
MARX'S LEGACY REINTERPRETED

Karl Heinrich Marx and Political Philosophy

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Abstract

Karl Heinrich Marx (1818–1881) is one of the most important reference thinkers for contemporary political theory, contemporary political philosophy and contemporary political history. The bases for this view are manifold. The ideas and criticisms presented by Marx are inclined to create friends and foes from the aspect of political praxis; and the most profound elements of his critique on capitalism are, I wish to argue, still valid. These also reflect the potentiality of Marx's ideas to create alternative perspectives for study of the contemporary world. This ensures the recall and the discussion of Marx's political ideas by alternative political agents in terms of both scientific concern and the contemporary world. Another reason for Marx being a reference thinker of the history of political philosophy—depending on the first two reasons—is that his ideas have been perceptibly “realized” in political practices albeit partially. Thus, whenever the Marxist tradition and its political practices are remembered, the agents of the political arena are obliged to reconsider Marx. In this article, the fact that Marx is considered as a reference thinker in the history of political philosophy will be analyzed in more detail. The basic concepts of his theory will be presented, related to each other with regard to philosophical, real and concrete moments. As conclusion, a short commentary on Marx's political theory will be provided.

Introduction

From the end of the nineteenth century to the present, Marx has inspired many theoretical successors (Marxologists, Marxist thinkers and critics),¹ followers (communist, socialist, syndicalist, anarchist militants),² as

¹ These are some thinkers and movements which have specified their intellectual positions related with Marx and Marxism: Georg Lukacs, Karl Korsch

well as other political thoughts (liberal and egalitarian social democratic policies) and alternative thinking circles (ecologists, utopists and egalitarian society activists, feminists and the agents of gender politics, the struggle of oppressed people and subaltern politics, the criticism of youth and the cultural criticisms of everyday life)³ in terms of their political criticisms and political goals. He has supplied a particular political positioning point to each one of them. This process also continues in the present. However, it is necessary to remember and show how the contemporaneity

(Hegelian Marxism); Antonio Gramsci (European Communism); Rudolf Hilferding, Otto Bauer, Max Adler (Austrian Marxism); Louis Althusser (Structural Marxism); many representatives of the Frankfurt School, Ernst Bloch, Henri Lefebvre (Critical-Cultural Marxism); Harry Cleaver, Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt (Autonomist Marxism); Clara Zetkin, Alexandra Kollontai (Feminist Marxism); Raya Duneyevskaya, Teodor Shanin (Humanist Marxism); Eric Fromm, Jean Paul Sartre (Existentialist Marxism), David Miller, Gerald A. Cohen, John Roemer, Jon Elster, Erik Olin Wright, Philippe van Parijs (Analytical Marxism), Ernesto Screpanti, Göran Therbon, Gregory Meyerson, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe (Post-Marxism).

² These are some original movements and the representatives which have produced political practices in relation with Marx and Marxism: Rosa Luxemburg, Antonie Pannekoek, Paul Mattick (The Spartacists, Left Communists); Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Joseph Stalin (Bolshevik Party); Mao Zedung, Deng Xiaoping (The Communist Party of China); Enver Hoxha (The Communist Party of Albania); Ernesto Che Guevara, Fidel Castro (The Communist Party of Cuba); Syndicalists (Daniel de Leon, Georg Sorel vd.); Anarchists (P.J. Proudhon, M.A. Bakunin), Ecologists (Murray Bookchin, Joel Kovel); Anarcho-Syndicalists, Zapatistas, Council Communists, Libertarian Socialists, Socialism or Barbarism Circle, Situationism, Third Worldism, Colonial Post-Colonial Liberation Movements.

³ Marx and Marxists have also important for Carl Schmitt, Hans Kelsen, Eric Voegelin, significant theorists of the right conservative circles; Karl Mannheim, Karl Polanyi, Jürgen Habermas, Frederick A. Hayek, Richard Sennett, Robert Nozick, significant liberals from the aspects of social welfare state and social democratic ideals; Dorothy Smith, Donna Haraway, Julia Kristeva, Mary Wollstonecraft, significant representatives of the feminist movement; Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Frantz Fanon, Dipesh Chakrabarty, theorists of the subaltern movement; Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Luce Irigaray, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Roland Barthes, structuralist and post-structuralist thinkers; and many other thinkers from many other movements of thought.

of the heritage inspired by Marx is continuous. Below, the article will specify the reasons for the aforementioned contemporaneity using the historical data and analyzing the traces of conceptual expressions.

The Marxist heritage is contemporaneous because: The success and the failure of Marx and internationalist class politics is a fact that must be remembered and recalled by contemporaries, as they produce concrete and realistic responses historically and socially. The first revolutionary realization of these indications is the “Bolshevik Revolution of 17th October.” The picture that occurred in the Bolshevik Revolution is to be a historical and social reference point of each participant who conducts a contemporary political discussion in the political arena one way or another, for the effects of the Bolshevik Revolution spread to the whole twentieth century. The course that Marxist politics followed through the agency of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (1917-1991) and Warsaw Treaty Organization (1955-1991) has left a deep mark on the course of the development of world politics. Recognizing the existence of such a picture enables us to reconsider Marx’s political philosophy as a guiding spirit. Tracing back the cultural history of the twentieth century necessarily leads us to the impacts of the Bolshevik Revolution—not only for its achievements but also for its failures. The carrier of this inspiration is again Marx. It is a well known fact that the Bible (the New Testament) was translated into the highest number of language of any book and printed with one of the most important inventions of humankind, the printing press. After hundreds of years, the throne of the Bible was nearly taken by *The Communist Manifesto* which was written by Marx and his friend Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) in 1848. *The Communist Manifesto* became the second great work available in all of the languages of the world when the support of the USSR and its allies was included in the printing and publishing process. Considered in terms of appeal, the fame of *The Communist Manifesto* has a positive affect on Marx’s contemporaneity. The recognition creates a chance of invasiveness and intervention; as a matter of fact, the contemporaneity is directly related to invasiveness and the power of intervention.⁴

⁴ The year of 1998 refers to the 150th anniversary of the first publication of *The Communist Manifesto*. In that year special editions of the *Manifesto* were intro-

The criticism of capitalism is contemporary because: Although Marx is the chief theoretician of the hegemonical “defeated camp” against capitalism (anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist camp), his criticism of capitalism and class politics is still valid to a great extent. Furthermore, expression of this validity by the institutions and organizations that are the symbols of the capitalism leads to a repatriation of Marx’s theory—considering the relevancy of his criticism—as an “antidote” or “elixir of rescue” that can “cure” capitalism (with the words of the ancient Jewish doctrine, *tikkun olam*—healing and restoring the world). Of course, revolutionaries and capitalists assign different meanings to “cure,” “antidote” and “rescue,” etc. However, despite differences in interpretation, for both groups, Marx is the first referenced thinker who houses the sedative and curative policies explicitly in his theory and hence conserves the curative characteristics in himself. For capitalist powers, turning the whelming atmosphere in the capitalist crisis to good account, in a sense, being in need of Marx’s bitter remedy has a functional importance. Whereas, for revolutionaries the evilness of capitalism stems from capitalism itself also—as Marx states; thus, it is instructive to resort to the Marx’s bitter remedy in terms of eliminating the domination of the living labor over death labor.⁵

duced in different places around the world. These editions included all the forewords and/or afterwords prepared by Marx and Engels for the translations in different languages. In addition, many articles were included written by significant Marxist thinkers. In Turkey also, some new publications were introduced in compliance with the fame of the *Manifesto*. “In the century and a half since its publication, it has been judged not only as a uniquely influential document in the theory and practice of revolutionary movements throughout the world, but also as a work of history, as economic, political, and cultural analysis, and as prophecy. The *Manifesto* has been judged as an account of past, present, and future—not only the present and future of its authors but those of every generation since, up to and including our own.” Ellen Meiksins Wood, “The Communist Manifesto after 150 Years”, *Monthly Review*, <http://monthlyreview.org/1998/05/01/the-communist-manifesto-after-150-years>, 1998. Also see: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Komünist Manifesto ve Hakkında Yazılar*, trans. Nail Satlıgan et al. (Istanbul: Yordam, 2008).

⁵ In every crisis period it is usual to see articles that recall Marx (and motivate people to reconsider him) in the important journals and newspapers of the USA. This tradition was not broken by weekly magazines and daily newspa-

The motto of the tradition is contemporary because: Marx not only inspires the political practices or offers opportunity for the critical development of these practices in the sphere of political economy; but also, as a revolutionary thinker he does not trust a search for traditional philosophical truth and knowledge like the other fundamental thinkers of his era. He gives inspiration to the first representatives of contemporary philosophy and thinking which breaks with tradition. Marx's work does not reproduce the tradition that builds systems. Instead, he pursues concrete and realistic problems by building a consistent line of thought. He formulates this in the "Preface" of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* as follows: "History does not raise unsolvable problems to any society." This *motto* reflects the spirit of the philosophical breakthrough made by Marx and his contemporaries "philosophy" or "philosophical systems" subrogated by the "realization of philosophy" or "questioning the meaning of human existence." The difference between Marx and his contemporaries lies in the discussions about contemporary epistemologies rather than studies on the history of political philosophy; thus, it is proper to limit the scope under the determination of Marx's philosophical approach. This is also a contribution that helps us to understand—in a different manner—why Marx is one of the reference thinkers of the contemporary politics.

The realization of philosophy is a contemporary political issue because: The main erectors of Marx's thought are "materialism," the "notion of history and the social" and "dialectic." Through these, existing

pers such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *Financial Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. Moreover, some representatives of significant financial institutions, such as the president of the Federal Reserve Bank, some great speculators of the global economy such as George Soros and many famous liberal economists do not neglect to keep harping on Marxism even in the middle of the crisis. It is possible to reach these explanations with a little search on the internet. (For example, see: Peter Gumbel, "Rethinking Marx," *Time Magazine* 2009, the last update, 26.07.2012, http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1873191_1873190_1873188-1,00.html;; and also for an interesting argument claiming that Soros has "communist ideals" with reference to some his explanations see: www.commieblaster.com). However, for a more comprehensive and more detailed explanation see: Terry Eagleton, *Why Marx Was Right* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011).

questions of humankind are analyzed and conceptualized. Materialistic philosophies generally lack some basic constituents which metaphysical, ontological or epistemological approaches in other philosophies base their arguments; these are *substance*, the first cause (*arkhe*), *a priori* knowledge, transcendence and transcendental. As a consequence of such lack, the materialist philosophies can not be regarded as philosophical systems, or have not adopted the method of mathematics, or pure logic in abstractness, in the name of the notion of system. They have not fallen back upon the linguistic and mystical games and have tried to be free from teleological intentions. This attitude brought about a heavy cost for materialist philosophies. From Plato up until now the traditional way of thinking has either philosophically ignored the existence of materialist philosophies or regarded them to be only slightly influential in the sphere of thinking. Marx's materialism has been doomed to a similar fate by traditional philosophy. It is easy to confirm this when the productions of traditional philosophy are analyzed. However, when the current problems of the day are handled, the crisis that is experienced by traditional philosophy points —as Martin Heidegger expressed it—to “an end” in the positive sense of a *new beginning*. A question arises: Why cannot Marx's criticism of traditional philosophy be a significant philosophical *new beginning*? For Marx's ideas on the realization of philosophy, the critical analysis and coherence created by historical materialism, remain contemporary as capitalist society survives.⁶

⁶ There is an approach introduced by Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin but entirely known with Henri Lefebvre: the phenomena that the everyday life in the modern world and the human mind getting into the rut of this life do not develop—contrary to what is believed—disjointedly from each other. In other words, the relationality between the mind and reality leads to a conditioning of one another and a renovation with mediation and repetition, as pointed out by Marx, but more severely than he estimates. As in the classical definitions of modernity, this gives the modern human the opportunity of both realizing himself/herself and social destruction. For the discussion on the realization of philosophy and its relations with the everyday life see: Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002). Also for another study discussing the realization of philosophy from a historical aspect thoroughly with Marx and his contemporaries see: Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution of Nineteenth-*

Materialism is contemporary as a political issue because: Marx develops his materialism by discussing it with philosophers such as Democritus (460-370 B.C.), Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), Epicurus (341-270 B.C.), Lucretius (99-55 B.C.), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) and the young-Hegelians. The conceptual richness of his materialism owes much to Aristotle, Hegel and young-Hegelians. His methodology is also in a sense Epicurean, which means that he is neither an empiricist materialist (like Democritus and the French materialists) searching after the certainty of knowledge nor, a metaphysical materialist (like the other young-Hegelians, especially Feuerbach) following the dogmatic *fait accompli*. His relationship with Epicurus is not unlimited; there are some serious differences and revisions within Marx's materialism. Epicurus's materialism led him to mechanism, chance and doubt to some extent. Epicurus looks into atoms as the objects of knowledge whereas Marx focuses on history and society. When Marx accepts history and society as the epitome of the object of knowledge, he not only makes "change," "relation" and "realization" imaginable but also facilitates the movements of a "concrete and realistic position" which enables "change," "relation" and "realization." Thus he starts his research from an appearance of history and society and moves forward by questioning the dialectic unity revealed by the different positioning points, variables and validities. Therefore, Marx goes entirely against traditional philosophical efforts and philosophical approaches that are in search of knowing before finding or introducing an authentic imagination about what should be before what is.

What differs in Marx's materialism from traditional philosophy and modern scientific efforts is not only the way to start knowing/questioning but also the characteristics of *relationality* which determines knowing. In this sense, Marx's thinking is neither merely reductionist nor merely deductive. It is rather a dialectic understanding based on the coherent explanation of the object of knowledge related with the relation that holds between a part and the whole. In a sense, both the deductive and the inductive approaches accept that there are some epistemic differences between "fact/act and concept," "subject and object,"

“signifier and signified;” yet they assert that they can transcend the mediations among the binaries by overcoming these binaries with a methodological or cognitive attitude. Marx looks for a way to rebuild the relation that holds between a part and the whole by making use of the dynamic structure of dialectic before transcending the aforementioned binaries. He acknowledges the epistemological rupture before fixing it, and tries to understand and analyze this situation in a humanistic reality. In other words, as Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) says, “I can know the table not the tree, because I made it,” so Marx starts off with the known (or given) and reaches to the whole that represents more than the sum of the parts with dialectic abstractions. This questioning continues until the moment when the solidity of the reached and the validity of the historical and social knowledge needs to be questioned and built again. By this way, a new path tending toward universality and tending to enrich life in the sphere of thinking is adopted rather than the traditional philosophies—based on absolutism and certainty—which narrows the richness of the life down. That is another reason why Marx remains contemporary within the history of political philosophy.

Dialectic materialism is contemporary as a political issue because: Considered with the impacts of Marx’s political orientation, the materialist innovation he brought to the thousands-of-years-old sphere of thinking is often not accepted both by his friends and foes. It is even possible to say, Marx has been so little understood that he is to be discovered again. First Engels and then the evolutionist-scientist thinkers [Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932), Karl Kautsky (1854-1932)] of the Second International (1889-1916) and the “Diamatist (those interested in the studies of dialectical materialism)” generations of the Soviet Academy of Sciences thought that materialist historicism had a systematic setup and consequently they produced a materialist-metaphysical approach that narrows down the richness of life from an attitude tending towards it. This materialist metaphysical approach has a typical name: “historical and dialectic materialism.” Joseph Dietzgen (1828-1888) synthesized Hegelian dialectic and Feuerbach’s materialism with reference to Marx and Engel’s works and used the concept of dialectic materialism in 1887. However the complete incarnation of the concept in practice was realized by Josef Vissaryonovič Çuğaşvili Stalin (1878-1953). Stalin’s *Dialectic and Historical Materialism* (1938) is the Marxist classic that was published in the highest number of languages after

the *Communist Manifesto*. Dialectic materialism is a reflective theory which expresses that infrastructure (economic base) determines the superstructure (religion, legal system, philosophy, art...) and also relies on historical progress. The prestige added to the official status of dialectic and historical materialism, within these years, is comprehended as the essence of Marxism and Marx's materialist historicism by a large intelligentsia. However, when the mighty shadows of the prestigious times lifted, it was understood that something was going wrong. Marx's materialist historicism and dialectic understanding often does not coincide with the theoretical direction that is locked up by the reductionist/vulgar/progressive/positivist pathologies. Therefore the agents of class politics—at least the old Marxist intelligentsia—began to direct their attention to Marx's works in order to turn to Marx's ideas from the line of dialectic and historical materialism. This turn updated Marx's position in the history of political philosophy and continues updating.⁷

The Philosophical Moments of Revolutionary Politics

Marx is a revolutionary. He adopts all the conceptual notions of the revolution: change, break, dislocation, a different beginning, innovation, rupture, reorganization, discontinuity, progress, evolution, movement, sublation, abolishment, profanization, creation, establishment, radicalism, suspension, etc. The revolutionary kernel of Marx's ideas live upon a few bases in respect of their historical roots: i) his father and those around him were followers of the Enlightenment; ii) there was an active

⁷ The discussions of materialism and dialectic materialism are becoming clearer and clearer. This leads to the appearance of the scientific studies devoted to the reproduction of the Marx's theory (the job of the analytical Marxists and the Anglo-Saxon writers in particular) and the manifestations of the factors behind the illusions. For a detailed comparison see: Jacques Bidet and Eustache Kouvélakis, eds., *Critical Companion to Contemporary Marxism* (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2008); Paul Paolucci, *Marx's Scientific Dialectics: A Methodological Treatise For A New Century* (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2007); Stanley Aronowitz, *The Crisis in Historical Materialism: Class, Politics and Culture in Marxist Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); Norman Levine, *Divergent Paths: Hegel in Marxism and Engelsism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006); Gerald A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001).

tendency to radical democracy in the development of politics in his hometown Trier and Prussia in general; iii) Hegel's philosophy dominated his time when he studied law and was working on his doctorate, while he was also in discussions with young-Hegelians concerning how to realize philosophy.

This atmosphere which, relatively, organizes the early period of his intellectual character becomes one of the archaic elements of his maturing intellectual journey. He wants to stay in the university during his doctorate. However, his studies in philosophy are cut across by the hot agenda of politics and accordingly his interest begin to change—just as in his earlier experience, when his intention to study law is cut across by philosophical inquiries. A radical and notable journalist and an old-hand politician began to evolve from a man who formerly aimed for the academy. The distresses of the journalist Marx not only determine the relatively discursive element underlying his early works, but also build the basis for the progress lines that Marx's thinking would specify as a problematic in the future.

As he continues in his legal education, he witnesses the discussions which reference Hegel on a new constitution, civil society, political society and state. Similarly he witnesses German Idealism and especially the philosophical discussions influenced by Hegelianism, in other words the discussions among the young-Hegelians. He even gets involved in these discussions and starts to act together with them. The young-Hegelians are Hegel's successors and like any other successors they act according to the circumstances of their era. However Hegel's successors are not limited to this group. A statement in Hegel's *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* manages to divide his successors: "All that is real is rational, and all that is rational is real."⁸ Some Hegelians (the right-Hegelians) adopt the first part of Hegel's statement ("all that is real is rational") and try to suggest the rationality of religion. The other camp, called young-Hegelians adopts the second part ("all that rational is real") and try to realize philosophy politically. That directs right-Hegelians toward discussions on religion and theology and the young-Hegelians

⁸ G.W.F. Hegel, *Hukuk Felsefesinin Prensipleri*, trans. Cenap Karakaya (Istanbul: Sosyal, 1991), 29. And also see Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1886/ludwig-feuerbach/ch01.htm>

toward discussions on politics.

For young-Hegelians the fault of the right-Hegelians stems from their fidelity to Hegel's writings and the limits of his philosophy which prevents them from understanding Hegel's contribution to Christianity and—from the aspect of historical-social perception of freedom—philosophy. In other words, the right-Hegelians repeat Hegel pointlessly and for that very reason, they put limits upon his philosophy as well as deadening the methodological dynamics of it. However, young-Hegelians focus on Hegel's social-political approach and rather than repeating him they try to make a new explanation of the current situation in Germany with Hegelian ideals. Therefore, their arguments about freedom of the press, free citizenship or the qualities of the religious dogmas influence the public sphere.

The motive forcing Marx to act with young-Hegelians/left-Hegelians⁹ and continue his intellectual career via *Rheinische Zeitung* is nothing but a vitality and richness created by the radical claims for democracy. The social developments of the era and his background also make him act together with the left-Hegelians.¹⁰ However Marx's rela-

⁹ The young-Hegelians consisting of David Stratus, Ludwig Feuerbach and Bruno Bauer initially came to be called left-Hegelians, with the involvement of Edgar Bauer, Moses Hess, Arnold Ruge, Max Stirner coming later. Together with the new figures the left-Hegelians i) bring up the criticisms of religion and theology to the press by taking the advantage of freedom of press in that period, ii) develop the discussions of the free citizen in Germany with the influence of Enlightenment and French Revolution, iii) look for the ways to develop democracy. All these build connections between the conceptual references of their philosophical approaches and radical, utopist, libertarian and egalitarian ideals. It is the aforementioned connection that ensures the relationality between the studies of the left-Hegelians on society and politics and the demands for radical democracy. For a detailed explanation see: Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*; David McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx* (Hampshire: Gregg Revivals Publishers, 1993); William J. Brazill, *The Young Hegelians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970); Warren Breckman, *Marx, the Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory: Dethroning the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹⁰ "The subject of my professional studies was jurisprudence, which I pursued, however, in connection with and as secondary to the studies of philosophy and history. In 1842-43, as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, I found myself

tionship with the left-Hegelians does not continue for decades. This relationship ends in the mid-1840s.

The left-Hegelian philosophers argue about the problem of realizing philosophy. Therefore, the Hegelian concepts of “alienation” and “dialectic” are of key importance for them. With the influence of left-Hegelians and Hegel himself, Marx gives important roles to the concept of “alienation” in his early writings, and then the concepts of “commodity fetishism” and “reification” in his later analyses of capitalism. The notion of “alienation” is not limited to his early works. His stressing of the concept in *Grundrisse* and then in the first volume of *Capital* shows its importance.

Another important concept for Marx is the concept of “species-being.” This concept occupies a central position in Feuerbach’s ideas—a thinker Marx is most sympathetic to among left-Hegelians. With the argument on “species-being” Marx interrogates with arguments on human nature, transcendentalism and the progress of the individual. Hence he begins to raise concerns about history, anthropology and philosophy. Such an overall movement helps Marx to make some radical changes and discoveries in his understanding. For instance, Marx radically converts Hegel’s division of civil and political society and the question of

embarrassed at first when I had to take part in discussions concerning so-called material interests. The proceedings of the Rhine Diet in connection with forest thefts and the extreme subdivision of landed property; the official controversy about the condition of the Mosel peasants into which Herr von Schaper, at that time president of the Rhine Province, entered with the *Rheinische Zeitung*; finally, the debates on free trade and protection, gave me the first impulse to take up the study of economic questions. At the same time a weak, quasi-philosophic echo of French socialism and communism made itself heard in the *Rheinische Zeitung* in those days when the good intentions ‘to go ahead’ greatly outweighed knowledge of facts. I declared myself against such botching, but had to admit at once in a controversy with the *Allgemeine Augsburger Zeitung* that my previous studies did not allow me to hazard an independent judgment as to the merits of the French schools. When, therefore, the publishers of the *Rheinische Zeitung* conceived the illusion that by a less aggressive policy the paper could be saved from the death sentence pronounced upon it, I was glad to grasp that opportunity to retire to my study room from public life.” Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. N. I. Stone (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1904), 10.

the state, in specifying his own “philosophical” position. The arguments with the left-Hegelian philosophers, of course, affected Marx much in specifying his characteristic position in this sense. However, the main role belongs to his attitude, assumed in these discussions (discussions about alienation, reification, commodity fetishism, species-being and individual, civil and political society and the state). Marx’s response to the representational gaps on the level of knowledge, which are thought to exist epistemologically between subject and object and to the ideological manipulations armed with hegemonic pressure and an insurmountable linearity between the “to be” and “should be,” benefits from this revolutionary political manner. In that case, in order to point out Marx’s characteristic position in the history of political philosophy again, it is useful to remember the philosophical moments of the revolutionary politics once more.

Alienation, Commodity Fetishism and Reification: Prior to Marx, some considered the concept of alienation; that it is possible to call them as the forerunners of the concept showed how to manifest alienation as a source of political problem. Leaving the disciples of Christianity aside, it is necessary to point out Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Hegel among the architects of the concept. For Rousseau alienation is an outcome of leaving the state of nature. The ground for the social contract is the epitome of this social/civilized state. The civilized state requires the emergence of some developments like the division of labor, greed for profit, settled life, competition and the birth of agricultural society, which are defined as the parts of historical-social progress and which, in fact, are not needed in the state of nature. All of these have helped property relations be an actual regulator in civilized society. The social contract is the demand for an agreement regulating the conflicts in such a civilized society growing away from the state of nature. Discretely from Rousseau’s, Hegel’s concept of alienation is based on ontology as in Christianity. Hegel thinks that the social forms of thinking (mythology, morality, religion, and philosophy), social stratum and the concrete unity of social relations (barbarism, emperorship, monarchy) progress as the realization of freedom in a dialectical contradiction, conflict, sublation and consensus. In other words, alienation, for Hegel, is one of the dialectical apprehensions of the politics of recognition, which is both indispensable and ontologically transcendable. As a materialist thinker Marx neither takes alienation as the basis of the historical narra-

tive that creates the social contract nor defines it as a tool that expresses the conceptual moments of an ontological system. Marx tries to explain alienation “now and here” with the “concrete analysis of the concrete circumstances” which necessarily motivates him to analyze modern capitalist society.

For Marx, alienation in the modern capitalist state is the gap between the action itself and its consequences (productions) which is experienced by the one carrying out the action; it is a kind of disintegration. Thus, the one carrying out the action becomes estranged and excluded from his/her action, from other people and also from his/her environment (productivity). As a result he/she becomes indurate and alienated from the capacities of his/her own original being (species-being). At this stage, overcoming alienation is not only necessary for the protection of one's own capacities of an individual; but also it is necessary for the protection and the sustenance of the human species, nature and human productions.¹¹ Thus, unlike the thinkers prior to him, it is impossible for Marx to understand alienation just as a given situation, or as a notion that is socially and historically explainable. For example, production is the possession of nature under a particular social form; however, it is impossible to claim that the possession/property should necessarily exist for the production to be carried out. And even asserting the necessity of private property is completely ridiculous. Marx comes to this judgment with regard to the historical data; that is to say, by discussing the com-

¹¹ Marx discusses the concept of alienation most clearly in the section of “The First Manuscript: Estranged Labor” in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. This discussion reaches to the peak in *Grundrisse* and *Capital*. However, in these later works the direction of the way that the concept is used changes thoroughly since Marx begins to use the concept under the influence of the critique of political economy. To compare with the analyses in the early periods see: Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (New York: International Publishers, 1964). “The material on which it works is alien material; the instrument is likewise an alien instrument; its labour appears as a mere accessory to their substance and hence objectifies itself in things not belonging to it. Indeed, living labour itself appears as alien vis-à-vis living labour capacity, whose labour it is, whose own life's expression [*Lebensäußerung*] it is, for it has been surrendered to capital in exchange for objectified labour, for the product of labour itself.” Marx, *Grundrisse*, 240.

munal form of ownership in Indian, Slavic and Celtic societies. He adopts the same attitude in the conceptualization of alienation.

Therefore, a revolutionary practice must destroy the material roots of alienation and must face the gap stemming from the dichotomies previously described by traditional philosophy and political economy. But, what is the way of realizing this? At this point, it is necessary to introduce two concepts important for Marx from the aspect of their relations with alienation and also to understand the power of alienation in political comprehension. These are commodity fetishism and reification.

Capitalism is a commodity production system. The commodity, in general terms, is the form of goods, acquired by people in exchange, as a result of the necessary production to sustain their existence at the social level. The commodity contains labor in different types and quality, and in terms of value, this containment enables the commodities to “live” in social relations specifying/assuming the equivalent qualities of them. In other words, when a commodity is put into relation with an equivalent commodity in the market by its owner, the exchange, the capitalist cycle, is realized and also the commodity continues to “live” as commodity. To Marx, the relation between one commodity and another equivalent to it begins to take a “mystical” position in the eyes of the producer after a certain point. It starts to be perceived that commodities have existence/life among themselves free from people/their owners/capitalist labor-value relation. However, the relation in the market among them which takes place in equivalence is nothing more than being a part of the social mediation of labor products. Marx associates this mediation/change gaining independence in the eyes of the producers to the fetishistic character of religion. The fetishistic character of religion makes religion free from the human and then decides what the human should be under the domination of religion. However, Marx states that “man makes religion, religion does not make man.” The commodity fetishism acts similarly. Commodities begin to adjust human relations. The commodity, however, is no more a necessary product of human needs, on the contrary being a part of the commodity system becomes a requirement of being human.

Undoubtedly, the commodity fetishism seems to be a specific conceptualization of alienation. It requires qualifications. Some commentators specify alienation to be, for Marx, a concept rather at the philosophical level and abandoned, at a certain point, with the growth/concentration of

Marx's social analysis. Therefore, the conceptual gap opened from alienation filled by commodity fetishism is a consequence of the concrete analysis of the concrete facts. Marx owes this change in emphasis to his materialist and historical approach. For Marx, at no other period of history do the class societies have the oppressor-oppressed relationship that capitalism has; for capitalism produces temporal-spatial compression and concentration. It develops the production of surplus value continuously by discovering wage labor. As the dispossessed masses cannot uncover the mystery of commodity production, capitalism ensures the protection of private property as well as ensuring the satisfaction and reproduction of the profit motive of capital. Capitalism homogenizes the world and puts its whole to an interaction. Thanks to the universal instruments of capitalism everything, including labor, becomes a component of the exchange as commodity. In other words, the commodities begin to be thought as the indivisible parts of the normative description of human nature, for capitalism is a commodity system and produces hegemony. Therefore, Marx thinks that the notion of commodities' gaining fetishistic characters is only possible in capitalism. Accordingly, Marx's choosing the conceptualization of commodity fetishism rather than alienation is a natural part of his criticism of political economy, which he developed as an outcome of his materialist historicism. The philosophical moment of revolutionary politics makes revolutionary politics comprehensible by moving to a contemporary basis like commodity fetishism from an abstract basis like alienation. A similar discussion continues, but with a more "blurry" concept: reification.

Reification is an activity in which a mediation of a particular act distinctively becomes the arbiter of the act itself. In a sense, just as the religion or commodity becomes something different from the product of human activity and specifies the human as the product of that act, reification refers to a holistic understanding used for all the acts and ideologies in general. Probably for this reason, Marx uses this concept only a few times in all three volumes of the *Capital*. Marx's sense of the drawback of the concept of reification probably stems from the fact that the concept is too "blurry and general" to become useful in revolutionary practice. Marx also uses the concept of objectification along with the concepts of alienation, commodity fetishism, and reification. Objectification is both a kind of alienation, externalization, separation and a kind of concretization, and limitation. Because of these meanings Marx uses the concept of objectifi-

cation in the negative meaning. For example, he defines commodity as objectivized labor. Extinguishing objectification and/or reification is not easily acceptable like alienation and commodity fetishism; breaking the mediation is also difficult for the former concepts.¹²

Civil and Political Society and the State: One of the most efficient discussions of the history of political philosophy is that on how to realize the regulation between the spheres of politics, the social and the historical. On one hand, the tactics and the strategies associated with political aims are actualized by the ruling political agents of the era. On the other hand, the positions and demands of the political agents depend on how the social forces are arranged attitudinally, leading to the construction of the lines for both the agents and those gaining the agent position. In the same way the apparatus represented by the institutional governors interfere in the civil and political spaces in order to develop the legitimacy of the hegemon continuously. Thus, the ties between the civil and political society in class societies is “strengthened.”

Marx accepts that the division of civil and political society, which is introduced rather differently in the history of political philosophy, is intrinsic to class-based societies. Therefore he associates the modern state to both of these social positions rather than only one of them. However, he does not disregard positioning civil society against political society and the state by sticking to the Hegelian conceptualization of civil society, for it does not represent the general/universal interests. Civil society refers to a social position of competitive individuals ready to split the whole society for their own interests. Hence, civil society is a social position in which the boundaries of both property relations and

¹² For a compact study discussing the relationships among the concepts like alienation, commodity fetishism, reification and some other concepts like commodification, externalization and decomposition overcoming the problems in the translation see: Önder Kulak, “Yabancılaşma, meta fetişizmi ve şeyleşme,” in *Marx’ın Halleri: Marksist Düşünce de Diyalektik Bir Yolculuk*, eds. Kurtul Gülenç and Önder Kulak (Istanbul: Kalkedon, 2012), 59-92. Also for the complete comprehension of the concepts of commodity fetishism and reification see: Timothy Bewes, *Reification or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2002); and Wolfgang Fritz Haug, *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics*, trans. Stuart Hall (University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

the domain of state sovereignty are continuously renewed and redrawn.

Within the tradition of social contract, enlightenment and the modern state theory, "man" is thought as an universal individual. Man is the abstract individual, more clearly man is the citizen. This is the individual who is opposite to the one of civil society, the one occupied in competition and conflict and following his/her own self-interest. This is the individual of regulations; in other words, the individual of the political society who hands over his/her will to an authority one way or another and who acts under the monopoly of regulation and violence of this authority.

The factor which makes Marx's analysis of civil society differ from all others is based particularly on his new position contra the Hegelian roots of his thinking about civil society. Hegel defines the state as the representative of universal/general interests; and political society as the society of moral individuals understanding and living these universal interests. For Hegel, civil society is the society of those who pursue their self-interests. However, Marx sees Hegel's moral individual protecting and living the general/universal interests of both political society and the modern state as the manifestation of property relations at the heart of social relations in civil society. In a sense, all the bright analyses of the modern capitalist state and political society are actually statements serving the preservation of the class nature of property relations in civil society. In other words, the modern capitalist state, for Marx, is not only the embodiment of political institutions, definite geographical borders, territorial legitimacy and social wishes; it is also an apparatus of class struggles, alienated human relations, illusory class relations and the needs of the dominant ideology and dominant class. Thus, the state is not free from civil society; on the contrary it is related to it.

However, there are two special factors which need to be emphasized at this point: Does Marx explain the state only via the ruling class theory? What can be done against the "deceptive nature" of the state and political society? For the second question the answer is constituted by a single word: revolution. For Marx, the class nature of both the state and the civil-political societies must be completely eliminated. In other words, both social and political revolution must be realized. (This theme will be examined in further pages, now it is enough to give the emphasis. My main argument will be about the first question.)

Marx's early works, most of which bear the traces of a struggle with Hegel, appear to be a parricide and to be fruitful. They densely include

discussions on civil society. However, in later works this content fades. Therefore, the assertion that Marx explains the state only with the dominant-class theory is grounded by drawing attention to his leaving behind discussions on civil society and emphasizing political economy. However, some Marxist thinkers specify that Marx does not only express the struggle for property and conflicting self-interest in his analysis of civil society, by moving to a sphere of the savage/stranger political, he also emphasizes that the democratic envisagement can exist in civil society; especially while he is arguing with anarchist Max Stirner (1806-1856). In other words, the power produced by the savagery of the masses—those defined by the dominant ideology in civil society—does not necessarily tend towards conflict. The inclination toward the savagery of conflict and self-interest are realized by the specification of the modern capitalist state to some extent. Therefore, aforementioned Marxist thinkers state that Marx does understand the modern capitalist state not only in terms of the dominant class theory. He also see the modern capitalist state as an apparatus desiring to capture the mechanisms of democracy and even sabotaging this sociality with a liberal ideology in contrast to democracy.¹³

Human Nature and Species-Being: All the metaphysical and/or ontological approaches in traditional philosophy accept that the human being has a nature/essence. The existence of human nature constitutes the scale of the answers that can be given to the question of what is human. By this way a

¹³ Marx's writings on the state develop within the context of the criticism of Hegel's state theory, when it comes to his early writings; and develop within the context of the necessity for the disappearance of the state, when it comes to his later writings. For a general summary of these discussions see: W. Stanley Moore, *The Critique of Capitalist Democracy: An Introduction to the Theory of the State in Marx, Engels, and Lenin* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969); Paul Thomas, *Alien Politics: Marxist State Theory Retrieved* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Bob Jessop, *State Theory: Putting the Capitalist State in its Place* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1990); Joachim Hirsch, *Materyalist Devlet Teorisi: Kapitalist Devletler Sisteminin Dönüşüm Süreçleri*, trans. Levent Bakaç (Istanbul: Alan, 2011). As Marx indicates capitalism/liberalism and democracy are contrary to each other. For this argument see: Paul Thomas, *Karl Marx and the Anarchists* (London, Boston et al.: Routledge, 1990); and Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

theoretical and practical investigation and evaluation of the human become possible. However, in metaphysics, all investigations related with the question of “what is” experiences something which is also related with the question of what is human; in a sense, “what is not human nature” is manifested rather than defining human nature. A reduced or limited definition is put forward in harmony with philosophical consistency and common sense. However, all the definitions of human nature are ultimately a requirement for forming the wills of the agents in the political sphere.

For example, Plato (427 B.C.-347 B.C.) determines human nature strictly within an essentialist ontology in *Republic* and *Laws* and expresses that inborn features cannot be fixed with environmental conditions. The Platonist ideal state searches for the possibility of discovering and constituting human nature via education. Thus Plato, who cuts the human spirit into three sections—all are inborn—as wisdom, desirousness and courage, positions education as an instrument working for courage and desirousness to be brought to the service of wisdom. The wisdom here is authority, and even the wisdom represented in the philosopher king. Differently from Plato’s efforts, Aristotle, in *Politics*, defines human nature as a necessity for the formation of the political society. Man is *zoon politikon*, in other words, “the political animal,” free citizen of Athens in this sense. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) in *Leviathan* draws attention to the conflicting aspect of human nature with reference to the conceptualization of state of nature. He asserts that this nature should be restrained by an absolute authority. Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality among Men* and *Social Contract* expresses that human nature is not malicious; the environmental conditions—called civilization—compels the human being to become distanced from his/her nature. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) points to the same danger that Hobbes does; however, he adds that, in order to restrain the excessiveness stemming from human nature, a universal understanding of peace and history and an ethics of duty are required.

It is possible to argue various approaches about human nature developed by other philosophers. However, there is something typical among them: human nature is a political concept. In terms of his contributions to the political philosophy Marx’s approach to human nature is rather important: the arguments made with Hegel or left-Hegelians leave their mark on all the points of Marx’s political philosophy. To put it another way the argument about human nature also bears this mark. Marx’s *Economic and*

Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, which is among his relatively early works, repeats Feuerbach's normative definition of human nature via the anthropological explanations and expresses man to be a social, creative and generative natural being. However, after a while he takes a more descriptive stance in both "Theses on Feuerbach" and *The German Ideology* and starts to emphasize the historicity and sociality of man. This is, in one sense, to say that the human does not have an unchanging nature/essence. Moreover, Marx understands the entirety of social relations from the concept of human nature at this stage.

In *The Poverty of Philosophy* and *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx explains human nature via historicity. Marx's later works like *Grundrisse* and *Capital* specifies human nature as a totality of the needs, requirements, wishes, instincts and powers of the human. Therefore, Marx thinks that human beings can make their history on their own; however, they cannot make it under the conditions that they desire, but the conditions they are already under. Hence, man as both making history and being the concrete individual specified by historicity and sociality has an unstable and diversifying nature rather than an essence and unchanging nature. However, at this point some Marxists¹⁴ assert that Marx seems not to abandon the concept of human nature especially giving reference to the sixth of "The Theses on Feuerbach."¹⁵ The tendency to consider human nature as a totality of relations within the historical and social era rather than trying to define it and also the

¹⁴ Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London: Verso Press, 2005); Norman Geras, *Marx and Human Nature: Refutation of a Legend* (London: Verso Editions and NLB, 1983); Sean Sayers, *Marxism and Human Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Eric Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man* (London: Continuum Publishers, 2004); Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History*.

¹⁵ "Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into human essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations. Feuerbach, who does not enter upon a criticism of this real essence, is consequently compelled: 1. To abstract from the historical process and to fix the religious sentiment [*Gemüt*] as something by itself and to presuppose an abstract—isolated—human individual. 2. The human essence, therefore, can with him be comprehended only as a 'genus', as an internal, dumb generality which merely naturally unites the many individuals." Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach" in *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968), 29.

descriptive constituents created by this tendency are enough to reveal the substance of the human being. Thus, for these Marxists, even though Marx accepts that the human is a part of nature and sociality, whenever he separates the human from animal, he returns to that definition of human nature again. In other words, the human who satisfies his/her existential wills and needs by organizing his/her labor has a general entirety even though he/she has not an unchanging nature/essence.

As Marx does not disregard this general entirety in the sixth thesis, he tends towards accepting the concept of human nature/essence “at the most” as a species-being line first in terms of content and then—in accordance with his own materialism—in terms of name: species-being.¹⁶ This change is a conceptualization exactly opposite to the that of human nature in the traditional philosophy.

The Real Moments of Revolutionary Philosophy

So far, in relation to the philosophical moments of Marx’s revolutionary politics, this paper has put forth the roots of concepts such as “alienation, commodity fetishism and reification,” “civil and political

¹⁶ “The perfect political state is, by its nature, man’s species-life, as opposed to his material life. All the preconditions of this egoistic life continue to exist in civil society outside the sphere of the state, but as qualities of civil society. Where the political state has attained its true development, man—not only in thought, in consciousness, but in reality, in life—leads a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly life: life in the political community, in which he considers himself a communal being, and life in civil society, in which he acts as a private individual, regards other men as a means, degrades himself into a means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers. The relation of the political state to civil society is just as spiritual as the relations of heaven to earth. The political state stands in the same opposition to civil society, and it prevails over the latter in the same way as religion prevails over the narrowness of the secular world—*i.e.*, by likewise having always to acknowledge it, to restore it, and allow itself to be dominated by it. In his most immediate reality, in civil society, man is a secular being. Here, where he regards himself as a real individual, and is so regarded by others, he is a fictitious phenomenon. In the state, on the other hand, where man is regarded as a species-being, he is the imaginary member of an illusory sovereignty, is deprived of his real individual life and endowed with an unreal universality.” Karl Marx, *On the Jewish Question*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/>.

society and the state,” “human nature and species-being” in the history of philosophy along with their general definitions and the way Marx makes these conceptual points part of his original thinking. Now it is possible to examine the real moments of Marx’s revolutionary politics more closely. In order to avoid repetition, it may be useful to read the concepts constituting the philosophical moments of revolutionary politics and those constituting the real moments of revolutionary politics symmetrically.

If politics is realized now and here by envisaging historically and socially a particular space, it must be contemporary. Contemporariness is one of the instruments leading to the organizing and developing of the connections that politics tends to create. For the analyses of political philosophy tend towards those that “should be actualized” rather than those that are “actual.” Thus, they both solve and reformulate the questions/problems. By this way, the reason are attempted to be specified as to how to structure and organize the relations established both in the political sphere and via social relations.

However, politics is concerned with “here and now” also in every sense. This is related, in the positive sense, with acts’ reference to the “actual” rather than what should be “actualized”. Moreover, it sometimes catches a level completely melting into daily events. Hence, the real moments of politics are nothing different from the political issues contemporary with Marx and criticisms and comments about these issues. The contemporary themes discussed above include both vivid historical references and more concrete arguments.

Human Rights, Radical Democracy and Communism: It is proper to begin consideration of Marx’s real moments of revolutionary politics with the influence of a heritage from Hegel and left-Hegelians: human rights and radical democracy. However this time there is a huge public body embracing this heritage together with Marx. The left-Hegelians and especially Marx’s near circle were influenced by the humanist, universal and egalitarian discourse of the French Enlightenment and Human Rights Declaration of the French Bourgeoisie Revolution. This influence gives rise to an important intellectual renaissance that integrates with the demands of most intellectuals in Prussia and Germany on social transformation. This influence also raised the ambition to realize the ideals of the Enlightenment and the French Bourgeoisie Revolution. Demands concerned equal citizenship, freedom of the press, freedom of

thought, loosening the excessive and despotic control mechanisms of the state, and related to issues they directly faced with and discussed via public journals. However the discussions are not limited to these issues. Some minorities and social groups are in a struggle to be freed from the discrimination, to which they exposed, and to achieve equality in the upcoming constitution by centralized power, while in the process of transforming to a nation state. Primeval Christian and German institutions and communities are in a struggle to keep their exclusive rights and opportunities as well. All these draw Marx's political theory to discussions on human rights and radical democracy.

Marx makes a particular contribution to discussions on human rights most directly while analyzing the relationship between civil society and the state in *The Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, criticizing his doctoral advisor Bruno Bauer's claims in *On the Jewish Question* and also analyzing the left-Hegelians' claims in *The Holy Family*. The Hegelian state is a constitutional monarchy with which civil society and political society are in great harmony. This monarchic constitutional state which is in harmony with the human rights that realize bourgeoisie ideals is also one where the moral life (ethic Idea) is concretized. For Hegel, these characteristics give rise to an assumption that the conflicting structure of civil society, dependent on self-interest, has already been transcended. Marx specifies that Hegel runs into a contradiction with such an assumption.¹⁷ The modern state's and the bourgeoisie's perceptions of citizenship are abstract. Hence, the real individual can take part in political society and the state by making himself/herself free from his/her own concrete existence and in some ways displaying a schizoid behavior. Thus, he/she manages to secure the right to be a citizen by going through the phase that he/she is supposed to. Marx makes this problem clear while analyzing Bruno Bauer's response to the Jewish

¹⁷ As he suggests before *On the Jewish Question*, Marx specifies Hegel's assumption as a solution consulting to a kind of mystery: The members of the political state are religious owing to the dualism between individual life and species-life, between the life of civil society and political life. They are religious because men treat the political life of the state, an area beyond their real individuality, as if it were their true life on the Jewish question. Karl Marx, *On the Jewish Question*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question>.

people's demand for political freedom.

The Jewish people demand political freedom within the scale of their power and their contributions to the state. Bauer thinks that this demand of Jews is not proper. He argues that political freedom should start from abolishing the state's Christian identity and, therefore, Jewish people should support freedom as citizens not as Jews. Marx sees a lot of problems in Bauer's approach: i) above all Bauer cannot see that a state accepting religion as a condition is not a real state yet; and therefore ii) cannot distinguish two types of freedom; one freedom frees from religion politically and the other is the freedom of the real individual from religion; iii) he is incapable of noticing the fact that "religion concerns the restoration of all the units of the private property and the civil society." Marx concludes that struggles for political freedom, of Jewish people and all the others, cannot conclude with the freedom of man, for the abolishment or readjustment of such kinds of rights may be in question when contradictions about the usage of human rights emerge. In this case, the practice remains as an exception and the theory as a rule. Therefore, Marx suggests a political position towards "personal freedom" rather than a rearranging of the demands for political freedom.¹⁸ That is valid for all other types of demands in relation to political freedom. In other words, if political freedom is purified of abstract characteristics and brings out the human, organizing the social powers against the egoist individual advocated by human rights, then it can take the road of humanistic freedom.

Marx's political attitude towards freedom turns him towards radical democracy. The individual of civil society in modern capitalist state is bourgeois, proletarian, the member of an atomized society. However, in this political society, existing as the "representative religion of private property," there is no room for all the members of civil society. Hence,

¹⁸ "Only when the real, individual man re-absorbs in himself the abstract citizen, and as an individual human being has become a *species-being* in his everyday life, in his particular work, and in his particular situation, only when man has recognized and organized his "own powers" as *social* powers, and, consequently, no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of *political* power, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished". Karl Marx, *On the Jewish Question*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/>.

the demands for freedom in political society must transform into the demands (for freedom) of private property sooner or later. Marx justifies the promotion/crystallization of the demands for freedom of human as species-being (in a sense the majority of civil society) rather than an individual. This justification is based on radical democracy not representative democracy, the democracy of the capitalism.¹⁹ Radical democracy is a demand for democracy which prevents the alienation of atomized social relations and masses by the hegemony of the “representative religion of the private property.” Marx uses the demands for radical democracy and the politics of total human freedom as a conceptual moment on the way to communism.

Communism represents both the struggle for eliminating private property and the general name of the movement of the proletarian class to realize it. Communism refers to a society free from the classes and exploitation where humankind realizes itself as a social being. In such a society, individuals resolve control of material powers over themselves. Marx avoids giving a keen definition and formula for communism until *The Critique of the Gotha Program*. Even in *The Critique of Gotha Program* he only asserts an alternative for transition to communism. In other words, he introduces a reflexive summary of the appearing of communism which rises from the capitalist relations of production, first with the state (socialist) and then without it (communist).²⁰

¹⁹ Radical democracy has been brought on to the agenda especially by post-Marxist thinkers with the redevelopment of discussions on civil society. For details see: Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985).

²⁰ This letter by Engels can summarize the subject: “The free people’s state is transformed into the free state. Taken in its grammatical sense a free state is one where the state is free in relation to its citizens and is therefore a state with a despotic government. The whole talk about the state should be dropped, especially since the Commune, which was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. The ‘people’s state’ has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists too long, although Marx’s book against Proudhon and later *The Communist Manifesto* directly declare that with the introduction of the socialist order of society the state will of itself dissolve and disappear. As, therefore, the ‘state’ is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, in order to hold down [*niederzuhalten*] one’s adversaries by force, it is pure nonsense to talk of a ‘free people’s state’; so long as the proletariat still *uses* the

Ideology, Class, Class Struggle, Class Consciousness: Although the dynamics of Marx's criticism of capitalism are rather clear, because he avoids coming up with the kinds of explanation typically specified by traditional philosophy, the literature among his followers shows great variety from the aspect of explanations and commentaries. One of the concepts that Marx avoids explaining is undoubtedly the concept of ideology. The importance of this concept in the history of political philosophy is unquestionable.

The concept is first used by Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836). Tracy sees ideology as "a scientific discipline/science of ideas" and states that this discipline has two aspects: the positive aspect is the one pointing to necessity as "a social mode of consciousness" and enabling the distinction between right and wrong. The negative aspect is the one enabling the description of "the consciousness as right or wrong epistemologically." There is another figure that makes a contribution to the concept as much as Tracy: Napoleon Bonaparte. Bonaparte describes himself as an "ideologist" before coming to power and adopts Tracy's attitude corresponding to the ideals of the Bourgeois Revolution in France. However, he breaks off his relations with the ideologists after coming to power and uses ideology "as an instrument of hegemony" in order to legitimize his power.²¹

Marx adopts both Tracy's and Bonaparte's conceptualizations and uses the concept partially different from them, for he tries to posit ideology as a concept serving for the development of criticism of capitalism.

state, it does not use it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist. We would therefore propose to replace the word 'state' everywhere by the word *Gemeinwesen* [community], a good old German word, which can very well represent the French word *commune*." Friedrich Engels, "Friedrich Engels to August Bebel; London, March 18-28, 1875", in Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, (New York: International Publishers, 1989), 31. For the entire content of this discussion see: Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

²¹ Eagleton suggests that this distinction should be defined as "the sociological ideologies" and "the epistemological ideologies". He clearly specifies and discusses both the meanings of the concept of ideology, gained historically, and all the references in Marx's usage of the concept. For detailed information see: Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991).

Although Marx uses this concept many times up to *The German Ideology*, basically he discusses it properly only in *The German Ideology*. There are several reasons for this. One of them is Marx's belief that he made "Hegel's philosophy stand on its feet" and another one is that "materialist historicism has begun to build epistemologically a consistent line of criticism against traditional philosophy."

Marx uses the concept of ideology basically in three different meanings in *The German Ideology*. i) To Marx, people deal with historical in an upside-down fashion, just like in *camera obscura*. The reason for that "in the narrowest sense" is the alienation of people from their activities; and "in the widest sense" the reason is their encountering wrong/false consciousness. In other words, the concept of ideology refers to the totality of real moments (of revolutionary politics) that needs to be discussed with concepts bearing alienation, human nature, reification and mystification. ii) Not only are the ideas of people upside down. Also, the relationship between their consciousness and practices dissolves in favor of consciousness. Marx objects to this situation as part of philosophical materialist thinking "Consciousness does not determine life; life determines consciousness." This approach, in the strict sense, serves as the vulgar materialist description of ideology, as a theory of reflection and in a broad sense it serves for the expression of a possibility: the dominant idea only belongs to the ruling class. iii) In that case, ideology should be seen as a critical instrument of hegemony revealing the forms of consciousness from the alienated and mystified state. Marx states that one must first focus on the criticism of religious essence for this reason. Marx's attitude which continues until *Grundrisse* and *Capital* is determined by the definitions of ideology in *The German Ideology*.²²

²² "i) Ideology is structured discourse. It is, directly or indirectly, based on or generated by a set of mutually interdependent categories... ii) The relation between reality and ideology (which produces 'inversion') is the cognitive relation... iii) Ideology arises from the opacity of reality." (John Mepham, "Theory of Ideology in Capital", in *Issues in Marxist Philosophy: Epistemology, Science, Ideology*, Volume 3, eds. John Mepham and David Hillel Ruben (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1979), 146-150.) For a similar classification on the same subject see: Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 55.

Marx's attempt at defining ideology in such a dynamic way relates to the powerful hegemony of capitalism itself. Marx does not limit himself to just a single definition of ideology in order to lift the blockade that this powerful hegemony creates. In other words, capitalism continues to develop itself as "the opium of the people" in order to preserve private property and the attendance of exploitation in the same way that religious essence's manner express itself as the entirety of social relations, in place of species-being. Marx accredits the power of undermining this attitude of capitalism to the proletariat since *The Communist Manifesto*. In a sense, he drives forward the proletarian class against the capitalist class since "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." Therefore, class struggles constitute the progression/development dynamo of the history; they tend towards the development of the self-interest and the satisfaction of the needs for all the people without exception. In this struggle there are two poles: One contains the property owners/hegemons/oppressors/bourgeoisie and the other contains dispossessed/oppressed people/people under domination/wage slaves. Between these poles it is only possible to see provisional consensuses. These consensuses come into question when there is a necessity to take the edge of the conflict or when one side becomes deprived of the instruments for expressing itself or one side feels itself weak for the struggle.

It is necessary to touch upon two more points here: class and class consciousness. Marx, contrary to what is believed, does not specify the classes only according to the codes of property relations. P. Y. Hayes arranges Marx's "categorization" of class as follows: i) from the aspect of property relations (*property owner classes*: bourgeoisie, big bourgeoisie, financial aristocracy, *the dispossessed*; proletariat, surplus population, lumpen proletariat), ii) from the aspect of productivity (*productive classes*: big bourgeoisie, bourgeoisie, proletariat, *unproductive classes*; surplus population, lumpen proletariat, financial aristocracy), iii) from the aspect of other culture codes (*degenerated classes*: big bourgeoisie, financial aristocracy, lumpen proletariat, *non-degenerated classes*; bourgeoisie, proletariat, surplus population).²³

²³ See: P. Hayes, "Marx's Analysis of the French Class Structure", in *Karl Marx's Social and Political Thought*, Volume 6, Bop Jessop and Russel Weathley eds. (London: Routledge Publishers 1999), 441-445. Table 1 shows the specification of Marx's class structure cyclically (Hayes, "Marx's Analy-

As a different standpoint, Hayes's classification is a small inventory of the social structures that Marx specifies as classes. Some Marxists make the "categorization" of the class with different components and categories. However, E. P. Thompson thinks that it is useful to separate class consciousness, as the sum of the class definitions that determine the class struggles, from the consciousness of class gained during the process of political struggle, which a specific class has, rather than this inventory of the class.²⁴ The reason is that, Marx in his trilogy analyzing the revolutionary, reformist and restorationist transformations of power and in his other historical analyses about some other great social movements, states that any historical and social effort adopting a strategy and tactic, which cannot create the consciousness of its class and accordingly cannot develop its own self-interest, has to sustain a defeat.

The Concrete Moments of the Revolutionary Politics

Up until now the philosophical and real moments of Marx's revolutionary politics have been specified, and via these moments Marx's importance in the history of political philosophy, at two different levels. This paper analyzes the revolutionary researches of Marx's revolutionary politics towards the capitalist state, which blesses private property and introduces class society as indispensable and eternal. Without leaving aside the conceptual moments that revolutionary politics philosophically justifies

sis of the French Class Structure", 313); and Table 2 shows the class positions of the degenerated workers among the other classes (Hayes, "Marx's Analysis of the French Class Structure", 326). Especially for the discussion of the position of the lumpen proletariat during the revolutionary periods and the specification of the basic question in creating class consciousness Table 2 can make an analytical contribution to the discussions of lumpen proletariat.

²⁴ For a compact study on Thompson's thoughts and critical studies about class see: William Sewell Jr., "How Classes are Made: Critical Reflections on E.P. Thompson's Theory of Working-Class Formation", in *E.P. Thompson: Critical Perspectives*, eds. Harvey J. Kaye and Keith McClelland (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990). Lukacs makes important analyses on this point and reformulates the philosophical grounds of class consciousness by applying Hegel's dialectic of master and slave to the class struggles. See: György Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971).

and the actual political situations discussed in real terms (but free from simple notions of one class against another), “concreteness” refers to the formula/proposal of the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed.

Marx uses the notion of “criticism” in the subtitle of all his works. This is the approach that Kant adopts in order to specify the position of his own philosophy towards the philosophies prior to himself. Of course, there was criticism in philosophy before Kant. However, Kant, and then The German Idealism, adopts criticism as an attitude that takes the lead in the epistemologically-based development of its era. With the influence of German Idealism, Marx uses criticism to specify his position to show why the intellectual limits of the thinkers prior to him in philosophy and political economy are insufficient to overcome the class society of capitalism. This usage also offers him the opportunity to develop his own ideas. As Marx builds his own ideas and reorganizes them critically, he begins to detect materialist and revolutionary dynamics more precisely and posits himself to be for liberation, not only as a critical thinker but also as a revolutionary. He reveals this position by collaborating and cooperating with social allies that he believes to work together.

Revolution, Revolutionary Agent, Proletariat: When Marx specifies history as the “history of class struggles” he also specifies the role of the classes and class consciousness. In a sense, the revolution comes true while a historically specific social structure, a mode of production and the classes related to them encounter an antagonism that they cannot solve historically; or a social organization managing to organize the consciousness of its class voluntarily can capture the control of the forces of production and the social instruments of hegemony against the oppressors to specify this force in its own way. When the libertarian/revolutionary agents developing in the heart of existing social structures destroy the hegemony of the existing social structure, the real footsteps of the revolution begin to be heard.

In his trilogy about France, Marx explains his notion of revolution by clearly discussing the Bourgeois Revolution and February Revolution in France as well as the Paris Commune. In *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, he explains the revolutions of the nineteenth century as follows:

The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself before it has stripped off all superstition about the past. Earlier revolutions required recollections of past world history in order to dull themselves to their own

content. *In order to arrive at its own content, the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead. There the words went beyond the content; here the content goes beyond the words.*²⁵

In a sense, the revolution is not just a showdown or the issue of who shall be the new owner of the forces of production. The revolutionary quality of the necessarily dead ideas and a melancholic revenge desired to be brought back cannot live under the total hegemony of the capitalist state. An unprecedented universal class and the oppressed ones in it should obtain all its power not from past but from future. Marx explains these ideas in *The Class Struggles in France*, a research covering the years of 1848-1850, as follows:

With the exception of only a few chapters, every more important part of the annals of the revolution from 1848 to 1849 carries the heading: *Defeat of the Revolution!* What succumbed in these defeats was not the revolution. It was the pre-revolutionary traditional appendages, results of social relationships which had not yet come to the point of sharp class antagonisms—persons, illusions, conceptions, projects from which the revolutionary party before the February Revolution was not free, from which it could be freed not by the *victory of February*, but only by a series of *defeats*. In a word, the revolution made progress, forged ahead, not by its immediate tragicomic achievements, but, on the contrary, by the creation of a powerful, united counter-revolution, by the creation of an opponent in combat with whom, only, the party of revolt ripened into a really revolutionary party.²⁶

For the Marx, the revolution cannot be realized only with the rebellion of the oppressed classes. The objectives of the revolution cannot be strengthened by protecting the government of revolutionary power. Not the agents of the revolutionary party but the agents of the revolution should be protected. A class struggle, dealing class-based society with the deadly blows developing the gains of the revolution for the good of

²⁵ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Moscow and London: Progress Publishers and, Lawrence and Wishart, 1984), 13 (italics mine).

²⁶ Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France*, in *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Lewis S. Feuer (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books Doubleday and Company, Inc.,) 281.

freedoms and at the same time realizing all the missions of the revolution through the agency of revolutionary agents and the revolutionary/destructive parties, will succeed. Otherwise, as in the decision given by the French government on 10th March 1850, it will begin making excuses: “Our dictatorship has hitherto existed by the will of the people; it must now be consolidated against the will of the people.” And, consistently, it seeks its props no longer within *France*, but without, in foreign countries, in *invasion*.²⁷

The most concrete moment of revolutionary politics, and probably the one that makes Marx most happy, is the Paris Commune; since the commune puts forward the social structure of the future without being busy with burying the dead. The commune is a self-governing urban community, does not have a problem of representation that excludes the oppressed and is ready to act together with other communes intending to unite the nation. In addition, there is no disunity between the members and the representatives of the commune. Tasking and deposal are dependent on the decisions of the members. First and foremost, there is an election system based upon common suffrage and both the wages and missions of the representatives are limited. The Paris Commune, in which women, children and elders are not socially ignored, is at a point where “the content goes beyond the words” as Marx states. In this sense, the Paris Commune manifests a structure serving as a model for all the revolutionary initiatives, achieving what is unachievable and caring, demolishing class society. For Marx, this structure—as the proletarian state—should be understood correctly.

While specifying the proletariat as the agent of the revolution in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx does not only think about the universal quality of this class; but also he assumes that “the proletarians that have nothing to lose but their chains” will sustain the revolutionary struggle against the capitalist dispossession as in Paris Commune. Peasantry, petty bourgeoisie and lumpens do not have such a necessity at the end of the day.

The National Problem, Internationalism and Communist Organizations: Similarly to how the commune has united the masses against the common enemy without disintegrating the nations and the people, as

²⁷ Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France*. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1850/class-struggles-france/ch03.html>.

Marx states, it is important for the communist revolution carried out by the proletariat to unite under the flag of internationalism. Although he adopts an attitude close to national chauvinism for a while during the 1848 revolutions developing in France and Germany (issues of Poland, Ireland, and Balkan states) he thinks that it is impossible for the exploited people to be free until “they have nothing to lose but their chains” (as stated in *Communist Manifesto*) or until the time that the dispossession of the dispossessed (as stated in *Capital*) comes true. Therefore, without refusing the principle of national self-determination, he is sometimes indecisive concerning the claims for national freedom that cannot prove themselves before the development of proletarian revolution. At all the points that Marx stays indecisive in relation to the national problem, since precisely during the 1848 revolutions, the international unions have integration problems. The most characteristic example of this is the Communist Union.

Marx accepts that Communist Union made a series of tactical mistakes during and after the German Revolution as a member of the central committee of *Communist Manifesto*. For example, it abandons decentralization in decision-making mechanisms and causes the disintegration of the organization. In a period when the proletariat has a weak organization and class consciousness, it urges the proletariat to force the political structure with the tactic of permanent revolution. However this results in exhaustion and power loss in organized power. All of these factors, as also the experiences of defeat in the 1848 Revolutions, influence Marx’s revolutionary perspective. Marx begins to broaden his perspective from Europe to the world and relies on the necessity of a proletarian mass party. Marx addresses himself to the organization of one of the new concrete moments of revolutionary politics again in order for the establishment and development of the International in 1860. This time he is softer in style and more serious in action. He shows this manner firstly in the opening speech of the International by emphasizing that it is insufficient to change capitalism just economically. Capitalism should also be forced to confront political change. However, the aforementioned softening in his style flies away with the harsh criticism he writes for the Gotha Program.²⁸

²⁸ In order to follow the historical process above see: David Fernbach, *Siyasal*

Conclusion

Up until now, this paper has touched upon the philosophical, real and concrete moments of Marx's revolutionary politics in order to specify his position in the history of political philosophy. Via these moments the article has also touched upon the concepts and instruments that Marx used in the political sphere. Thus, as the occasion arose, the paper has constituted reciprocity between the contemporariness of his revolutionary politics and the reasons for this. It is appropriate to add some discussion items here as an attempt to make some critical contributions or to enable Marx's political position to be understood correctly.

- 1) Is aiming at building Marx's materialist historicism as a scientific construct— even if there are these reference points within his work to materialist historicism— not to ask it to be like a bourgeois science; sociology, economy, traditional philosophy?
- 2) If, rather than relying on Marx's criticism and seeking an end to the dominance of the dead labor over living labor in order to overcome exploitation in (wage) labor, we demand the continuation of wage labor under more humanistic conditions, is this not to reproduce the bourgeois civil-society movement?
- 3) Marx cares about a line of struggle—as well as its forms of representation—on which the social and historical interests of the class in its class consciousness coincide with interests of the class members. Is limiting the political sphere merely to the party/union struggle—even though these parties/unions have a class perspective—under the name of democratic struggle, not to reduce everything to the parliamentary struggle focusing on the representation problem central to bourgeois public politics?
- 4) While Marx starts criticizing capitalism and its religious essence, via the criticism of political economy and criticizing the political economy with the analysis of commodity, does he manifest the essence of both civil and political society captured by capitalist commodification, with its historical and social context, or does he reduce everything to an economic essence?

Marx, trans. Murat Akad (Istanbul: Daktylos, 2008); Thomas, *Karl Marx and the Anarchists*; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Critique of Gotha and Erfurt Programmes*; Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Mikhail Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin and Vladimir Lenin, *Writings on the Paris Commune* (St. Petersburg and Florida: Red and Black Publishers, 2008).

5) How with the production of general approaches by the social sciences and, without specifying the existence of the surplus value introduced in the labor theory of value, can the protection of nature in the world capitalist system, and the production of socialness and the securitizing of history come true?

These questions and the other ones in connection with them are being reconsidered now by the theorists of political philosophy, in general, and by Marx's friends and enemies, particularly. All of these make Marx's revolutionary politics indispensable from the aspect of the history of political philosophy.