The Young Hegelian

Little more than a year after his arrival as a student in Berlin, Marx wrote to his father that he was now attacking himself "more closely to the current philosophy." This "current philosophy" was the philosophy of G.W. F. Hegel, who had taught at the University of Berlin from 1807 until his death in 1831. Years later, Friedrich Engels described Hegel's influence in the period when he and Marx began to form their ideas:

The Hegelian system covered an extraordinarily greater domain than any earlier system and developed in this domain a wealth of thought which is astounding even today.

One can imagine what a tremendous effect this Hegelian system must have produced in the philosophy-stingy atmosphere of Germany. It was a triumphal procession which lasted for decades and which by no means came to a standstill on the death of Hegel. On the contrary, it was precisely from 1830 to 1840 that "Hegelianism" enjoyed most exclusiveness and to a greater or lesser extent infected even its opponents.

The close attachment to this philosophy Marx formed in 1837 was to affect his thought for the rest of his life. Writing about Hegel in 1844, Marx referred to the Phenomenology of Mind as "the true birthplace and secret of his philosophy" (EM 48). This "long and obscure work is therefore the place to begin our understanding of Marx.

The German word for "Mind" is sometimes translated as "Spirit". Hegel used it to refer to the spiritual side of the universe, which appears in his writings as a kind of universal mind. My mind, your mind, and the minds of every other conscious being are particular, limited manifestations of this universal mind. There has been a good deal of debate about whether this universal mind is intended to be God or whether it somehow, in pantheistic fashion, identifies God with the world as a whole. There is no definite answer to this question, but it seems appropriate and convenient to distinguish this universal mind from our own particular minds by writing the universal variety with a capital, as Mind.

The Phenomenology of Mind traces the development of Mind from its first appearance as individual minds, conscious but neither self-conscious nor free, to Mind as a free and fully self-conscious unity. The process is neither purely historical, nor purely logical, but a strange combination of the two. One might say that Hegel is trying to show that history is the progress of Mind along a logically necessary path, a path along which it must travel in order to reach its final goal.

The development of Mind is dialectical - a term that has come to be associated with Marx because his own philosophy has been referred to as "dialectical materialism", the dialectical elements of Marx's theory were taken over from Hegel, so this is a good place to see what "dialectic" is.

Perhaps the most celebrated passage in the Phenomenology concerns the relationship of a master to a slave. It will illustrates what Hegel means by dialectic, and it introduces an idea echoed in Marx's view of the relationship between capitalist and worker.

Suppose we have two independent people, aware of their own independence, but out of their common nature as aspects of one
universal Mind. Each sees the other as a tool, a limit to his own power over everything else. This situation is therefore unstable. A struggle ensues, in which one conquers and enslaves the other. The master-slave relationship, however, is not stable either. Although it seems at first that the master is everything and the slave nothing, it is the slave who works and by his work changes the natural world. In this assertion of his own nature and consciousness over the natural world, the slave achieves satisfaction and develops his own self-consciousness, while the master becomes dependent on his slave. The ultimate outcome must therefore be the liberation of the slave, and the overcoming of the initial conflict between the two independent beings.

This is only one short section of the Phenomenology, the whole of which traces the development of Mind as it overcome contradiction or opposition. Mind is inherently universal, but in its limited form, as the minds of particular people, it is not aware of its universal nature — that is, particular people do not see themselves as all part of the one universal Mind. Hegel describes this as a situation in which Mind is "alienated" from itself — that is, people who are manifestations of Mind take other people (who are also manifestations of Mind) as something foreign, hostile, and external in themselves, whereas they are in fact all part of the same great whole.

Mind cannot be free in an isolated state, for in such a state it appears to encounter opposition and carries on its own complete development. Since Mind is really infinite and all-encompassing, opposition and barriers are only appearances, the result of Mind not recognizing itself for what it is, and taking what is really a part of itself as something alien and hostile to itself. These apparently alien barriers limit the freedom of Mind, for if Mind does not know its own infinite power it cannot exercise these powers to organize the world in accordance with its plans.

The progress of the dialectical development of Mind in Hegel's

S. G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), whose philosophy provided the framework for Marx's ideas.
philosophy is always progress towards freedom. 'The History of the World is one other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom,' he wrote. The Phenomenology is thus an immense philosophical epic, tracing the history of Mind from its first blind gropings in a hostile world to the moment when, in recognizing itself as master of the universe, it finally achieves self-knowledge and freedom.

Heidegger's philosophy has an odd consequence which would have been embarrassing to a more modest author. If all history is the story of Mind working towards the goal of understanding its own nature, this goal is actually reached with the completion of the Phenomenology itself. When Mind, manifested in the mind of Hegel, grasps its own nature, the last stage of history has been reached.

So this is postpositivism. Hegel's speculative mixture of philosophy and history has been unfeasible for a long time. It was, however, taken seriously when Marx was young. Moreover we can make sense of much of the Phenomenology even if we reject the notion of a universal Mind as the ultimate reality of all things. We can treat 'Universal Mind' as a collective term for all human minds. We can then rewrite the Phenomenology in terms of the path to human liberation. The 'Sage of Mind' then becomes the sage of the human spirit.

This is what a group of philosophers known as Young Hegelians attempted in the decade following Hegel's death. The orthodox interpretation of Hegel was that since human society is the manifestation of Mind in the world, everything is right and rational as it is. There are plenty of passages in Hegel's works which can be quoted in support of this view. At times he seems to regard the Proven state as the supreme incarnation of Mind. Since the Proven state paid his salary as a professor of philosophy in Berlin, it is not surprising that the more radical Young Hegelians took the view that in these passages Hegel had betrayed his own philosophy. Among these was Marx, who wrote in his doctoral thesis: 'If a philosopher really is compromised, it is the job of his followers to tear the inner core of his thought and to illuminate its own superficial expositions of it' (Drs).

For the Young Hegelians the 'superficial expression' of Hegel's philosophy was his acceptance of the state of politics, religion, and society in early nineteenth-century Prussia. The 'inner core' was his account of Mind overcoming alienation, reinterpreted as an account of human self-consciousness freeing itself from the illusions that prevent it achieving self-understanding and freedom.

During his student days in Berlin and for a year or two afterwards Marx was close to Bruno Bauer, a lecturer in theology and a leading Young Hegelian. Under Bauer's influence Marx entered on orthodox religion as the chief illusion standing in the way of human self-understanding. The chief weapon against this illusion was philosophy. In the Preface to his doctoral thesis, Marx wrote:

'Philosophy means no secret of it. The proclamation of Proverbs - in a word, I detest all the gods - is her own profession, her own slogan against all the gods of heaven and earth who do not recognize man's self-consciousness as the highest divinity. They shall be no other than it.'

In accordance with the general method of the Young Hegelians, Bauer and Marx used Hegel's own critique of religion to reach more radical conclusions. In the Phenomenology Hegel referred to the Christian religion at a certain stage of its development as a form of alienation, for while God reigns in heaven, human beings inhabit an inferior and comparatively worthless 'vale of tears'. Human nature is divided between its essential nature, which is immortal and heavenly, and its non-essential nature, which is mortal and earthly. Thus individuals see their own essential nature as having its home in another realm; they

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Chapter 3
From God to Money

The transformation of Hegel's method into a weapon against religion was carried through most thoroughly by another radical Hegelian, Ludwig Feuerbach.

Friedrich Engels later wrote of the impact of the work that made Feuerbach famous: 'The same Feuerbach, the Essence of Christianity, ... One must himself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get an idea of it. Enlightenment was general; we all became at once Feuerbachians.' Like Becher, Feuerbach in the Essence of Christianity characterized religion as a form of alienation. God, he wrote, is to be understood as the essence of the human species, externalized and projected into an alien reality. Wisdom, love, benevolence — these are really attributes of the human species, but we attribute them, in a purifying form, to God. The more we enrich our concept of God in this way, however, the more we impoverish ourselves. The solution is to realize that theology is a kind of misdescribed anthropology. What we believe of God is vitally true of ourselves. Thus humanity can regain its essence, which in religion it has lost.

When The Essence of Christianity appeared, in 1841, the first meeting between Marx and Engels was held two years earlier. The book may not have made as much of an impression on Marx as it did on Engels, for Marx had already been exposed to similar ideas through Becher; but
Feuerbach's later works, particularly his *Deductive Theses for the
Paragraph of Philosophy*, did have a decisive impact on Marx, triggering off
the next important stage in the development of his thought.

Feuerbach's later works went beyond the criticism of religion to the
creation of Hegelian philosophy itself. Yet it was a curious form of
criticism of Hegel. For Feuerbach continued to work by systematizing
Hegel, using Hegel's method against all philosophy in the Hegelian
mode. Hegel had taken Mind as the moving force in history, and
humans as manifestations of Mind. This, according to Feuerbach,
leaves the essence of humanity outside human beings and thus, like
religion, serves to demean humanity from itself.

More generally, Hegel and other German philosophers of the idealist
school began from such concepts as Spirit, Mind, God, the Absolute,
the Infinite, and so on, treating these as ultimately real, and regarding
ordinary humans and animals, tables, sticks and stones, and the rest of
the frate, material world as a limited, imperfect expression of the
spiritual world. Feuerbach again reversed this, insisting that philosophy
must begin with the finite, material world. Thought does not precede
existence, existence precedes thought.

So Feuerbach put at the centre of his philosophy neither God nor
Thought, but man, and the task of the progress of Mind, overcoming
alienation in order to achieve freedom, was for Feuerbach a mystifying
expression of the progress of human beings in overcoming the alienation
of both religion and philosophy itself.

Marx related onto his idea of bringing Hegel down to earth by using
Hegel's methods in attack the present condition of human beings. In
his brief spell as editor of the Rheinische Zeitung, Marx had descended
from the refined air of Hegelian philosophy to more practical issues
like censorship, divorce, a Prussian law prohibiting the gathering of
dead churls from streets, and the economic distress of Mosele wine-
growers. When the paper was suppressed Marx went back to
philosophy, applying Feuerbach's technique of transformation to
Hegel's political philosophy.

Marx's views at this stage (1843) are liberal rather than socialist, and he
still thinks that the change is consciousness is all that is needed, in an
letter to Arnold Ruge, a fellow Young Hegelian with whom he worked
on the short-lived German-French Annuals, Marx wrote: 'Freedom, the
feeling of men's dignity, will have to be awakened again in these men.
Only this feeling... can again transform society into a community of
man to achieve their highest purposes, a democratic state.' And in a
later letter to Ruge about their joint ventures:

we can express the aim of our practical ideal in one phrase: A self
understanding (equal, critical philosophy) of the age concerning its
unhappy existence... To have this into forgiveness, mankind has only to
declare itself for what it is.

(R 38)

Up to this point Marx had followed Feuerbach in reinterpreting Hegel
as a philosopher of man rather than Mind. His view of human beings,
however, focused on their material aspect, their thoughts, and their
consciousness. The first signs of a shift in his later emphasis on the
material and economic conditions of human life can be seen in an essay
written in 1843 entitled 'On the Jewish Question'. The essay reviews
two publications by Bruno Bauer on the issue of civil and political
rights for Jews.

Marx rejects his friend's treatment of the issue as a question of
religion. 'It is not the people that we should consider,' Marx says, but
the everyday Jew. Accepting the common stereotype of Jews as
obsessed with money and bargaining, Marx describes the Jew as merely
a special manifestation of what he calls 'civil society's pedant' - that
is, the dominance in society of bargaining and financial interests
generally Marx therefore suggests that the way to abolish the ‘problem’ of Judaism is to reorganize society so as to abolish bargaining.

The importance of this essay is that it sees economic life, not religion, as the chief form of human alienation. Another German writer, Max Stirner, had already developed Feuerbach’s ideas in this direction, writing the First, as Engels put it, to reach communism by ‘the philosophic path’. (There had, of course, been many earlier communists who were more or less philosophical — what Engels meant was the path of Hegelian philosophy.) Now Marx was heading down the same route. The following quotation from ‘On the Jewish Question’ reads exactly like Bauer, Feuerbach, or Marx himself, a year or two earlier, denouncing religion — except that where they would have written ‘God’ Marx now substitutes ‘money’.

Money is the universal, self-computed value of all things. Hence it has robbed the whole world, the human world as well in nature, of its proper value. Money is the alienated essence of man’s labour and he puts this alien essence antagonist to him as he appropriates it.

The final sentence points the way forward. First the young Hegelians, including Bauer and Feuerbach, were religion as the alienated human essence, and sought to end this alienation by their critical studies of Christianity. Then Feuerbach goes beyond religion, arguing that any philosophy which concentrates on the spiritual rather than the material side of human nature is a form of alienation. Now Marx insists that it is neither religion nor philosophy, but money that is the barrier to human freedom. The obvious next step is a critical study of economics. This Marx now begins.

Before we follow this development, however, we must pause to note the emergence of another key element in Marx’s work which, like economics, was to remain central to his thought and activity.
Chapter 4
Enter the Proletariat

We saw that when the Prussian government suppressed the newspaper he had been editing, Marx started work on a critique of Hegel's political philosophy. In 1844 he published, in the German-French Annals, an article entitled "Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction". The critique which this article was to introduce remained unfinished, but the "Introduction" stands alongside "On the Jewish Question" as a milestone on the road to Marxism. It is in this article that Marx first allocates to the working class a decisive role in the coming redemptive of humanity.

The "Introduction" starts by summarizing the attack on religion made by Bauer and Feuerbach. This passage is notable for its epigrams, including the frequently quoted description of religion as "the opium of the people", but it says nothing new. Now the human self-division has been unmasked in its holy forms, Marx continues, it is the task of philosophy to unmask it in its unholy forms, such as law and politics. He calls for more criticism of German conditions, to allow the German people "not even a moment of self-deception". But for the first time - and in contrast to Bauer and Feuerbach - Marx suggests that criticism by itself is not enough:

The weapon of criticism evidently cannot replace the criticism of weapons. Material force must be overthrown by material force. But theory also becomes a material force once it has gripped the masses. (605)

In his initial recognition of the role of the masses, Marx treats the role as a special feature of the German situation, not applicable to France. Whereas in France 'every class of the nation is politically active and experiences itself first of all as a particular class but as representing the general needs of society', in Germany practical life is 'mindless' and no class can be free until it is freed to be by its immediate condition, by material necessity, by its very nature. Where then, Marx asks, is the positive possibility of German freedom to be found? And he answers:

In the formation of a class with real needs... a sphere of society having a universal character because of its universal suffering... a sphere, in short, that is the complete loss of humanity and can only redeem itself through the total redemption of humanity. This dissolution of society in a particular class is the proletariat. (72-3)

Marx concludes by placing the proletariat within the framework of a transformed Hegelian philosophy:

As philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat, the proletariat finds its intellectual weapons in philosophy.

More explicitly:

Philosophy cannot be actualized without the supercession of the proletariat, the proletariat cannot be superceded without the actualization of philosophy. (73)

Here is the germ of a new solution to the problem of human alienation. Criticism and philosophical theory alone will not end it. A more practical force is needed, and that force is provided by the artificially impoverished working class. This lowest class of society will bring about the 'actualization of philosophy' - by which Marx means
the culmination of the philosophical and historical saga described, in a
modified form, by Hegel. The proletariat, following the lead of the new
radical philosophy, will complete the dialectical process in which
humans have emerged, grown estranged from themselves, and
become enslaved by their own alienated essence. Whereas the
property-owning middle class could win freedom for themselves on
the basis of rights to property – thus excluding others from the
freedom they gain – the property-less working class possess nothing
but their title as human beings. Thus they can liberate themselves only
by liberating all humans.

Before 1844, to judge from his writings, Marx scarcely noticed the
existence of the proletariat; certainly he never suggested they had a
part to play in overcoming alienation. Now, like a film director calling
on the wrong boy to play Hamlet, Marx introduces the proletariat as
the material force that will bring about the liberation of humanity.

Why?

Marx did not arrive at his view of the proletariat as the result of
detailed economic studies, for his economic studies were just
beginning. He had read a great deal of history, but he does not
buttress his position by quoting from historical sources, as he was later
to do. His reasons for placing importance on the proletariat are
philosophical rather than historical or economic. Since human
alienation is not a problem of a particular class, but a universal
problem, whatever it is to solve it must have a universal character – and
the proletariat, Marx claims, has this universal character in virtue of its
total exploitation. It represents not a particular class of society, but all
humanity.

That a situation should contain within itself the seed of its own
dissolution, and that the greatest of all triumphs should come from the
depths of despair – these are familiar themes in the dialectic of Hegel
and his followers. (They echo, some have said, the redemption of
humanity by the crucifixion of Jesus.) The proletariat fits neatly into
this dialectical scenario, and one cannot help suspecting that Marx
seized upon it precisely because it served his philosophical purposes so
well.

To say this is not to say that when he wrote the "Introduction" Marx
knew nothing about the proletariat. He had just moved to Paris, where
socialist ideas were much more advanced than in Germany. He mixed
with socialist leaders of the time, living in the same house as one of the
"leaders of the League of the Just, a radical workers' group. His writings
reflect his admiration of the French socialist workers: "The nobility of
man," he writes, "shines forth from their toil-worn bodies" (MK 87). In
giving so important a role to the proletariat, therefore, the
"Introduction" reflects a two-way process: Marx tailors his concept of
the proletariat to suit his philosophy, and tailors his philosophy in
accordance with his new-found enthusiasm for the working class and
its revolutionary ideas.
Chapter 5
The First Marxism

Marx had now developed two important new insights: that economics is the chief form of human alienation, and that the material force needed to liberate humanity from its domination by economics is to be found in the working class. Up to this stage, however, he had only made these points briefly, in essays ostensibly on other topics. The next step was to use these insights as the basis of a new and systematic world-view, one which would transform and supplant the Hegelian system and all prior transformations of it.

Marx began his critical study of economics in 1844. It was to culminate in Marx's greatest work, Capital, the first volume of which was published in 1867, later volumes appearing after Marx's death. So the work Marx produced in Paris, known as the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, was the first version of a project that was to occupy him, in one form or another, for the rest of his life.

The 1844 version of Marxism was not published until 1932. The manuscript consists of a number of disconnected versions, some obviously incomplete. Nevertheless we can see what Marx was trying to do. He begins with a Preface which praises Feuerbach as the author of 'the only writings since Hegel's Phenomenology and Logic containing a real theoretical revolution'. There are then sections on the economics of wages, profits, and rent, in which Marx quotes liberally from the founding fathers of classical economics like J. R. Say and Adam Smith.

The point of this, as Marx explains, is to show that according to classical economics the worker becomes a commodity, the production of which is subject to the ordinary laws of supply and demand. If the supply of workers exceeds the demand for labour, wages fall and some workers starve. Wages therefore tend to the lowest possible level compatible with keeping an adequate supply of workers alive.

Marx draws another important point from the classical economists. Those who employ the workers - the capitalists - build up their wealth through the labour of their workers. They become wealthy by keeping for themselves a certain amount of the value their workers produce. Capital is nothing else but accumulated labour. The worker's labour increases the employer's capital. This increased capital is used to build bigger factories and buy more machines. This increases the division of labour. This puts more self-employed workers out of business. They must then sell their 'labour on the market. This intensifies the competition among workers trying to get work, and lowers wages.

All this Marx presents as deductions from the presuppositions of orthodox economics. Marx himself is not writing as an economist. He wants to rise above the level of the science of economics, which, he says, simply takes for granted such things as private property, greed, competition, and so on, saying nothing about the extent to which apparently accidental circumstances are really the expression of a necessary course of development. Marx wants to ask larger questions, ignored by economists, such as 'What is the evolution of mankind is the meaning of this reduction of the greater part of mankind to abstract labour?' By 'abstract labour' Marx means work done simply in order to earn a wage, rather than for the worker's own specific purposes. Thus making a pair of shoes because one wants a pair of shoes is not abstract labour; making a pair of shoes because that happens to be a way of getting money is. Marx, in other words, wants
to give a deeper explanation of the meaning and significance of the laws of economics.

What type of explanation does Marx have in mind? The answer is apparent from the section of the manuscripts entitled 'Alienated Labour'. Here Marx explains the implications of economics in terms closely parallel to Feuerbach's critique of religion:

The more the worker severs himself, the more powerful becomes the alien objective world which he feels against himself, the poorer he and his inner world become, the less there is that belongs to him. It is the same in religion. The more man attributes to God, the less he retains in himself. The worker puts his life into the object; then it no longer belongs to him but to the object... the externalization of the worker in his product means not only that his work becomes an object, an external existence, but also that it exists outside him, self-sufficiently, alien, an autonomous power, opposed to him. The life he has given to the object confronts him as hostile and alien.

(YP 78-9)

The central point is more skilfully stated in a sentence preserved in the notebooks Marx used when studying the classical economists, in preparation for the writing of the 1844 manuscripts:

It is evident that economics establishes an alienated form of social intercourse in the essential, original and natural form.

(M 116)

This is the gist of Marx's objection to classical economics. Marx does not challenge the classical economists within the presuppositions of their science. Instead, he takes a viewpoint outside those presuppositions and argues that private property, competition, greed, and so on are to be found only in a particular condition of human existence, a condition of alienation. In contrast to Hegel, whom Marx praises for grasping the self-development of man as a process, the classical economists take the present alienated condition of human society as its 'essential, original and defective form'. They fail to see that it is a necessary but temporary stage in the evolution of mankind.

Marx then discusses the present alienated state of humanity. One of his premises is that 'man is a species-being'. The idea is taken directly from Feuerbach, who in turn derived it from Hegel. Hegel, as we saw, told the story of human development in terms of the progress of a single Mind, of which individual human minds are particular manifestations. Feuerbach stripped out the super-Mind, and entwined Hegel in less mysterious human terms; but he retained the idea that human beings are in some sense a unity. For Feuerbach the basis of this unity, and the essential difference between humans and animals, is the ability of humans to be conscious of their species. It is because they are conscious of their essence as a species that human beings can see themselves as individuals (that is, as one among others), and it is because humans see themselves as a species that human reason and human power are unlimited. Human beings partake in perfection - which, according to Feuerbach, they mistakenly attribute to God instead of themselves - because they are part of a species.

Marx transforms Feuerbach, making the conception of man as a species-being still more concrete. For Marx 'productive life... is species-life.' It is in activity in production, that humans show themselves to be species-beings. The somewhat unconvincing reason Marx offers for this is that while animals reproduce only to satisfy their immediate needs, human beings can produce according to universal standards, free of any immediate need - for instance, in accordance with standards of beauty (YP 82).

On this view, labour in the sense of free productive activity is the essence of human life. Whatever is produced this way - a statue, a house, or a piece of cloth - is therefore the essence of human life made
property in one blow. In a word, communism. Marx introduces communism in terms, belittling the closing chapter of a Hegelian epic:

Communism... is the genuine resolution of the antagonism between man and nature and between man and man; it is the real resolution of the conflict between existent and essence, objectification and self-objectification, freedom and necessity, individual and species. It is the birth of history and of history itself as this solution. (EPMM II).

One might expect that Marx would go on to explain in some detail what communism would be like. He does not. In fact nowhere in his writings does he give more than sketchy suggestions on this subject. He does, however, gesture at the enormous difference communism would make. All human senses, he claims, are degraded by private property. The dourer in miners; the market value of the jewels he handles, not their beauty. In the alienated condition caused by private property we cannot appreciate anything except by possessing it, or using it as a means. The abolition of private property will liberate our senses from this alienated condition, and enable us to appreciate the world in a truly human way just as the moral ear perceives a wealth of meaning and beauty where the unmusical ear can find none, so will the sense of social human beings differ from those of the unsocial.

These are the essential points of 'The First Manifesto'. It is manifestly not a scientific enterprise in the sense in which we understand science today. Its theories are not derived from detailed factual studies, or subjected to controlled tests or observations.

The first Marxism is more down to earth than Hegel's philosophy of history, but it is a speculative philosophy of history rather than a scientific study. The aim of world history is human freedom, human beings are not now free, for they are unable to organize the world so as to satisfy their needs and develop their human capacities. Private
Chapter 6
Alienation as a Theory of History

Marx’s first published book – and, incidentally, the first work in which Engels participated – attacked articles published in the General Literar Guette (Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung), a journal edited by Marx’s brother and teacher, Bruno Bauer. Since Bauer’s brother was a co-editor, the book was meticulously entitled The Holy Family. The best comment on it was made by Engels: the sovereign derrision that we accord to the General Literar Guette is in stark contrast to the considerable number of pages that we devote to its criticism. Nevertheless, some passages of The Holy Family are interesting because they show Marx in transition between the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts and later statements of the materialist conception of history.

One section is a defence of the French socialist Proudhon and his objections to private property. Marx is still thinking in terms of alienation:

The propertyless class and the class of the proletariat represent the same human self-alienation. But the former feels comfortably and confirmed in this self-alienation, knowing that its alienation is its own power and possessing in it the semblance of a human existence. The latter feels itself raised in this alienation and sees in it its impotence and the actuality of an inhuman existence.