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Marx und Engels Konvergenzen – Divergenzen

Deutungskämpfe um Marx' Frühschriften
Zur Edition der »Deutschen Ideologie«
The Concept of Structure in The German Ideology
Naturdialektik und Marxsche Kritik der Philosophie
Über Marxsche Kategorien:
Extramehrwert · Kaufmannskapital · Asiatische Produktionsweise
Zur Kritik von Engels' Historismus in seinem
»Kapital«-Verständnis

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On the MEGA and the French Edition of *Capital*, vol. I: An Appreciation and a Critique

The new MEGA edition of the 1890 fourth German edition of volume one of Marx's *Capital*, which appeared in 1991 (MEGA² II/10),¹ is a real publishing event in Marxist studies. When taken together with the other versions of the first volume of *Capital* which have been issued as part of the new MEGA, this tenth volume in their series on Marx's economic writings now makes available to scholars all of the versions of volume one of *Capital* which were published under Marx's or Engels' editorship: the 1867 first German edition (MEGA² II/5), the 1872 second German edition (MEGA² II/6), the 1872-5 French edition (MEGA² II/7), the Engels-edited 1883 third German edition (MEGA² II/8), the Engels-edited 1887 English edition (MEGA² II/9), and finally, the Engels-edited 1890 fourth German edition (MEGA² II/10). In addition, an appendix to the last of these volumes reveals that there are important alternate texts to volume one from the 1872-75 French edition which Engels did not include in his "final" 1890 edition.

Scholars such as Roman Rosdolsky have discussed the development of Marx's economic theory from the unpublished *Grundrisse* (1857-58) to the finished volume one of *Capital*. It is equally well known that after Marx's death in 1883 Engels put together volumes two and three of *Capital* from Marx's manuscripts, leading some such as Rosa Luxemburg to question Engels' editing procedures. The fact that volume one itself went through many changes by Marx from its first edition in 1867 to the French edition of 1872-75 is far less known, nor is the fact that Engels made some important editorial decisions here. But that is what the new MEGA allows us to see, more comprehensively than ever before. To give one example of the importance of these changes and developments from 1867 to 1875, in the 1867 edition, there was no separate section on commodity fetishism at all. Some of the material later included in that section was published as part of the discussion at the beginning of the book on the commodity, while another

¹ Karl Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Erster Band.* Hamburg 1890. (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1991). Referred to hereafter directly in the text as MEGA² II/10.

part of it was included in an appendix. By the 1872 German edition, there was a separate section on fetishism, which included a fair amount of material not found anywhere in the 1867 edition. Then, in the 1872-75 French edition, where, although it was a translation, Marx reworked the whole text considerably, he added a few more sentences and rearranged the material slightly. The new MEGA editions of volume one of *Capital*, with their copious appendixes indicating which passages Marx changed from one edition to another, shed new light on the process by which Marx developed his greatest theoretical work.

In establishing the 1890 fourth German edition - the 1883 third German edition was a reprint with few changes of the 1872 German edition - Engels claimed to have looked at all three editions developed by Marx and to have incorporated everything of importance from the French edition. He wrote in the preface to the 1890 fourth German edition of his effort to achieve the "most attainable final version of the text" (MEGA² II/10, p. 22). Since the publication of this 1890 edition, most scholars, Marxist and non-Marxist alike, have regarded it as the definitive text of volume one. This was for example the position taken by Louis Althusser in his introduction to a 1969 reprint of the 1872-75 French edition, where he stated that readers should also consult the German "original" established by Engels.² A new English translation of volume one was issued in 1976 with a preface by Ernest Mandel, with the claim that, in following Engels' 1890 edition, for the first time it gave the English-speaking world a complete and accurate edition.³ In France, where the prestigious publisher Gallimard's La Pléiade series of great books continues to reprint Maximilien Rubel's edition of Marx's 1872-75 French edition of *Capital* as the definitive text,⁴ the Communist Party publishing house retranslated Engels' 1890 edition into French for the Marx

² Althusser's preface to Marx, *Le Capital*, volume one (Paris: Flammarion, 1969). Althusser was so anti-Hegelian that he urged the reader to skip chapter one, with its discussion of fetishism. See also the letters from 1870-73 in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 44 (New York: International Publishers, 1975f), which often show Marx's preference for the French edition, and Engels' for the German.

³ Marx, *Capital*. Vol. I. Translated by Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin and New York: Vintage, 1976).

⁴ See Marx, *Œuvres. Économie I*, Édition établie, présentée et annotée par Maximilien R. Rubel (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), [Bibliothèque de la Pléiade]. The above-cited 1969 Flammarion edition, prefaced by Althusser, is also still in print in France.

centenary in 1983, claiming that they had now produced a definitive edition of volume one.⁵

A key problem is that Engels did not include all of the significant material from the French edition, the last one which Marx personally prepared for the printer, in his 1890 fourth German edition. While a few scholars such as Maximilien Rubel and Raya Dunayevskaya⁶ have noted these discrepancies over the years, the new MEGA edition of the fourth German edition of volume one of *Capital* establishes definitively that there are a large number of key textual variants in Marx's French edition of which Engels was either unaware or which he chose to ignore. It does so through a lengthy appendix entitled "List of Places in the Text of the French Edition That Were Not Included in the Third and Fourth German Editions" (pp. 732-83). Unfortunately, this rather elliptical title does not state explicitly that Engels was the person who decided that these passages be "not included."

I would like now to mention a few key omissions from the French edition by Engels and subsequent editors of volume one of *Capital*:

(1) In a passage on the relationship of the human being to nature, the text in the English edition, based on the fourth German edition, reads:

Through this movement he⁷ acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this way he simultaneously changes his own nature. *He develops the potentialities slumbering within nature, and subjects the play of its forces to his own sovereign power.* We are not dealing here with those instinctive forms of labor which remain on an animal level.⁸

In the 1872-75 French edition this same passage reads a bit differently:

At the same time that through this movement he acts upon external nature and modifies it, he modifies his own nature, and *develops the*

⁵ See Marx, *Le Capital*. Livre 1. Traduction de la 4e édition allemande sous la responsabilité de Jean-Pierre Lefebvre (Paris: Messidor/Éditions sociales, 1983). This edition has recently been reissued by Presses Universitaires de France.

⁶ For Rubel's comments, see his notes for the 1963 Pléiade edition of Marx, cited above. For those of Raya Dunayevskaya, see especially, "The Paris Commune Illuminates and Deepens the Content of *Capital*," pp. 92-102 in her *Marxism and Freedom* (New York: Bookman, 1958), as well as her later "Capital: Significance of the 1875 French Edition of Volume I," pp. 139-52 in her *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (New Jersey: Humanities and Sussex: Harvester, 1982).

⁷ In this passage in the various German editions, Marx uses the German word "Mensch," better translated today as "human being" than "he" or "man."

⁸ Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, 1976 Penguin/Vintage English edition referred to above, p. 283, emphasis added. See also MEGA² II/10, p. 162.

potentialities slumbering within it. We are not dealing here with those instinctive forms of labor which remain on an animal level.⁹

Here I would argue that Marx has removed from the later French edition some language from the earlier German ones asserting the necessity of human domination over nature, and replaced it with language stressing a more interactive relationship with nature.¹⁰

(2) In a well-known passage on the relationship of industrial to non-industrial societies, the English edition, again based on the fourth German edition, reads:

The country that is more developed industrially only shows, *to the less developed*, the image of its own future.¹¹

Some of those who attack volume one of *Capital* as a deterministic work have interpreted this passage to suggest that Marx thought *all* human societies would be forced to follow a single pathway of development, that of nineteenth century capitalist England.¹² But note how this same passage reads in the French edition, where Marx clarifies his argument:

The country that is more developed industrially only shows, *to those which follow it on the industrial path [échelle]*, the image of its own future.¹³

Here the notion of one country following the pathway of another is *explicitly* limited to countries which are moving toward industrialization. Non-industrial societies of Marx's time such as Russia and India are now seemingly bracketed out, leaving open the notion of alternative roads for them.

(3) In a fairly lengthy discussion of the world market, the English edition, once again based on the fourth German edition, discusses the attempt by capital to lower British wages to the then lower French ones, an argument centering around the notion of competitiveness, one quite familiar to us today:

An eighteenth century writer we have often quoted already, the author of the "Essay on Trade and Commerce" [John Cunningham-K.A.],

actually reveals the innermost secret of English capital when he declares that England's historical mission is to force down English wages to the French and Dutch level. He says, naïvely, "But if our poor" (a technical term for the workers) "must live luxuriously, ... then labor must, of course, be dear ... [...]. To which may be added, our essayist continues [on the French workers-K.A.] that their drink is either water or other small liquors, so that they spend very little money ... These things are very difficult to be brought about; but they are not impracticable, since they have been effected both in France and in Holland." [added paragraph here] Twenty years later, an American humbug, the ennobled Yankee Benjamin Thompson (*alias* Count Rumford), pursued the same line in philanthropy, to the great satisfaction of God and man.¹⁴

In the French edition, Marx does not rewrite the above, but he adds an entire paragraph within the passage, connecting these issues to China as well as Europe:

Today we have to a large extent gone beyond these aspirations, thanks to the multi-faceted [*cosmopolite*] competition into which the development of capitalist production has thrown the workers of the whole world. It is no longer only a question of reducing English wages to those of the continental Europe, but of lowering, in the near or more distant term, the European level to the Chinese. Here is the perspective which Mr. Stapleton, Member of the English Parliament, has just put forth to his constituents in an [1873-K.A.] address on *The Price of Labor in the Future*: "If China, he says, becomes a big manufacturing country, I do not see how the industrial population of Europe will know how to sustain the struggle without descending to the level of its competitors."¹⁵

According to the MEGA editors (MEGA² II/10, pp. 539/40), Engels did include a small part of the above on passage on China as a footnote in the 1883 third German edition, but he did not use this text in the 1890 fourth German edition. The three examples cited above are just a few of the textual

⁹ Marx, *Œuvres. Économie. I*, Rubel edition, pp. 727/28, emphasis added.

¹⁰ Chris Arthur, who makes a different interpretation of this passage in his "Capital: A Note on Translation," *Science & Society*, Vol. 54:2 (1990), first called it to my attention.

¹¹ Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, 1976 Penguin/Vintage English edition referred to above, p. 91, emphasis added. See also MEGA² II/10, p. 8.

¹² See for example the British sociologist Teodor Shanin's edited collection, *Marx and the Russian Road* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983).

¹³ Marx, *Œuvres. Économie. I*, Rubel edition, p. 549, emphasis added.

¹⁴ Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, 1976 Penguin/Vintage English edition referred to above, pp. 748/49. See also MEGA² II/10, p. 538/9.

¹⁵ Marx, *Œuvres. Économie. I*, Rubel edition, pp. 1106/7. The last quote had to be retranslated back from French into English. See also MEGA² II/10, pp. 757/58.

differences between the French edition of 1872-75 and the 1890 fourth German edition established by Engels.¹⁶

It is a scandal that, nearly 130 years after its first edition, many of the standard editions of Marx's most important work, Vol. I of *Capital*, do not indicate to the reader that there are significant textual differences between the various editions which Marx himself published. This problem goes back to Engels and his attempt to establish once and for all a definitive edition, but was also covered up for decades by the official Stalinist editions of Marx. This cover-up was largely successful even though independent Marxist scholars such as Dunayevskaya and Rubel have pointed to the importance of the French edition for years.

While, as I have argued above, the new MEGA edition goes some distance toward overcoming this problem, the editors did not locate or note all of the key textual differences between the French edition and Engels' fourth German edition. In fact, of the three examples of textual differences I have mentioned above, only the third one was noted by the MEGA editors in their appendix listing passages from the French edition which were not included in the fourth German edition.

Getting a full text of volume one of *Capital* is part of a far larger problem: separating Marx's work from that of the post-Marx Marxists, beginning with Engels. Not only separating it, but untangling all of the distortions and truncations of his work, up through the point where Marxism, a philosophy of liberation, could be transformed into its opposite, a totalitarian ideology such as Stalinism.

The last two examples given above of textual variants also point to another issue of contemporary relevance, Marx's increasing concern in his last decade, 1872-83, with non-Western society. When, as in the later work of Dunayevskaya,¹⁷ some of the changes Marx made for the 1872-75 French edition are viewed alongside his late writings on Russia and his 1880-82 *Ethnological Notebooks*, we can begin to see Marx as a thinker already preoccupied, *avant la lettre*, with issues related to today's debates over multiculturalism.

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¹⁶ For a different group of examples of textual differences between the French edition and those editions based on the Engels-edited fourth German edition, see my earlier article "The 'Unknown' Marx's *Capital*: The French Edition of 1872-75, 100 Years Later", in: *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol. 15:4 (1983), pp. 71-80.

¹⁷ See Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg*, cited above, as well as her *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future* (New Jersey: Humanities, 1985).

Heinz Paragenings / Hermann Simon

Zur historisch-kritischen Aufarbeitung von Marx' Kategorie des Extramehrwerts

1. Die Marxsche Konzeption

Zur Darstellungsmethode

Im Theoriengebäude von Marx ist die Kategorie des Extramehrwerts in die Mehrwerttheorie eingebunden. Der Ausgangspunkt ist hier das Problem, was der Mehrwert seiner Substanz nach ist und wie er entsteht. Stellung und Lösung dieses Problems erfolgt in der logisch-historischen Form, wie sie für die ökonomische Gesamtheorie Marxens charakteristisch ist. Substanz und Entstehung des Mehrwerts werden also in logischer Form, d.h. struktur- u. funktionsanalytisch entwickelt (Verwandlung von Geld in Kapital, von Arbeitsvermögen in Ware, Wertbildung und Verwertung, Mehrwert). Die so gewonnenen Kategorien drücken aber zugleich ihre historische Genese und Entwicklung aus (Zirkulationssphäre, Handels- und Wucherkapital als prähistorische Formen, doppelt freier Lohnarbeiter, produzierendes Kapital, notwendige und Mehrarbeitszeit, Kampf um die Länge des Arbeitstages). Die Klärung des Problems der Substanz und der Entstehung des Mehrwerts ist somit identisch mit der Analyse des absoluten Mehrwerts. Erst auf dieser Grundlage kann das - historisch völlig neuartige - Phänomen der beständigen Revolutionierung der Produktivkräfte, ihre zunehmende Vergesellschaftung (Geburt und Entwicklung der maschinellen Industrie usw.) untersucht werden, denn das ist ein Werk des Kapitals selbst und setzt den Mehrwert voraus. Als zentrale Kategorie erweist sich nun der relative Mehrwert. Im Unterschied zum absoluten Mehrwert (extensive bzw. intensive Verlängerung der Arbeits- und dadurch der Mehrarbeitszeit) wird er durch Verkürzung der notwendigen Arbeitszeit, also durch Senkung des Wertes der Arbeitskraft erzielt, was beständige Steigerung der Produktivität einschließt. So gelingt es, den Mehrwert in seinen strukturellen und funktionellen Zusammenhängen als ein geschichtliches Produktionsverhältnis von Kapital und Lohnarbeit, als grundlegendes Kapitalverhältnis par excellence in seiner realen gesellschaftlichen Bewegung zu erfassen.

Vom Standpunkt der entwickelten kapitalistischen Produktion stellen sich absoluter und relativer Mehrwert nur noch als die beiden grundlegenden