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Marx's and Engels' Studies Contrasted

Relationship of Philosophy and Revolution to Women's Liberation

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When Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution is finally published, the following chapter will appear in a different form. It will be split into two parts, as part of two separate chapters.

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I. Why A Century to Publish Marx?

BECAUSE MARX HAD DISCOVERED a new continent of thought as well as revolution, and because both concept and fact have ever been rigorously tied together in Marx's Marxism, his works carry a special urgency for our age. More relevant than the ceaseless question of private vs. collective (or state property that calls itself Communism) is Marx's articulation of Man/Woman as the fundamental relationship, at the very moment (1844) when he first laid the philosophic foundation for what became known as Historical Materialism. The new continent of thought Marx discovered soon issued its indictment of the past—"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles"—and its call for a new world, new human relations, a class-less society.

What has an imperativeness for today is the fact that, at the very end of his life (1880-1882)—after the French edition of his greatest theoretical work, *Capital*, which was published after the defeat of the greatest revolution he had witnessed, the Paris Commune—Marx returned to the pivotal Man/Woman relationship, as, at one and the same time, he excerpted Lewis H. Morgan's *Ancient Society*,¹ and wrote to Vera Zasulich about the needed Russian Revolution.

It has taken nothing short of a series of revolutions to bring out the unpublished writings of Marx.² The 1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts were not published until after the Russian Revolution. The 1857-58 Grundrisse was not published until after the Chinese Revolution. Unfortunately, Women's Liberationists of the mid-1960s to mid-1970s exercised no revolutionary prod to wrest Marx's notes on anthropology from the Archives, much less dialectically work out, on that ground, all the new from the ongoing Movement. Quite the contrary. The Women's Liberation Movement, which had helped create a new interest in Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, only served to provide new loopholes for Marxists, "orthodox" and so-called independent alike, to rush in and try to have that work be the ground, the direction the Movement would take.

Though there had always been a Party, and, indeed, an International (the Second) that laid claim to the heritage of Marx, the truth is that it took the Russian Revolution of November, 1917 to prod even Marxist scholars to discover the now-famous 1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts. And once the early workers' state became transformed into its opposite—a state-capitalist society—these continued to gather dust until the 1956 Hungarian Revolution brought them onto the historic stage.

To bring about a serious study of the next unpublished work, the Grundrisse,³ in the 1950s, it took nothing short of the Chinese Revolution of 1949. It took still another decade before even the single most discussed chapter of that work—"Forms Which Precede Capitalist Production"—was published in English as *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*. Because, however, the discussion was focused mainly on feudalism, or rather, the transition from feudalism to capitalism, many lacunae gaped open as to its relationship to Engels' *The Origin of the Family*, with all Marxists, Eric Hobsbawm included, claiming: "This was a work which Marx wanted to write, and for which he had prepared voluminous notes, on which Engels based himself so far as possible."⁴ Was that really so?

¹ In 1972, Marx's Notebooks, under the title, *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx* (Van Gorcum, Assen, 1972), were finally transcribed by Lawrence Krader, painstakingly footnoted and with quite a profound, 80-page Introduction. It is necessary to emphasize the word, transcribed. It is not a translation. The Notebooks were written by Marx in English but include many phrases and full sentences in French, German, Latin and Greek.

² Not all have been brought out even now! There is no dearth of scholars who are happy to jump at such an excuse in order not to grapple seriously with that which is available, especially on *Capital*. See Ernest Mandel's Introduction to the Pelican edition of Vol. I of Karl Marx's *Capital*, p. 29 and again p. 234. And see my critique of Mandel, "Today's Epigones Who Try to Truncate Marx's Capital," in *Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis* (News & Letters, 1978).

³ The Grundrisse was not published in full in English until 1973, when the Pelican Marx Library published it in London.

⁴ Karl Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, with an Introduction by Eric J. Hobsbawm (International Publishers, 1965), p. 51, fn. 2. There is no indication anywhere that Hobsbawm had seen these "voluminous notes", which dealt with Morgan, Phear, Maine and Lubbock.

The year which finally saw the publication of Lawrence Krader's transcription of Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks*, 1972, was the year also when Eleanor Burke Leacock wrote a new Introduction "updating" Engels' work. She perpetuated the myth that *The Origin of the Family* is a product of Marx as well as Engels.⁵ In 1974, Charnie Guettel, in her pamphlet *Marxism and Feminism*, makes Leacock's Introduction "mandatory reading for any serious Marxist."⁶

1972 is also the year that saw the publication of a most serious independent work on the history of women's resistance from the 17th century to the present, *Women, Resistance and Revolution*, by Sheila Rowbotham, who likewise not only acts as if Marx and Engels were one, but singles out Hal Draper's "Marx and Engels on Women's Liberation" thusly: "This is a very useful summary of what Marx and Engels wrote about women." While she is independent enough of Marx to call Marx and Engels "a couple of bourgeois men in the 19th century,"⁷ she has but one criticism of Draper's "summary": "It doesn't really point out problems and inadequacies of what they wrote."

Hal Draper, the author of the article Rowbotham recommends, was then (1970) working on a book pretentiously⁸ entitled *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*. It is first now (1978) seeing the light of day, and still not in toto. Clearly, however, eight years back, Draper was so very anxious to bring his views to bear on the Women's Liberation Movement, subjected to "less-than-knowledgeable summaries that have seen the light recently," that he chose that chapter for separate publication.¹⁰ Neither then, nor now, has he shown any knowledge of the finally available *Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*.

⁵ Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (International Publishers, New York, 1972, 1975). In her 66-page Introduction, Leacock writes: "The book was written after Marx's death, but was drawn from Marx's as well as Engels' own notes" (p. 7). Neither the 1972 nor 1975 edition has any reference to the *Ethnological Notebooks*, nor does Leacock show any awareness of the fact that Marx's notes on Morgan had been available in Russia since 1941.

⁶ Charnie Guettel, *Marxism and Feminism* (The Women's Press, Toronto, copyright 1974): "Leacock's introduction is the most valuable current study of Engels available and mandatory reading for any serious Marxist" (p. 14, fn. 8).

As for Evelyn Reed's *Woman's Evolution* — the pretentious "product of over 20 years of research," glorifying a "matriarchal age" "comprising more than 99 percent of human existence" — its emptiness of any revolutionary socialism is seen in the studied elimination of any and all reference to Marx. This is further emphasized by the fact that none of Marx's works are listed in the bibliography. Consider the fact that Evelyn Reed's subject is "woman's evolution," and both Morgan's and Engels' studies do play an acknowledged, important part in her analysis, but there is not one word about the *Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*. Whether that is out of sheer ignorance or out of studied omission, one must question what is her purpose. A little bit of dialectics, of course, would have gone a long way to soften her complaint that the "wealth of data on the question of anthropology and archeology has not been matched by an equivalent expansion in theoretical insight" (p. xvi). Evelyn Reed explains her methodology to be "evolutionary and materialist." All one can say about that is that it certainly isn't revolutionary or historical.

⁷ Sheila Rowbotham, *Women's Liberation and Revolution* (Falling Wall Press, Bristol, England, March 1972, expanded in 1973) p. 6. This is the "extensive, descriptive bibliography" to which Rowbotham refers in *Women, Resistance and Revolution*.

⁸ Sheila Rowbotham, *Women, Resistance and Revolution* (Pantheon Press, New York, 1972).

⁹ Draper explains his goal to have been "a full and definitive treatment of Marx's political theory, policies, and practice," but since that was "unattainable", since politics has come to have a narrow meaning, and since there is a need to go "beyond the indispensable 'grand theory' . . . It is to bend the stick the other way that this work is titled *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution* rather than *Political Theory*, which might be interpreted too narrowly" (pp. 11, 12). Hal Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution* (Monthly Review Press, New York and London, copyright 1977).

¹⁰ Hal Draper, "Marx and Engels on Women's Liberation" (*International Socialism*, July/August 1970). All pagination in the text is to this article.

The pretentious scholar who so heavily roots himself in Engels' *The Origin of the Family*—not only in the chapter on "Women's Liberation" but throughout his projected six-volume work—should surely have known about these Notebooks, and I'm not referring only to 1972, when they were finally transcribed in their original English, but to the first mention of them in the early 1920s when Ryazanov discovered them and had them photographed.¹¹ In 1941, the Marx-Engels Institute published a Russian translation.¹² And therein lies a tale.

IT IS TRUE THAT ENGELS did think he was carrying out a "bequest" of Marx in writing *The Origin of the Family*. It is also true that his enthusiasm in discovering Marx's Notebook on Morgan, which led him to get his own copy of Morgan's *Ancient Society*, and which inspired him to write the book, made him believe that he was expressing Marx's views in a coherent form rather than the polyglot marginalia Marx was using for himself alone as he was excerpting Morgan. But Engels was not Marx, as he, himself, was the first to admit, and *The Origin of the Family* was his version, in which the select quotations from Marx gave the impression that he was reproducing Marx's "Abstract."

Far from that being true, we now know that not only is the "Abstract"—that is to say, Marx's actual Notebook on Morgan—148 pages long, but also that it is not the whole of Marx's Notebooks on anthropology. The whole is 254 pages—and even that is not the whole.* This is not the place to try to come to grips with this great mass of material (although I do hope to return to the question at a later date). Here I'm concerned only with the way modern Marxists who are interested in today's Women's Liberation Movement were influenced by *The Origin of the Family*, without ever bothering to find out what Marx had actually written, and then acting

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as though Marx and Engels were one on the question. For this purpose, it will be sufficient to focus first on a fairly minor matter—how important even a mere excerpt is in Marx's hands, through the way in which he emphasized certain words that were not emphasized in Morgan. Here is one excerpt on women of the Iroquois:

"The women allowed to express their wishes and opinions through an orator of their own selection. Decision given by the Council. Unanimity was a fundamental law of its action among the Iroquois. Military questions usually left to the action of the voluntary principle."¹³

Secondly, and this is the critical point, the Russians took liberties when they, in 1941, did translate the Marx text on Morgan. Engels, naturally, cannot be blamed for this mis-translation. Nor can the Russians excuse themselves on the basis that the inspiration for using the words "private" and "hallowed" came from Engels. Here is how Marx excerpted a part of Morgan:

"When field culture bewiesen hatte, dass d(ie) ganze Oberflaeche der Erde could be made the subject of property owned by individuals in severalty u(nd) (das) Familienhaupt became the natural center of accumulation, the new property career of mankind inaugurated, fully done before the close of the Later Period of Barbarism, weite einen grossen Einfluss auf (the) human mind, reif new elements of character wach . . ." (*Ethnological Notebooks*, p. 133.)

Here is how the Russian translation reads:
"When field agriculture had demonstrated that
(Continued on Page 6)

the whole surface of the earth could be made the object of property of separate individuals and the head of the family became the natural center of accumulation of wealth, mankind entered the new hallowed path of private property. It was already fully done before the later period of barbarism came to an end. Private property exercised a powerful influence on the human mind, awakening new elements of character . . ." (*Arkhiv Marksa y Engelsa*, Vol. 9, p. 52. Emphasis is mine to stress what was neither in Morgan nor in Marx's excerpt.)

(Here is the original Morgan excerpt: "When field agriculture had demonstrated that the whole surface of

the earth could be made the subject of property owned by individuals in severalty, and it was found that the head of the family became the natural center of accumulation, the new property career of mankind was inaugurated. It was fully done before the close of the Later Period of barbarism. A little reflection must convince any one of the powerful influence property would now begin to exercise upon the human mind, and of the great awakening of new elements of character it was calculated to produce . . .")

Now the Russians have very concrete, class—state-capitalist class—interests that inspire them to translate "the career of property" as "private property" and repeat the word twice. But why should independent Marxists who are not statist-Communists likewise narrow the subject to collective vs. private property, when Marx's point is that the "property career", i.e. accumulation of wealth, is that which contains the antagonisms of the development of patriarchy and later class divisions?

If we are to grapple with that seriously, we must, first, appreciate the totality of Marx's philosophy of revolution sufficiently to want to unearth what Marx had said from under all the debris of what was attributed to him from the time of his death in 1883 until the 1970s, especially so on women's liberation; and secondly, maintain a finger on the pulse of today's Women's Liberation Movement. It's in this context that we turn to one of the recent "summaries" of what Marx was supposed to have thought on the question, Hal Draper's "Marx and Engels on Women's Liberation."

¹¹Ryazanov's first brief account was published on Nov. 20, 1923 in *Vestnik Sotsialisticheskoi Akademii*, No. 6.

¹²*Arkhiv Marksa y Engelsa*, Vol. 9, 1941 (Leningrad).

¹³In the edition of *Ancient Society* I am using (the reproduction by Kerr, Chicago, of the 1877 edition) this appears on p. 118. Not only is there no underlining in Morgan, but in Marx the role of the women is not limited by "even", nor is the word "decision" limited by a "but" as in Morgan: "Even the women were allowed to express their wishes and opinions through an orator of their own selection. But the decision was made by the council . . ."

* Marx's notes on Kovalevsky, which the Russians published in 1958, were reproduced by Lawrence Krader in *The Asiatic Mode of Production*, Van Gorcum, 1975, available from Humanities Press.

II. Hal Draper Misconstrues

Hal Draper no sooner opens his chapter on women's liberation than he at once starts sniping at today's Women's Liberationists' "social psychology and attitude (like 'male chauvinism')", contrasting it to the views of "Marx and Engels" who, he claims, rooted the "Woman Question" in the "primordial division of labor" between the sexes, and warning us that since that preceded "capitalism, or the state, or the division between town and country, or even private property . . . this division of labor will be most resistant to uprooting" (p. 20, col. 2).

To help us in this tortuous task, it would seem he would at once plunge into Marx's whole new continent of thought. No, Draper, instead, chooses to roll Marx's views back to his "presocialist" days. This at once makes it clear that the "Woman Question" is not the only theme of which Draper is oppressively aware; the other apparition is Hegel. He blames Marx for casting his views "in typically Hegelian-idealist terms" (p. 21, col. 1). By no accident, what then manifests itself is that these two preoccupations, in turn, take second place to the overwhelming drive to do nothing short of transforming into opposite Marx's concept of that most fundamental relationship of Man/Woman as measure of just how deep a revolution is needed to uproot this exploitative alienating social order.

BENT ON THAT GOAL, Draper begins his task by trying to reduce Marx's concept to that of Fourier, frothing at the mouth about the first "lucubrations of this newfledged socialist, his 'Paris manuscripts.'" He is talking about the epochal Humanist Essays of Marx, holding that they are a product of the fact that Marx's view that the Man/Woman relationship is a measure of humanity's development is only due to the fact that Marx "enthusiastically" adopted Fourier's view.¹⁴

So anxious is Draper to force Marx's Promethean concept of the Man/Woman relationship into the Procrustean attitude of Draper's view of Fourier that he embarks on yet another bold leap downward to his reductio ad absurdum thesis by skipping the years between 1844 and 1868, though he is still dealing with the first section, "Marx's Early Views (1842-1846)". Obviously not all that confident that he has succeeded in obfuscating the year before Marx broke with bourgeois society (1842) with the year after (1844), as he presents the years 1842 to 1846 as a single unit, Draper now decides to devise a different scenario in jumping to 1868. First he refers to Engels in *Anti-Duhring* (1878) as again paying "homage to Fourier".¹⁵ Then Draper divines that Marx is also paying homage to Fourier in 1868. Proof? It takes strange ears to hear it in Marx's Letter to Kugelmann (Dec. 12, 1868): "Great progress was evident in the last Congress of the American 'Labour Union' in that, among other things, it treated working women with complete equality . . . Anybody who knows anything of history knows that great social changes are impossible without the feminine ferment. Social progress can be measured exactly by the social position of the fair sex (the ugly ones included)."

If you failed to hear that "echo" of enthusiasm for Fourier in Marx's 1868 letter, you are obviously not as adept as Draper in "the exercise in excavation".¹⁶ To hear it where it isn't, you need the presumptuousness of Draper's divinations that Marx, "perhaps without think-

ing of the source" (p. 21, col. 2), nevertheless achieved that "echo".

Please remember that Draper is not at this point writing about "the lucubrations of the new fledged socialist." No, the Marx he is talking about here is the Marx who, the year before, finally published his greatest theoretical work, *Capital*. Two decades have elapsed since Marx had issued the world-shaking *Communist Manifesto* and plunged directly into the 1848 *Revolutions*. It is the Marx who is the head of the First International Working Men's Association, writing about a new stage in working class development in the U.S. following the Civil War and the struggle for the shortening of the working day.

The establishment of the National Labor Union with its call for the equality of women (indeed, it was electing them to decision-making positions¹⁷) is what inspired Marx's letter to Dr. Kugelmann. Marx had devoted no less than 80 pages of *Capital* to the struggles for the shortening of the working day, and the bulk of that chapter dealt with the oppression of women and children.¹⁸ Now Marx sees something happening across the ocean on the subject and he calls Dr. Kugelmann's attention to the women being invited to join the First International. That letter does have another sentence Draper chose to leave for later. Marx was stressing that they had elected Madame Harriet Law to the highest ranking body, the General Council. Wouldn't that have been something to shout to the skies about, that in mid-19th century Victorian England, Marx organized the First International Working Men's Association which had women not only as members but in decision-making positions?

There was an expression in that letter to Dr. Kugelmann which showed that even a Marx hadn't fully escaped the marks of the age, and thus, though he measured "social progress" by the "special position of the fair sex", he nevertheless added the phrase, "(the ugly ones included.)" But far from taking issue with that phrase, Draper lets it go as he returns hurriedly to the "early years" once again, and then is off to the question—"The Sexual Revolution of the Past" and "Monogamy and/or Love: The Future of the Family", which he roots in Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

WE WILL FIRST NOW SEE the reason why Draper had held that this work was not just Engels' but Marx's — it "should be considered the joint work of both men" (p. 23, col. 2)—and how that inaccuracy has helped to disorient the socialist women's liberation movement.

The question of sexual relations, forms of marriage, the family, are certainly pivotal, and even if one, like Draper, wishes he could skip over the 1844 *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*, especially so on the question of that fundamental relationship of Man/Woman, there nevertheless has been plenty of other evidence about Marx's disgust with bourgeois monogamy and its double standard, all of which needed total uprooting in any new society. After all, the very next year, 1845, there was the joint work of Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, which is recognized as the first statement of Historical Materialism, and which Draper quotes at length on these questions. And in that famous year, there is Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* that again Draper quotes, even calling attention to the fact that where Marx wrote that "the family" had to be "destroyed in theory and in practice", Engels had edited it to read that the family "must be criticised in theory

¹⁴The phrase Draper uses here is what appears in his *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution* as the method that will govern the whole work. See pp. 20 to 23 of that work.

¹⁷Two of the best known were Kate Mullaney, president of the Troy Collar Laundry Workers, who was appointed assistant secretary and national organizer for women, and Augusta Lewis, a leader in the typographical union. See Joyce Maupin's *Working Women and Their Organizations and Labor Heroines*, both published in 1974 by Union WAGE, Berkeley, Cal.

¹⁸See the section on "The Working Day and the Break with the Concept of Theory" in my *Marxism and Freedom* (Pluto Press, London; available from News & Letters, Detroit).

and revolutionized in practice." Nor did one have to search for heretofore unpublished documents, since the most famous of all of Marx's works—the Communist Manifesto—made no bones about the fact that it was "self-evident" that with the "abolition of private property" would come "the abolition of the family".

What, then, could possibly have produced such great new enthusiasm, four decades later, for Morgan's Ancient Society, as analyzed by Engels in The Origin of the Family? Surely it couldn't have been just the question that not only had the monogamous family not always been the form of marriage, but neither could it be considered the highest form of love.¹⁹ For Engels, it was a matter of finding, in Marx's posthumous papers, Marx's Notebooks on Morgan. Draper, instead, chooses to footnote that year, 1883, as the year in which Kautsky had written some stupid articles on "loose" monogamy having always characterized mankind's development, and that this so incensed Engels that he "wrote and published his Origin of the Family a year later" (p. 25, col. 1).

What was Draper doing in all these "excavations" not to have found any of the letters that Engels wrote on his discovery of Marx's notes on Morgan, or in Bernstein's description in his My Years of Exile of how Engels had read to him from Marx's Notebook and from Engels' own synopsis?²⁰

Whether it's out of Draper's sheer ignorance of Marx's Notebooks, (he refers only to an "Abstract" that Engels supposedly reproduced more or less in full), or because the erudite Draper decided to invent new categories of his own, one thing his footnote to Kautsky does disclose is the smug attitude of Draper on Women's Liberation. He clings to Engels' designation about "the world historic defeat of the female sex", which, in turn, he is always relating, with great emphasis, to the "primordial division of labor between the sexes." And, of course, both are deeply rooted in the transition from matriarchy, or at least matrilineal descent, to patriarchy. No matter how hard Draper tries to insinuate that the "world historic defeat of the female sex" is a view that Marx shares with Engels, that is no expression of Marx's. What is true of both Marx and Engels is that they were constantly driving at the "etymology" of the word, family. Far from the word bearing a reference to a married couple and their children, it was the word for slaves. Famulus meant domestic slave, familia referred to the total number of slaves one man owned. (See The Origin of the Family, p. 121.) And Marx's stress is on the social and not only the "sexual division of labor."

Of course, Marx strongly opposed patriarchy, calling for the "abolition" of the patriarchal family. He held that: "The modern family contains in embryo not only slavery (servitus) but soridom also, since from the very beginning it is connected with agricultural service. It contains within itself, in miniature, all the antagonisms which later develop on a wide scale within society and its state."²¹ And "all the antagonisms" extended from "ranks" that begin in communal life and lead to

¹⁹Indeed, love, in Marx's eye, was not only a great sensuous experience, but a universal, since it is "love which first really teaches man to believe in the objective world outside himself, which not only makes man an object, but the object of man!" (The Holy Family, p. 32).

²⁰A list of the letters as well as a quote from Bernstein's work appears on pp. 388 to 390 of Ethnological Notebooks.

²¹Quoted by Engels in The Origin of the Family, pp. 121-122. Incidentally, and not so incidentally, Engels omitted the sentence that preceded this paragraph. It reads: "Fourier characterizes the Epoch of Civilization by Monogamy and private Property in land." (See Ethnological Notebooks, p. 120.) From the manner in which Engels had worked the omitted single sentence into an entire paragraph that he placed prominently in a note at the very end of his work (p. 236) on how we find already in Fourier "the profound recognition that in all societies which are imperfect and split into antagonisms, single families (les familles incoherentes) are the economic unit". Draper would have learned a great deal about the difference between Marx and Engels on the "acceptance" of Fourier.

the division between the chieftain and the masses, class divisions in embryo, "in miniature."

It is not true, as Draper would have it, that Engels devoted "one" chapter to "The Family," so entitled; in truth, very nearly one-third of the book is devoted to that subject. Engels appears to have a unilateral instead of a multilateral attitude to the question of the development of Man/Woman. It is true it was great, in 1884, to stress the manner in which woman has always been oppressed since her "world historic defeat," how different it had been in "matriarchal" society, and how socialism would be the re-establishment of primitive communism on a higher scale. Or, as Engels italicized Morgan's judgment as the very final sentence of his whole book, "It will be a revival, in a higher form, of the liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient gentes." But the fact is that Engels' writing there is neither very dialectical nor comprehensive when it gets fixed on the Family.

MARX, ON THE CONTRARY, showed that the elements of oppression in general, and of woman in particular, arose from within primitive communism, and not only related to change from "matriarchy," but beginning with establishment of ranks — relationship of chief to mass — and the economic interests that accompanied it. Indeed, in Volume III of Capital, as Marx probed in his chapter, "Genesis of Capitalist Ground Rent," "the economic conditions at the basis" of class "individuality," you can see the actual dialectical foundation for his stress, in the Notebooks on anthropology, on property as the material base for changing social relations. He was not using Morgan's phrase, "career of property," as if it were a synonym for historical materialism.

Engels' uncritical acclaim of Morgan notwithstanding, Morgan had not "discovered afresh in America the materialist conception of history discovered by Marx 40 years ago."²²

Marx emphasized Morgan's great contribution on the theory of the gens and its early egalitarian society, but he certainly didn't tie it, alone, to the precedence of matriarchy over patriarchy as did Engels in the Preface to the Fourth Edition, 1891. "This rediscovery of the primitive matriarchal gens as the earlier stage of the patriarchal gens of civilized peoples has the same importance for anthropology as Darwin's theory of evolution has for biology and Marx's theory of surplus value for political economy."

Marx didn't take issue with Morgan's findings about the Iroquois society and especially singled out the role of women in it. But he did not stop there. In calling attention to other societies and other analyses, he brought in, first, new illumination to the writings of Plutarch:

"The expression by Plutarch, that 'the lowly and poor readily followed the bidding of Theseus' and the statement from Aristotle cited by him, that Theseus 'was inclined toward the people' appear, however, despite Morgan, to indicate that the chiefs of the gentes etc. already entered into conflict of interest with the mass of the gentes, which is inevitably connected with the monogamous family through private property in houses, lands, herds."²³

Then, Marx demonstrates that, long before the dissolution of the primitive commune, there emerged the question of ranks within the egalitarian commune. It was the beginning of a transformation into opposite — gens into caste. That is to say, within the egalitarian communal form arose the elements of its opposite — caste, aristocracy, different material interests. Moreover, these weren't successive stages, but co-extensive with the communal form. Or as Marx put it when they began changing the names of the children to assure paternal rather than maternal rights (a paragraph Engels did reproduce in The Origin of the Family): "Innate casuistry! To change things by changing their names! And to find loopholes for violating tradition while maintaining tradition, when direct interest supplied sufficient impulse."

In a word, though Marx surely connects the monogamous family with private property, what is pivotal to him is the antagonistic relationship between the Chief and the masses.

Marx's historic originality in internalizing new data, whether that be in anthropology or "pure" science, was a never-ending confrontation with what Marx called "history and its process."²⁴ That was concrete. That was

²²Engels' Preface to the First Edition of The Origin of the Family.

²³I'm using Krader's translation in his article, "The Works of Marx and Engels in Ethnology Compared," (International Review of Social History, Vol. XVIII, 1973, Part 2, Van Gorcum, Assen). This is really an extension of his magnificent transcription and editing of Marx's Ethnological Notebooks, and I am greatly indebted to the seminal Introduction he wrote for it.

²⁴Capital, Vol. I, p. 408 fn. 2 (Kerr edition): "The weak points in the abstract materialism of natural science, a materialism that excludes history and its process, are at once evident from the abstract and ideological conceptions of its spokesmen, whenever they venture beyond the bounds of their own speciality." See also Chapter 2, "A New Continent of Thought", in my Philosophy and Revolution (Delacorte, New York, 1973).

ever-changing. And that ever-changing concrete was inexorably bound to the universal, because, precisely because, the determining concrete was the ever-developing Subject — self-developing men and women.

The whole question of transitions is what is at stake between Marx's and Engels' views. Marx is showing that it is during the transition period that you see the duality, the beginnings of antagonisms, whereas Engels always seems to have it only at the end, as if class society came in very nearly full blown after the communal form was destroyed and private property was established. Moreover, where, to Marx, the dialectical development from one stage to another is related to new revolutionary upsurge, Engels sees it as a unilateral development.

In the 1850s, for example, what inspired Marx to return to the study of pre-capitalist formations and gave new appreciation of ancient society and its craftsmen was the Taiping Revolution.* It opened so many new doors on "history and its process" that "materialistically" a stage of production wasn't just a stage of production — be it the Western or the Asiatic mode of production — but a question of revolutionary relations. Whether that concerned the communal form or the despotic form of property, the development of the individual to society and to the state was crucial. It was no accident, on the other hand, that Engels, who certainly agreed with Marx's singling out the Asiatic mode of production, nevertheless happened to skip over the question of the Oriental commune in his analysis of primitive communism in *The Origin of the Family*.

Hal Draper, on the other hand, not only continues to act as though Engels' *The Origin of the Family* was written also by Marx, but as if he, Draper, is speaking for them, as he reaches the last part of his chapter, entitled, "Problems of Women's Liberation." Thus, in returning to Marx's Dec. 12, 1868 Letter to Kugelmann, this time citing that the First International had elected "Madame Law to be a member of the General Council,"

"Engels' world historic defeat of the female sex" is no expression of Marx's."

Draper presents the fact with the same attitude that he has towards the statement of Engels that became such a favorite of Clara Zetkin and the whole Social Democratic women's movement: "In the family, he (man) is the bourgeois; the wife represents the proletariat." Draper's comment was that it was meant "as a strong metaphor, of course" (p. 24, col. 2):

NO WONDER THAT THE STRESS, as he goes to the actual women's movement, is on Engels' and Bebel's role in encouraging the establishment of women's organizations with their own "autonomous leadership" (p. 27, col. 1), rather than the women's autonomous leadership itself. No wonder Clara Zetkin rates hardly more than a couple of paragraphs, and whereas he does say she was the head of the movement, whose organ, *Gleichheit*, reached a circulation of 100,000, he acts as if all they discussed was the "Woman Question." Not a word comes into it about the fact that women played the greatest revolutionary role in opposing the First World War.

Why should Eleanor Marx, who is finally recognized "as a revolutionary organizer and agitator" as well as "extraordinarily effective political activist" be listed only as "the ablest woman trade union organizer in the New Unionism," when, in fact, it wasn't only "as a woman" that she was a great organizer. She was the one who took seriously Marx's urging, after the fall of the Paris Commune, that revolutionaries should go "lower and deeper" into the proletariat, away from the skilled toward the unskilled and the most exploited, not to mention the newly arrived peasants and the doubly exploited Jew of London's East End. Draper does give her credit for playing "an active role in the building of the new-type Gas Workers' and General Laborers Union" (p. 27, col. 1) and says she "co-authored a pamphlet for England on *The Woman Question*." But he doesn't single this out as something significantly new both for her, and the Movement.

The most important and relevant for our age, however, is not what Engels wrote in 1884, much less whether there was or wasn't a matriarchal stage. Nor is it "the woman question" as Bebel saw it at the beginning of the 20th century, though both men's writings had a great influence on the development of the socialist women's movement, which was likewise way ahead of the times, not just theoretically, but in the actual mass organization of working women. What is cogent today

*It is not clear whether Engels knew Marx's *Grundrisse*, but he did know the articles in *The New York Tribune* on the Taiping Revolution.

²⁵It took World War I before Lenin found that phrase of Marx, made to the 1871 Congress of the International Working Men's Association, and first then made a category of it. See Chapter X, "The Collapse of the Second International and the Break in Lenin's Thought," in *Marxism and Freedom*.



Frederick Engels Karl Marx

is whether the ground laid helps or doesn't help today's Women's Liberation Movement. Draper's doesn't.

Thus, when he starts with the Paris Commune, which is certainly a very high point of women's activities as revolutionaries, as workers, as thinkers — Marx speaks not only of "bleeding," but of "thinking Paris" — Draper focuses on Marx pointing to the fact that the Commune made no distinction "between legitimate and so-called illegitimate wives . . . with regard to the indemnity of 75 centimes." Draper finds no need to mention the *Women Incendiaries*,²⁶ although that work has a vast amount of new material and actual documents, contemporary to 1871, of the activities and writings of the women revolutionaries. While Draper notes the fact that Marx had followed up the concern with women in the Paris Commune by proposing a motion in the First International that women's branches be organized, there is not a single mention of a single woman who actually participated in the Paris Commune.

Even without knowing (or perhaps just not caring) about Edith Thomas' *Women Incendiaries*, there was no way of him not knowing the most famous woman revolutionary, Louise Michel, and about the young woman Marx advised to go to Paris, Elizabeth Dmitrieva, to organize a women's section of the International. What was necessary, to make the women's participation in the Paris Commune, as both force and reason, come alive, required more space than the single paragraph Draper devoted to it. Let us see what he does when he finally reaches the culmination of his subject with the thunderous: "Social Revolution Comes First."

It focuses on counter-revolution, with the apex of the whole — the very, very final sentence — narrowing the question to the "division of labor between the sexes": "But in the last analysis the historic forms of the divisions of labor between the sexes could be uprooted for good and all only by as profound an upheaval as it had originally taken to impose 'the world-historic defeat of the female sex' of which Engels had written."

The nonsense of talking about the "division of labor between the sexes" as if that "primordial" state is the burning question of the day, when even for the primitive stage it was part of the social division of labor, is not only forgetting what was at stake, but what is pivotal and underlies all class societies — the division between mental and manual labor. There is not a whiff of that Great Divide, and that is of the essence for our age.

Is the totality of that "primordial" counter-revolution the ground for Women's Liberation today? And can we possibly disregard Draper's cynicism as he feels compelled to add, parenthetically, of course, that the totality of the change needed in the Man/Woman relationship holds under "all" circumstances: "(That would be so even without the Pill.)"? Does he consider it mod to keep stressing, when he refers to "the world-historic defeat of the female sex," that it "cannot be changed basically simply by ideological (including psychiatric) exhortation" (p. 24, col. 2)? What idiocy, first to reduce today's fight for total liberation to the merely "ideological," and then further to reduce ideology to "psychiatric exhortation"!

Whether or not Draper, in his projected six-volume work (of which this article is a chapter), intends to reach our age, or just limit himself to presenting what he considers to be the views of "Marx and Engels"; whether or not he considers that basis sufficient for the Women's Liberation Movement "itself" to work out today's problematic, the point is that his mis-interpretation of the views of Marx, the lacunae that gape out from his presentation of the present as well as the past, not to mention his superciliousness (if not outright cynicism) cannot possibly lay new foundations for what is relevant and most urgent for our day.

(Continued on Page 8)

²⁶Draper published, edited and wrote a Foreword to a whole book, *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Writings on the Paris Commune* (Monthly Review Press, 1971), which likewise failed to take into account any of the material on what actually happened, uncovered by this magnificent book, *Women Incendiaries*, written by Edith Thomas and published in France in 1963, and in New York in 1966.

Marx died before he could write up his Notebooks on anthropology either as a separate work, or as part of Vol. III of Capital. There is no way for us to know what Marx intended to do with this intensive study, much less the concrete manner in which he would have dialectically related the external to the internal factors in the dissolution of the primitive commune. What is clear, however, is that the decline of the primitive commune was not due just to external factors, nor due only to "the world historic defeat of the female sex." (That was Engels' phrase, not Marx's.) Just as there was conquest, even when the commune was at its height, and the beginning of slavery when one tribe defeated another, so there was the beginning of commodity exchange between the communes as well as emergence of conflict within the commune, within the family, and not only between the family and the gens. All these conflicts culminated during the dissolution, which is why Marx's Notebooks keep stressing the duality in primitive communism.

Take, for example, the question of the division of labor. Though, in 1845, in *The German Ideology*, he called attention to the fact that the first division of labor was sexual, he now stresses the two-fold nature in the division of labor: 1) physiological as well as inter-tribal conflict; 2) the social division of labor based both on exchange of surplus products between communities and on the mode of labor. As the family develops as an economic unit, and gets separated out of the gens, the focus changes again to the different material interests that are developing both internally and externally, including development of technology and agriculture. Which was why, in the paragraph that Engels did quote in *The Origin of the Family*, Marx emphasized that not only slavery, but also serfdom was latent in the family; indeed, that all conflicts that were developing in the transition to class society were present in the family "in miniature."

Finally, what Marx called "the excrescence of the state" in class-divided society—and he uses that in his reference to a period during the dissolution of the commune—is introduced into the question of transition from primitive communism to a political society. The point at all times is to stress a differentiation in the family, both when that is part of the gens or as they separate out of the gens to another society, at which point Marx again differentiates between the family that is in a society that already has a state and the family before the state emerged. The point at all times is to have a critical attitude both to biologism and uncritical evolutionism.

IT WAS BY NO MEANS SIMPLE, unitary development, and it cannot under any circumstances be attributed to a single cause like patriarchy winning over matriarchy and establishing thereby nothing less than some sort of "world historic defeat of the female sex." Marx, by taking as the point of departure, not the counter-revolution, but new stages of revolution, was enabled to see, even in the Asiatic mode of production, the great resistance to Western imperial encroachments, contrasting China to India, where British imperialism won.

Throughout Marx's Notebooks, his attack on colonialism, racism, as well as discrimination against women, is relentless, as he refers to the British historians, jurists, anthropologists and lawyers as "blockheads" who definitely didn't appreciate what discoveries were being made and therefore often skipped over whole historic periods of humanity. Listen to the criticisms included in Marx's Notebooks on Maine: "Herr Maine als block-headed Englishman geht nicht von gens aus, sondern von Patriarch, der spacter Chief wird etc."²⁷ And a little later: "Nach dem Ancient Irish Law women had some power of dealing with their own property without the consent of their husbands, and this was one of the institutions expressly declared by the English block-headed Judges to be illegal at the beginning of the 17th century."²⁸

As against Engels, who was so overwhelmed with all the new data on forms of marriage and the development of a family, in and out of the gens, that it very nearly subsumed the question of property, i.e. economics, Marx, in assembling new data, never fails to criticize the major writers he is excerpting. He does this, not just "politically", i.e. calling attention to the fact that they are bourgeois writers, but calling attention to the fact that their method is empiric and nowhere is empiricism as method as vacuous as when gathering new facts. What Marx was doing, instead, was following the empiric facts dialectically, relating them not only to other historic facts, but tracing the development of each fact, its petrification and transformation into opposite, caste. Which is why he kept his eye on the differences in rank in the gens, emergence of conflict within it, both in changing material interests and in relations between Chief and ranks. And yet, Marx drew no such unbridgeable gulf between primitive and civilized as Engels had. As he was to write to Zasulich, in the year he was working most intensively on Morgan's *Ancient Society*, the pivotal point was that everything "depends on the historical environment in which it occurs."

While there was no difference between Marx and

Engels on such a conclusion—indeed, the expression "Historical Materialism" was Engels', not Marx's—the relationship of concrete to universal always remains, with Engels, in two totally separate compartments. Put differently, "knowing" Historical Materialism, and having that always at the back of his mind, and recognizing Marx as "genius" whereas he and the others were "at best, talented", did not impart to Engels' writings after Marx's death, the totality of Marx's new continent of thought. Engels' *The Origin of The Family*, as his first major work after the death of Marx, proves that fact most glaringly today, because Women's Liberation is an Idea whose time has come, and for that, *The Origin of the Family* sheds little direction.

As Marx, in the last years of his life was turning to anthropology, it was neither as the philosophic anthropology which ran through his 1844 Essays, nor just as the latest empiric data in the 1880s. Rather, whether it's a question of the description of the equality of women during primitive communism, or the question of Morgan's theory of the gens, what Marx was focusing on was the self-development of humanity from primitive communism to the period in which he lived, though revolutionary praxis. That is what kept him enthralled as he dug deep into the latest in anthropology, in archeology, in early history, technology and agriculture, craftsmanship and primitive human relations. Truly, we see here that no greater empiricist ever lived than the great dialectician, Karl Marx. And Marx wasn't hurrying to make easy generalizations, such as Engels' on the future being just a "higher stage" than primitive communism. No, Marx envisioned a totally new man, a totally new woman, a totally new life form (and by no means only for marriage); in a word, a totally new society.

"No greater empiricist ever lived than the great dialectician, Karl Marx."

Suddenly, Marx found it difficult to answer a simple question from Vera Zasulich on the future of the Russian commune, in the manner in which it was debated between the Narodniks and the Marxists—that is to say, whether it could lead to communism without needing to go through capitalism and evidently without a revolution! He wrote no less than four different versions of his answer, the first of which was fully ten pages long. From that first draft, until the very much abbreviated one that he finally sent, what is clear is that his preoccupation is not "the commune" but the "needed Russian Revolution": "In order to save the Russian commune a revolution is needed."²⁹

The second draft manifests also what he had developed with the Asiatic mode of production: "The archaic or primary formation of our globe contains a number of strata of different ages, one superimposed on the other . . . (isolation) permits the emergence of a central despotism above the communities . . . I now come to the crux of the question. We cannot overlook the fact that the archaic type to which the Russian commune belongs, conceals an internal dualism."³⁰

The third draft, which in part was quoted above on the question of the historical environment being the crucial point, was a conclusion Marx reached as he emphasized "the dualism within it (the commune) permits of an alternative: either the property element in it will overcome the collective element, or the other way."

THIS IS ALWAYS THE KEY to the whole. We must remember that just as, in 1844, Marx was projecting not just the overthrow of the old but stressing that a new society must change human relationships totally, actually as well as philosophically, so, once the 1848 Revolutions were defeated, Marx developed a new concept—the "revolution in permanence." In a word, it was in the 1850 Address to the Communist League that Marx first projected both the deepening of the concrete revolution as well as the world revolution, the inter-relatedness of both.

As we saw, it was the Taiping Revolution in the 1850s which led, at one and the same time, to his probing of pre-capitalist forms of society, and seeing the Chinese Revolution as "encouraging" the West European proletariat, which was quiescent at the moment, to revolt. The *Grundriess*, which contained that most

²⁹The 1970 edition of the three-volume Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *Selected Works* (Progress Publishers, Moscow) finally published the first draft of Marx's reply, pp. 152-163. Peculiarly enough, the explanatory note (fn. 113, p. 522) refers to the fact that Marx was working on the third volume of *Capital* at this time without referring to the fact that he was then studying Morgan's *Ancient Society*, though Marx himself refers to it, and they have to footnote the actual title of Morgan's book.

³⁰Excerpts from the second and third draft (March 8, 1881) are included in *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*. All four drafts are included in full in *Arkhiy Marksya y Engelsa*, Vol. I. They are also included in the *Russian Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 19. Actually, Marx wrote all the drafts in French.

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brilliant chapter on pre-capitalist formations, also contained the projection of a totally new society wherein man, wrote Marx, "does not seek to remain something formed by the past, but is in the absolute movement of becoming."

And here — after the great "scientific-economic" work, *Capital* (which, however, likewise projected "human power is its own end"³¹), after the defeat of the Paris Commune; and after four full decades from the start of Marx's discovery of a whole new continent of thought, first articulated in 1844—we see that Marx returns to probe "the origin" of humanity, not for purposes of discovering "new" origins but for perceiving new revolutionary forces, their reason, or as Marx called it in emphasizing a sentence of Morgan, "powers of the mind." How total, continuous, global must the concept of revolution be now? One culminating point in this intensive study of primitive communism and in the answer to Vera Zasulich,³² can be seen in the Introduction Marx and Engels wrote for the Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, which, without changing a word in the *Manifesto* itself,³³ projected the idea that Russia could be the first to have a proletarian revolution: "If the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting for a communist development."

The Introduction was dated January 1882. Marx continued his work in ethnological studies for the rest of the year. The last writer he excerpted—Lubbock—was studied but four months before his death. He did not abate his criticism of either the writers or their reports. Thus, in excerpting Lubbock's statement, "Among many of the lower races relationship through females is the prevalent custom . . ." and noting that Lubbock still continues to talk of "a man's heirs", Marx contemptuously noted "but then they are not the man's heirs; these civilized asses cannot free themselves of their own conventionalities."³⁴

How can anyone consider that what Engels was writing in *The Origin of the Family* was the equivalent of Marx's accumulated depth and breadth of thought and revolutionary experience? The dialectic of all the developments, subjective and objective, in Marx's day (1843-1883) has a great deal to tell us, but we will not get it from Draper's "summation" of what "Marx and Engels" wrote on women's liberation, or from the socialist women who accept that summation.

I began this chapter by focusing on the fact that, though Marx's discovery of a new continent of thought signalled, as well, an epoch of revolution, it nevertheless took a whole series of revolutions to bring out his unpublished works. The fact that the mid-1880s also gave birth to a new Women's Liberation Movement, as both force and reason, makes it necessary to study the finally published notebooks of Marx on Morgan, Maine, Phœar and Lubbock³⁵. As theoretic preparation for the American Revolution, it is of more than passing interest that what preoccupied Marx in his last years was a study by an American anthropologist, Morgan, centering on the Iroquois Confederacy. Of course, each generation of Marxists must work out its own problems. But Marx's philosophy of revolution is so total a concept that it cannot be just heritage. Rather, it is the type of past that is proof of the continuity of Marx's philosophy for our age. We will continue to grapple with it throughout this projected work, *Rosa Luxemburg, Today's Women's Liberation Movement and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*.

³¹ *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 954. One erudite anthropologist, who is certainly no Marxist, Sir Raymond Firth, also focuses on the fact that *Capital* is not so much an economic work as "a dramatic history designed to involve its readers in the events described." (See "The Sceptical Anthropologist? Social Anthropology and Marxist Views on Society" by Raymond Firth in *Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology* (Malaby Press, London, 1975).)

³² Her letter to Marx is included in *The Russian Menace to Europe*, edited by Paul W. Blackstock and Bert F. Hoselitz (Free Press, Illinois 1952), but the liberties they take by trying to create a one-page composite of the four drafts of Marx's answer leave a great deal to be desired.

³³ In that 1882 Introduction, signed by both Marx and Engels, Marx saw no reason for making any changes, although he was then intensively studying primitive communism, something they knew little about in 1847 when the *Manifesto* was first written. Engels, on the other hand, in the 1888 English edition, felt called upon to offer a demurrer to the epoch-making statement: "All history is a history of class struggles." He claimed in a footnote, that this meant all "written" history but that, since the publication of Morgan's *Ancient Society*, much more had been learned about primitive communism. To this writer, Engels thereby modified the dialectic structure of Marx's historic call to revolution.

³⁴ *Ethnological Notebooks*, p. 340.

³⁵ Marx's Notebooks include his studies of Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society*, John Budd Phœar's *The Aryan Village*, Henry Sumner Maine's *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions*, and John Lubbock's *The Origin of Civilization*.