is the relationship of complete political emancipation to religion? The fact that even in the land of completed political emancipation we find not only the existence of religion but a living existence full of freshness and strength furnishes us with the proof that the existence of religion does not contradict or impede the perfection of the state. But since the existence of religion is the existence of a defect, the source of this defect can only be sought in the nature of the state itself. Religion for us no longer has the force of a basis for secular deficiencies but only that of a phenomenon. Therefore we explain the religious prejudice of free citizens by their secular prejudice. We do not insist that they must abolish their religious limitation in order to abolish secular limitations. We insist that they abolish their religious limitations as soon as they abolish their secular limitations. We do not change secular questions into theological ones. We change theological questions into secular ones. History has for long enough been resolved into superstition: we now resolve superstition into history. The question of the relationship of political emancipation to religion becomes for us a question of the relationship of political emancipation to human emancipation. We criticize the religious weakness of the political state by criticizing the secular construction of the political state without regard to its religious weaknesses. We humanize the opposition of the state to a particular religion, Judaism for example, into the opposition of the state to particular secular elements, and the opposition of the state to religion in general into the opposition of the state to its own presuppositions in general.

The political emancipation of the Jew, the Christian, and religious man in general implies the emancipation of the state from Judaism, Christianity, and religion in general. The state as state emancipates itself from religion in the manner peculiar to its own nature by emancipating itself from the state religion, i.e. by not recognizing, as a state, any religion, by affirming itself simply as a state. Political emancipation is not the completed and consistent form of religious emancipation because political emancipation is not the completed and consistent form of human emancipation.

The limitations of political emancipation are immediately evident in the fact that a state can liberate itself from a limitation without man himself being truly free of it and the state can be a free state without man himself being a free man. Bauer himself tacitly admits this when he poses the following condition for political emancipation: 'Every single religious privilege, including the monopoly of a privileged church, must be abolished. If several or more or even the overwhelming majority of people still felt obliged to fulfil their religious duties, this practice should be left to them as a completely private matter.' Therefore

the state can have emancipated itself from religion, even when the overwhelming majority of people is still religious. And the overwhelming majority does not cease to be religious simply because its religion is private.

But the attitude of the state, especially the free state, to religion is merely the attitude of the men who make up the state to religion. It follows from this that man liberates himself from an impediment through the medium of the state and politically by entering into opposition with himself and getting round this impediment in an abstract, limited, and partial manner. It follows also that when man liberates himself politically, he liberates himself by means of a detour, through the medium of something else, however necessary that medium may be. It follows finally that man, even when he proclaims himself an atheist through the intermediary of the state, i.e. when he proclaims the state to be atheist, still retains his religious prejudice, just because he recognizes himself only by a detour and by the medium of something else. Religion is precisely the recognition of man by detour through an intermediary. The state is the intermediary between man and his freedom. As Christ is the intermediary onto whom man unburdens all his divinity, all his religious bonds, so the state is the mediator onto which he transfers all his Godlessness and all his human liberty.

The political elevation of man above religion shares all the deficiencies and all the advantages of political elevation in general. The state as state annuls private property, for example, as soon as man declares in a political manner that private property is abolished, as soon as he abolishes the requirement of a property qualification for active and passive participation at elections, as has happened in many North American states. Hamilton interprets this fact from the political standpoint quite correctly: 'the masses have thus gained a victory over the property owners and monied classes'. Is private property not abolished ideally speaking when the non-owner has become the lawgiver for the owner? The census is the last political form of recognizing private property.

And yet the political annulment of private property has not only not abolished private property, it actually presupposes it. The state does away with difference in birth, class, education, and profession in its own manner when it declares birth, class, education, and profession to be unpolitical differences, when it summons every member of the people to an equal participation in popular sovereignty without taking the differences into consideration, when it treats all elements of the people's real life from the point of view of the state. Nevertheless the state still allows private property, education, and profession to have an effect in their own manner, that is as private property, as education, as profession, and make their particular natures felt. Far from abolishing these factual differences, its existence rests on them as a presupposition, it only feels itself to be a political state and asserts its universality by opposition to these elements. Therefore Hegel defines the relationship of the political state to religion quite rightly when he says: 'In order for the state to come into existence

as the self-knowing ethical actuality of spirit, it is essential that it should be distinct from the form of authority and of faith. But this distinction emerges only in so far as divisions occur within the ecclesiastical sphere itself. It is only in this way that the state, above the particular churches, has attained to the universality of thought—its formal principle—and is bringing this universality into existence.' [1942, p. 173] Of course! only thus does the state build its universality over and above its particular elements.

The perfected political state is by its nature the species-life of man in opposition to his material life. All the presuppositions of this egoistic life continue to exist in civil society outside the sphere of the state, but as proper to civil society. When the political state has achieved its true completion, man leads a double life, a heavenly one and an earthly one, not only in thought and consciousness but in reality, in life. He has a life both in the political community, where he is valued as a communal being, and in civil society, where he is active as a private individual, treats other men as means, degrades himself to a means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers. The political state has just as spiritual an attitude to civil society as heaven has to earth. It stands in the same opposition to civil society and overcomes it in the same manner as religion overcomes the limitations of the profane world, that is, it must likewise recognize it, reinstate it, and let itself once more be dominated by it. Man in the reality that is nearest to him, civil society, is a profane being. Here where he counts for himself and others as a real individual, he is an illusory phenomenon. In the state, on the other hand, where man counts as a species-being, he is an imaginary participant in an imaginary sovereignty, he is robbed of his real life and filled with an unreal universality.

The conflict with his citizenship and with other men as members of the community in which man as an adherent of a particular religion finds himself can be reduced to the secular division between political state and civil society. For man as a bourgeois 'life in the state is only an apparent and momentary exception to the essential rule'. [In this passage Marx uses 'bourgeois' to mean a member of civil society, and 'citizen' to mean an individual with political rights.] Of course the bourgeois, like the Jew, only remains in the life of the state sophistically speaking, just as the citizen only sophistically remains a Jew or bourgeois; but this sophism is not a personal matter. It is a sophism of the political state itself. The difference between the religious man and the citizen is the difference between the trader and the citizen, between the labourer and the citizen, between the property owner and the citizen, between the living individual and the citizen. The opposition to the political man in which the religious man finds himself is the same opposition in which the bourgeois finds himself to the citizen and the member of civil society to his political lion's skin.

This secular strife to which the Jewish question can in the last analysis be reduced—the relationship of the political state to its presuppositions, whether

these be material elements like private property or intellectual like education, religion, the conflict between general and private interests, the rift between the political state and the civil society—these secular oppositions are left intact by Bauer while he polemicizes against their religious expressions. 'It is precisely the same need which is the basis of civil society, ensures its continued existence, and guarantees its necessity that also exposes its existence to perpetual dangers, sustains an unsure element within it, produces the continuing oscillating mixture of wealth and poverty, need and superfluity, and in general creates change' (p. 8).

Compare the whole section entitled 'Civil Society' (pp. 8–9), which is drafted from the main points of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'. Civil society in its opposition to the political state is recognized as necessary because the political state is recognized as necessary.

Political emancipation is of course a great progress. Although it is not the final form of human emancipation in general, it is nevertheless the final form of human emancipation inside the present world order. It is to be understood that I am speaking here of real, practical emancipation.

Man emancipates himself politically from religion by banishing it from the field of public law and making it a private right. Religion is no longer the spirit of the state where man behaves, as a species-being in community with other men albeit in a limited manner and in a particular form and a particular sphere: religion has become the spirit of civil society, the sphere of egoism, the *bellum omnium contra omnes* [war of all against all]. Its essence is no longer in community but in difference. It has become the expression of separation of man from his common essence, from himself and from other men, as it was originally. It is still only the abstract recognition of a particular perversion, private whim, and arbitrariness. For example, the infinite splintering of religion in North America already gives it the exterior form of a purely individual affair. It is shoved away into the crowd of private interests and exiled from the common essence as such. But we should not be deceived about the limitations of political emancipation. The separation of man into a public and a private man, the displacement of religion from the state to civil society is not a stage but the completion of political emancipation, which thus does not abolish or even try to abolish the actual religiosity of man.

The decomposition of man into Jew and citizen, protestant and citizen, religious man and citizen, this decomposition is no trick played upon political citizenship, no avoidance of political emancipation. It is political emancipation itself, the political manner of emancipating oneself from religion. Of course, in times when the political state is born violently as such out of civil society, when man's self-liberation tries to complete itself in the form of political self-liberation, the state must go as far as abolishing, destroying religion, but only in the same way as it goes as far as abolishing private property, at the most, by

declaring a maximum, by confiscation or a progressive tax, or in the same way as it abolishes life, by the guillotine. In moments of particular self-consciousness political life tries to suppress its presuppositions, civil society and its elements, and to constitute itself as the real, harmonious life of man. However, this is only possible through violent opposition to its own conditions, by declaring the revolution to be permanent. The political drama therefore ends necessarily with the restoration of religion, private property, and all the elements of civil society, just as war ends with peace.

Indeed, it is not the so-called Christian state, that one that recognizes Christianity as its basis, as the state religion, and thus adopts an exclusive attitude to other religions, that is the perfected Christian state, but rather the atheist state, the democratic state, the state that downgrades religion to the other elements of civil society. If the state is still a theologian, makes an official confession of the Christian faith, and does not yet dare to declare itself a state, then it has not yet succeeded in expressing its human basis, of which Christianity is the transcendental expression, in a secular, human form, in its reality as a state. The so-called Christian state is quite simply the non-state because it is only the human background of Christianity and not Christianity itself that can be translated into real human achievements.

The so-called Christian state is the Christian negation of the state, but in no way the state realization of Christianity. The state that still recognizes Christianity in the form of a religion, does not yet recognize it in a political form because it still has a religious attitude to religion, that is it is not the real elaboration of the human basis of religion because it still accepts the unreal, the imaginary form of this human kernel. The so-called Christian state is the imperfect state and the Christian religion serves as a supplement and a sanctification of its imperfection. Religion therefore necessarily becomes a means for the state, and the state is one of hypocrisy. There is a great difference between the perfect state counting religion as one of its presuppositions because of the deficiencies in the general essence of the state, and the imperfect state declaring religion to be its foundation because the deficiencies in its particular existence make it a deficient state. In the latter case religion becomes imperfect politics. In the former the imperfection of even a perfect politics shows itself in religion. The so-called Christian state needs the Christian religion in order to complete itself as a state. The democratic state, the true state, does not need religion for its political completion. Rather it can abstract from religion, because it realizes the human foundations of religion in a secular manner. The so-called Christian state, on the other hand, has a political attitude towards religion and a religious attitude towards politics. When it degrades the forms of the state to an appearance, then it degrades religion just as surely to an appearance.

In order to explain this opposition, we shall examine Bauer's model of the

Christian state, a model that derives from a study of the Christian Germanic state.

'In order to prove', says Bauer, 'the impossibility or non-existence of a Christian State, people have often recently pointed to the sayings in the Gospel which the present state does not only not follow, but cannot even begin to follow if it does not wish to bring about its complete dissolution as a state.' 'But the matter is not dealt with so easily. What do those sayings in the Gospel demand? Supernatural self-denial, subjection to the authority of revelation, disregard of the state, abolition of secular relationships. But the Christian state demands and performs all this. It has made the spirit of the Gospel its own, and if it does not repeat it in the same words that the Gospel uses, that is only because it expresses this spirit in political forms, that is, in forms that are certainly borrowed from the nature of the state and this world but which, in the religious rebirth that they must experience, are degraded to an appearance. Its disregard of the state is realized and completed through the political institutions' (p. 55).

Bauer now further develops the theme of how the people in a Christian state are merely non-people, have no more will of their own, and have their true existence in their leader to whom they are subject and who is nevertheless alien to them in origin and nature since he is God-given and arrived at without their own co-operation; Bauer also explains how the laws of this people are not their own work but direct revelations; how the supreme leader needs privileged intermediaries with his own people and the masses; how the masses themselves disintegrate into a number of particular groups formed and defined by chance which differentiate themselves through their interests, particular passions and prejudices, and obtain as a privilege the permission mutually to exclude each other, etc. (p. 56).

But Bauer himself says: 'Politics, if it is to be nothing but religion, cannot be politics; any more than dishwashing, if it has the force of a religious practice, should be treated as a household matter' (p. 108). In the Christian Germanic state, however, religion is a 'household matter' just as 'household matters' are religious. In the Christian Germanic state the dominance of religion is the religion of dominance.

The separation of the 'spirit of the Gospel' from the 'letter of the Gospel' is an irreligious act. The state which lets the Gospel speak political words, in words different from the Holy Spirit, commits sacrilege in its own religious eyes if not in the eyes of men. The state that recognizes Christianity as its highest norm and the Bible as its Magna Carta must be met with the words of the Holy Scripture, for every word of Scripture is holy. Both this state and the dregs of humanity on which it is based arrive at a painful contradiction that is insurmountable from the point of view of religious consciousness, if it has pointed out to it those sayings of the Gospel with which it 'does not conform

and cannot conform unless it wishes to dissolve itself entirely'. And why does it not wish to dissolve itself entirely? It can give neither itself nor others an answer to this question. In its own consciousness the Christian state is an ideal whose realization is unattainable. It can only convince itself of its own existence by lies and so remains for ever an object of self-doubt, an insufficient, problematic object. Thus criticism is fully justified when it forces the state that appeals to the Bible into a crazed state of mind where it no longer knows whether it is an imagination or a reality, where the infamy of its worldly ends for which religion serves as a cloak arrives at an insoluble conflict with the honesty of its religious consciousness which views the final aim of the world as religion. This state can only pacify its inner uneasiness by becoming a myrmidon of the Catholic Church. In the face of the Catholic Church, which declares secular powers to be its bondsmen, the state is as powerless as is the secular power which affirms itself to be dominant over the religious spirit.

In the so-called Christian state it is alienation that is important, not man himself. The man who is important, the king, is a being specifically differentiated from other men (which is itself a religious conception), who is in direct contact with heaven and God. The relationships that hold sway here are ones of faith. The religious spirit is thus not yet really secularized.

But the religious spirit can never really be secularized. For what is it but the unsecular form of a stage in the development of the human spirit? The religious spirit can only be secularized in so far as the stage in the development of the human spirit whose religious expression it is emerges and constitutes itself in its secular form. This happens in the democratic state. The foundation of this state is not Christianity but the human foundation of Christianity. Religion remains as the ideal, unsecular consciousness of its members, because it is the ideal form of the stage of human development that is realized in this state.

What makes the members of the political state religious is the dualism between their individual life and their species-life, between life in civil society and political life, their belief that life in the state is the true life even though it leaves untouched their individuality. Religion is here the spirit of civil society, the expression of separation and distance of man from man. What makes a political democracy Christian is the fact that in it man, not only a single man but every man, counts as a sovereign being; but it is man as he appears uncultivated and unsocial, man in his accidental existence, man as he comes and goes, man as he is corrupted by the whole organization of our society, lost to himself, sold, given over to the domination of inhuman conditions and elements—in a word, man who is no longer a real species-being. The fantasy, dream, and postulate of Christianity, the sovereignty of man, but of man as an alien being separate from actual man, is present in democracy as a tangible reality and is its secular motto.

The religious and theological consciousness has all the more religious and

theological force in the complete democracy as it is without political significance and earthly aims. It is the affair of minds that are shy of the world, the expression of a limited understanding, the product of arbitrariness and fantasy, a really other-worldly life. Christianity achieves here the practical expression of its significance of a universal religion in that it groups together the most different opinions in the form of Christianity and even more because it does not lay on others the requirements of Christianity, but only a religion in general, any religion (compare the above mentioned work of Beaumont). The religious consciousness revels in richness of religious opposition and religious diversity.

Thus we have shown that political emancipation from religion leaves religion intact even though it is no longer a privileged religion. The contradiction with his citizenship in which the adherent of a particular religion finds himself is only a part of the general secular contradiction between the political state and civil society. The perfect Christian state is the one that recognizes itself as a state and abstracts from the religion of its members. The emancipation of the state from religion is not the emancipation of actual man from religion.

So we do not say to the Jews, as Bauer does: you cannot be emancipated politically without emancipating yourselves radically from Judaism. Rather we say to them: because you can be politically emancipated without completely and consistently abandoning Judaism, this means that political emancipation itself is not human emancipation. If you Jews wish to achieve political emancipation without achieving human emancipation, then the incompleteness and contradiction does not only lie in you, it lies in the nature and category of political emancipation. If you are imprisoned within this category, then you are sharing in something common to everyone. Just as the state is evangelizing when it, although a state, has a Christian attitude to Jews, so the Jew is acting politically when he, although a Jew, requests civil rights.

But if a man, although a Jew, can be politically emancipated and acquire civil rights, can he claim and accept human rights? Bauer denies it.

The question is whether the Jew as such, i.e. the Jew who himself admits that his true nature compels him to live in eternal separation from others, is capable of accepting universal human rights and bestowing them on others.

The concept of human rights was first discovered by the Christian world in the previous century. It is not innate in man, but won in a struggle against the historical traditions in which man has hitherto been educated. Thus human rights are not a gift of nature, no dowry but the prize of the struggle against the accident of birth and against privileges that history transmitted from generation to generation up to the present time. They are the result of culture and only to be possessed by the man who has won and merited them.

Can the Jew really take possession of them? As long as he is a Jew the limited nature which makes him a Jew must gain the upper hand over the human nature that should bind him as a man to other men and must separate him off from non-Jews. He declares

through this separation that the particular nature that makes him a Jew is his true and highest nature, before which his human nature must give way.

In the same way, the Christian as Christian cannot grant human rights [pp. 19, 20].

According to Bauer man must sacrifice the 'privilege of belief' in order to be able to receive general human rights. Let us discuss for a moment the so-called human rights, human rights in their authentic form, the form they have in the writings of their discoverers, the North Americans and French! These human rights are partly political rights that are only exercised in community with other men. Their content is formed by participation in the common essence, the political essence, the essence of the state. They fall under the category of political freedom, under the category of civil rights, which, as we have seen, in no way presuppose the consistent and positive abolition of religion, nor, consequently, of Judaism. It remains to discuss the other part of human rights, the rights of man, in so far as they differ from the rights of the citizen.

Among them are freedom of conscience, the right to exercise a chosen religion. The privilege of belief is expressly recognized either as a human right, or as a consequence of one of the human rights, freedom.

Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, 1791, Article 10: 'No one should be molested because of his opinions, not even religious ones'. In the first section of the constitution of 1791 'the liberty of every man to practise the religion to which he adheres' is guaranteed as human right. *The Declaration of the Rights of Man . . . 1793* counts among human rights, in Article 7, 'the free exercise of religious practice'. Indeed, concerning the right to publish one's thoughts and opinions, to hold assemblies and practise one's religion, it goes as far as to say: 'the necessity of announcing these rights supposes either the present or the recent memory of despotism'. Compare the constitution of 1795, Section 14, Article 354.

Constitution of Pennsylvania, Article 9, Paragraph 3: 'All men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences: no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect or support a place of worship, or to maintain any ministry, against his consent; no human authority can, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience.'

Constitution of New Hampshire, Article 5 & 6: 'Among the natural rights, some are in their very nature unalienable . . . Of this kind are rights of conscience' (Beaumont loc. cit., pp. 213, 214).

The incompatibility of religion with the rights of man is so far from being evident in the concept of the rights of man, that the right to be religious, to be religious in one's own chosen way, to practise one's chosen religion is expressly counted as one of the rights of man. The privilege of faith is a universal right of man.

The rights of man are as such differentiated from the right of the citizen. Who is the 'man' who is different from the 'citizen?' No one but the member of civil society. Why is the member of civil society called 'man', simply man, and why are his rights called the rights of man? How do we explain this fact? From the relationship of the political state to civil society, from the nature of political emancipation.

Above all we notice the fact that the so-called rights of man, the rights of man as different from the rights of the citizen are nothing but the rights of the member of civil society, i.e. egoistic man, man separated from other men and the community. The most radical constitution, the constitution of 1793, can say:

Declaration of the Rights of Man . . . , Article 2. These rights etc. (natural and imprescriptable rights) are: equality, liberty, security, property.

What does liberty consist of?

Article 6: 'Liberty is the power that belongs to man to do anything that does not infringe on the right of someone else' or according to the declaration of the rights of man of 1791 'liberty consists in the power of doing anything that does not harm others'.

Thus freedom is the right to do and perform what does not harm others. The limits within which each person can move without harming others is defined by the law, just as the boundary between two fields is defined by the fence. The freedom in question is that of a man treated as an isolated monad and withdrawn into himself. Why is the Jew, according to Bauer, incapable of receiving the rights of man? 'So long as he is a Jew the limited nature that makes him a Jew will get the upper hand over the human nature that should unite him as a man to other men and will separate him from the non-Jew.' But the right of man to freedom is not based on the union of man with man, but on the separation of man from man. It is the right to this separation, the rights of the limited individual who is limited to himself.

The practical application of the rights of man to freedom is the right of man to private property.

What does the right of man to property consist in?

Article 16 (Constitution of 1793): 'The right of property is the right which belongs to all citizens to enjoy and dispose at will of their goods and revenues, the fruit of their work and industry.'

Thus the right of man to property is the right to enjoy his possessions and dispose of the same arbitrarily, without regard for other men, independently from society, the right of selfishness. It is the former individual freedom together with its latter application that forms the basis of civil society. It leads man to see in other men not the realization but the limitation of his own freedom. Above all it proclaims the right of man 'to enjoy and dispose at will of his goods, his revenues and fruits of his work and industry'.

There still remain the other rights of man, equality and security.

Equality, here in its non-political sense, is simply the counterpart of the liberty described above, namely that each man shall without discrimination be treated as a self-sufficient monad. The constitution of 1795 defines the concept of this equality, in conformity with this meaning, thus:

Article 3 (Constitution of 1795): 'Equality consists of the fact that the law is the same for all, whether it protects or punishes.'

And security?

Article 8 (Constitution of 1793): 'Security consists in the protection afforded by society to each of its members for the conservation of his person, rights, and property.'

Security is the highest social concept of civil society, the concept of the police. The whole of society is merely there to guarantee to each of its members the preservation of his person, rights, and property. It is in this sense that Hegel calls civil society the 'state of need and of reason'.

The concept of security does not allow civil society to raise itself above its egoism. Security is more the assurance of egoism.

Thus none of the so-called rights of man goes beyond egoistic man, man as he is in civil society, namely an individual withdrawn behind his private interests and whims and separated from the community. Far from the rights of man conceiving of man as a species-being, species-life itself, society, appears as a framework exterior to individuals, a limitation of their original self-sufficiency. The only bond that holds them together is natural necessity, need and private interest, the conservation of their property and egoistic person.

It is already paradoxical that a people that is just beginning to free itself, to tear down all barriers between different sections of the people and form a political community, should solemnly proclaim (Declaration of 1791) the justification of egoistic man separated from his fellow men and the community. Indeed, this proclamation is repeated at a moment when only the most heroic devotion can save the nation, and is therefore peremptorily demanded, at a moment when the sacrifice of all the interests of civil society is raised to the order of the day and egoism must be punished as a crime (*Declaration of the Rights of Man . . . 1793*). This fact appears to be even more paradoxical when we see that citizenship, the political community, is degraded by the political emancipators to a mere means for the preservation of these so-called rights of man, that the citizen is declared to be the servant of egoistic man, the sphere in which man behaves as a communal being is degraded below the sphere in which man behaves as a partial being, finally that it is not man as a citizen but man as a bourgeois who is called the real and true man.

'The aim of every political association is the conversation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man' (*Declaration of the Rights of Man . . . 1791*, Article 2). 'Government is instituted to guarantee man the enjoyment of his natural and imprescriptible rights' (*Declaration of the Rights of Man . . . 1791*,

Article 1). So even in the moments of youthful freshness and enthusiasm raised to fever pitch by the pressure of circumstances, political life is declared to be a mere means whose end is the life of civil society. It is true that its revolutionary practice is in flagrant contradiction with its theory. While, for example, security is declared to be a right of man, the violation of the privacy of correspondence is publicly inserted in the order of the day. While the 'unlimited freedom of the press' (Constitution of 1793, Article 122) is guaranteed as a consequence of the right of man to individual freedom, the freedom of the press is completely destroyed, for 'the liberty of the press must not be permitted when it compromises public liberty' ('The Young Robespierre' in Buchez and Roux, *Parliamentary History of the French Revolution*, vol. 28, p. 159). This means then that the right of man to freedom ceases to be a right as soon as it enters into conflict with political life, whereas, according to the theory, political life is only the guarantee of the rights of man, the rights of individual man, and so must be given up as soon as it contradicts its end, these rights of man. But the practice is only the exception and the theory is the rule. Even though one were to treat the revolutionary practice as the correct version of the relationship, the riddle still remains to be solved of why, in the minds of the political emancipators, the relationship is turned upside-down and the end appears as the means and the means as the end. This optical illusion of their minds would always be the same riddle, although it would then be a psychological and theoretical riddle.

The riddle has a simple solution.

Political emancipation is at the same time the dissolution of the old society on which rests the sovereign power, the essence of the state alienated from the people. Political revolution is the revolution of civil society. What was the character of the old society? One word characterizes it. Feudalism. The old civil society had a directly political character. The elements of civil life, like, for example, property or the family or the type and manner of work, were, in the form of seigniorial right, estates, and corporations, raised to the level of elements of state life. They defined in this form the relationship of the single individual to the state as a whole, that is, his political relationship, the relationship of separation and exclusion from the other parts of society. For this sort of organization of the people's life did not turn property or work into social elements but completed their separation from the state as a whole, and made them into particular societies within society. But the vital functions and conditions of life in civil society was still political even though political in the feudal sense, that is, they excluded the individual from the states as a whole. They turned the particular relationship of the corporation to the totality of the state, into his own general relationship to the life of the people, as it turned his particular civil occupation into his general occupation and situation. As a consequence of this organization the unity of the state—the mind, will, and authority of this state unity, the power of the state in general—equally appears

necessarily as the particular affair of a lord and servants who are cut off from the people.

The political revolution overthrew this feudal power and turned state affairs into affairs of the people; it turned the state into a matter of general concern, i.e. into a true state; it necessarily destroyed all estates, corporations, guilds, privileges which were so many expressions of the separation of the people from the community. The political revolution thus abolished the political character of civil society. It shattered civil society with its simple parts, on the one hand into individuals, on the other hand into the material and spiritual elements that make up the life experience and civil position of these individuals. It unfettered the political spirit that had, as it were, been split, cut up, and drained away into the various cul-de-sacs of feudal society. The political revolution collected this spirit together after its dispersion, freed it from its confusion with civil life, and set it up as the sphere that was common to all, the general affair of the people in ideal independence from the other particular elements of civil life. Particular professions and ranks sank to a merely individual importance. They were no longer the relationship of individuals to the state as a whole. Public affairs as such became the general affair of each individual and politics was a general occupation.

But the perfection of the idealism of the state was at the same time the perfection of the materialism of civil society. The shaking off of the political yoke entailed the shaking off of those bonds that had kept the egoistic spirit of civil society fettered. Political emancipation entailed the emancipation of civil society from politics, from even the appearance of a general content.

Feudal society was dissolved into its basis, into man. But into the man that was its true basis, egoistic man. This man, the member of civil society, is the basis, the presupposition of the political state. He is recognized by it as such in the rights of man.

But the freedom of egoistic man and the recognition of this freedom is the recognition of the unimpeded movement of the spiritual and material elements that go to make up its life.

Man was therefore not freed from religion; he received freedom of religion. He was not freed from property; he received freedom of property. He was not freed from the egoism of trade; he received freedom to trade.

The formation of the political state and the dissolution of civil society into independent individuals, who are related by law just as the estate and corporation men were related by privilege, is completed in one and the same act. Man as member of civil society, unpolitical man, appears necessarily as natural man. The rights of man appear as natural rights, because self-conscious activity is concentrated upon political action. Egoistic man is the passive, given results of the dissolved society, an object of immediate certainty and thus a natural object. Political revolution dissolves civil life into its component parts, without revolutionizing and submitting to criticism these parts themselves. Its attitude

to civil society, to the world of need, to work, private interests, private law is that they are the foundation of its existence, its own presupposition that needs no further proof, and thus its natural basis. Finally, man as a member of civil society counts for true man, for man as distinct from the citizen, because he is man in his sensuous, individual, immediate existence, while political man is only the abstract fictional man, man as an allegorical or moral person. This man as he actually is, is only recognized in the form of the egoistic individual, and the true man only in the form of the abstract citizen.

The abstraction of the political man is thus correctly described by Rousseau: 'He who dares to undertake the making of a people's institutions ought to feel himself capable, so to speak, of changing human nature, of transforming each individual, who is by himself a complete and solitary whole, into part of a greater whole from which he in a manner receives his life and being; of altering man's constitution for the purpose of strengthening it; and of substituting a partial and moral existence of the physical and independent existence nature has conferred on us all. He must, in a word, take away from man his own resources and give him instead new ones alien to him, and incapable of being made use of without the help of other men.'

All emancipation is bringing back man's world and his relationships to man himself.

Political emancipation is the reduction of man, on the one hand to a member of civil society, an egoistic and independent individual, on the other hand to a citizen, a moral person.

The actual individual man must take the abstract citizen back into himself and, as an individual man in his empirical life, in his individual work and individual relationships become a species-being; man must recognize his own forces as social forces, organize them, and thus no longer separate social forces from himself in the form of political forces. Only when this has been achieved will human emancipation be completed.

II
The Capacity of Present-day Jews and Christians to Become Free

By Bruno Bauer

This is the form that Bauer gives to the question of the relationship of the Jewish and Christian religions to each other and to criticism. Their relationship to criticism is their relationship to 'the capacity to become free'.

The conclusion is: 'the Christian has only one barrier to surmount, his religion, in order to give up religion altogether', and thus to become free; 'the