

REVIEW ESSAY

The Rediscovery of Karl Marx

MARCELLO MUSTO

Few men have shaken the world like Karl Marx. His death, almost unnoticed, was followed by echoes of fame in such a short period of time that few comparisons could be found in history. His name was soon on the lips of the workers of Detroit and Chicago, as on those of the first Indian socialists in Calcutta. His image formed the background of the congress of the Bolsheviks in Moscow after the revolution. His thought inspired the programmes and statutes of all the political and union organizations of the workers' movement, from Europe to Shanghai.

His ideas have changed philosophy, history, and economics irreversibly. Yet despite the affirmation of his theories, turned into dominant ideologies and state doctrines for a considerable part of humankind in the twentieth century, and the widespread dissemination of his writings, to date he is still deprived of an unabridged and scientific edition of his works. Of the greatest thinkers of humanity, this fate befell him exclusively.

The main reason for this peculiar situation lies in the largely incomplete character of Marx's *oeuvre*. With the exception of the newspaper articles he wrote between 1848 and 1862, most of which featured in the *New York Tribune*, one of the most important newspapers in the world at the time, the works published were relatively few when compared with the amount of works he only partially completed and the imposing extent of research he undertook. Indicatively, in 1881, one of the last years of his life, when asked by Karl Kautsky about the possibility of a complete edition of his works, Marx said: "First of all, they would need to be written".¹

Marx left many more manuscripts than he published. Contrary to what is commonly believed, his *oeuvre* was fragmentary, at times contradictory, and these aspects are evidence of one of its peculiar characteristics: incompleteness. The excessively rigorous method and merciless self-criticism which made it impossible for him to carry to the end many of the

1. Karl Kautsky, *Mein Erster Aufenthalt in London*, in Benedikt Kautsky (ed.), *Friedrich Engels' Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky* (Vienna, 1955), p. 32.

works he began; the conditions of profound poverty and the permanent state of ill-health that tormented him throughout his entire life; his inextinguishable passion for knowledge, not altered by the passing of the years, leading him time and again to new studies; and, finally, the awareness he attained in his later years of the difficulty of confining the complexity of history within a theoretical project; these made incompleteness the faithful companion and damnation of his whole intellectual production and of his life itself. Other than a small part, the colossal plan of his work was not completed. His incessant intellectual endeavours ended in a literary failure. For all that, this failure does not make his endeavours less brilliant, or its intellectual implications less far-reaching.²

Nevertheless, despite the fragmentary status of the *Nachlass* of Marx and his intrinsic aversion to the creation of a subsequent social doctrine, the unfinished work was subverted and a new system, “Marxism”, emerged.

MARX AND MARXISM: INCOMPLETENESS VERSUS SYSTEMATIZATION

After Marx’s death, in 1883, Friedrich Engels was the first to dedicate himself to the very difficult task – due to the dispersion of the material, obscurity of language, and illegibility of the handwriting – of editing his friend’s legacy. His work concentrated on reconstruction and selection from the original materials, on the publication of unedited or incomplete texts, and, at the same time, on the republication and translation of writings already known.

Even if there were exceptions, such as the case of the *Theses on Feuerbach*, edited in 1888 as an appendix to his *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, and the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, which came out in 1891, Engels focused almost exclusively on the editorial work for the completion of *Capital*, of which only the first volume was published before Marx’s death. This undertaking, lasting more than a decade, was pursued with the explicit intention of realizing “a connected and as far as possible complete work”.³ In the course of his editorial activity on the second and third volumes of *Capital*, Engels did much more than reconstruct the genesis and development of Marx’s original manuscripts. On the basis of a selection of texts, which were far from definitive versions (and as a matter of fact genuinely different variants), Engels aimed to make a uniform whole, so he sent copy for the volumes to the publishers in a completely edited, finished state.

Previously, however, Engels had already directly contributed to a

2. Cf. Maximilien Rubel, *Marx critique du marxisme* (Paris, 2000), pp. 439–440.

3. Friedrich Engels, *Vorwort* to Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, Zweiter Band, *Marx Engels Werke*, Band 24 (Berlin, 1963), p. 7.

process of theoretical systematization with his own writings. Appearing in 1879, *Anti-Dühring*, defined by Engels as the “more or less connected exposition of the dialectical method and of the communist world outlook championed by Marx and myself”,⁴ became a crucial point of reference in the formation of “Marxism” as a system and its differentiation from the eclectic socialism widespread at the time. *Evolution of Socialism from Utopia to Science* had even more importance: it was a re-elaboration, for the purposes of popularization, of three chapters of the previous work, published for the first time in 1880, and enjoyed a success comparable to that of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

Even if there was a clear difference between this type of popularization, undertaken in open polemic with the simplistic short cuts of the encyclopaedic syntheses, and that adopted by the next generation of German social democracy, Engels’s recourse to the natural sciences opened the way to the evolutionistic conception of social Darwinism which, soon after, would also be affirmed in the workers’ movement.

Marx’s thought, indisputably critical and open, even if sometimes marked by deterministic temptations, fell foul of the cultural climate in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. As never before, it was a culture pervaded by the popularity of systematic conceptions – above all by Darwinism. In order to respond to it, the newly born Marxism, that had precociously become an orthodoxy in the pages of the review, *Die Neue Zeit*, under Kautsky’s editorship, rapidly conformed to this model.

A decisive factor that helped to consolidate this transformation of Marx’s work into a system can be traced in the modalities that accompanied its diffusion. Booklets of synthesis and very partial compendia were privileged, as demonstrated by the reduced print runs of the editions of his texts at this time. Furthermore, some of his works bore marks of the effects of political utilizations, and the first editions of his writings were published with revisions by the editors. This practice, resulting from the uncertainty of Marx’s legacy, was then increasingly combined with the censorship of some of his writings. The form of a manual, an important means for the export of Marx’s thought throughout the world, certainly represented a very efficacious instrument of propaganda, but it also led to considerable alterations in his initial conception. The circulation of his complex and incomplete work in its encounter with positivism in order to respond to the practical needs of the proletarian party, translated it into a theoretically impoverished and vulgarized version of the original material,⁵ rendering it barely recognizable in the end and transforming it from *Kritik* into *Weltanschauung*.

4. *Idem*, “Vorworte zu den drei Auflagen”, from *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft*, MEGA² I/27 (Berlin, 1988), p. 492.

5. Cf. Franco Andreucci, *La diffusione e la vulgarizzazione del marxismo*, in Eric J. Hobsbawm et al. (eds), *Storia del marxismo*, vol. 2 (Turin, 1979), p. 15.

From the development of these processes a schematic doctrine took shape, an elementary evolutionistic interpretation soaked in economic determinism: the Marxism of the period of the Second International (1889–1914). Guided by a firm though naive conviction of the automatic forward progress of history, and therefore of the inevitable replacement of capitalism by socialism, it demonstrated itself to be incapable of comprehending actual developments, and, breaking the necessary link with revolutionary praxis, it produced a sort of fatalistic quietism that promoted stability for the existing order.⁶ In this way this doctrine demonstrated itself to be very distant from Marx, who had already declared in his first work that “*history does nothing* [...] ‘history’ is not, as it were, a person apart, using man as a means to achieve *its own* aims; history is *nothing but* the activity of man pursuing his aims”.⁷

The theory of crisis [*Zusammenbruchstheorie*], or the thesis of the impending end of bourgeois capitalist society, which found its most favourable expression in the economic crisis of the great depression unfolding during the twenty years after 1873, was proclaimed as the fundamental essence of scientific socialism. Marx’s affirmations, aiming at the delineation of the dynamic principles of capitalism and, more generally, at describing the tendencies of development within them,⁸ were transformed into universally valid historical laws from which it was possible to deduce the course of events, even particular details.

The idea of a contradictory agonized capitalism, autonomously destined to breakdown, was also present in the theoretical framework of the first entirely “Marxist” platform of a political party, *The Erfurt Programme* of 1891, and in Kautsky’s commentary, which announced how “inexorable economic development leads to the bankruptcy of the capitalist mode of production with the necessity of a law of nature. The creation of a new form of society in place of the current one is no longer something merely *desirable* but has become *inevitable*”.⁹ It was the clearest and most significant representation of the intrinsic limits of the conception of the time, as well as of its vast distance from the man who had been its inspiration.

Even Eduard Bernstein, who conceived of socialism as possibility and not as inevitability, and hence signalled a discontinuity with the interpretations that were dominant in that period, read Marx in an equally

6. Cf. Erich Matthias, *Kautsky und der Kautskyanismus*, in *Marxismusstudien* II (Tübingen, 1957), p. 197.

7. Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *Die heilige Familie*, Marx Engels Werke, Band 2 (Berlin, 1962), p. 98.

8. Cf. Paul M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York [etc.], 1942), pp. 19 and 191.

9. Karl Kautsky, *Das Erfurter Programm, in seinem grundsätzlichen Teil erläutert* (Hanover, 1964), pp. 131f.

artificial way, which didn't differ at all from other readings of the time, and contributed to the diffusion of an image of him, by means of the wide resonance of the *Bernstein-Debatte*, that was equally false and instrumental.

Russian Marxism, which in the course of the twentieth century played a fundamental role in the popularization of Marx's thought, followed this trajectory of systematization and vulgarization with even greater rigidity. Indeed, for its most important pioneer, Georgii Plekhanov, "Marxism is a complete conception of the world",¹⁰ imbued with a simplistic monism on the base of which the superstructural transformations of society proceed simultaneously with economic modifications. In *Materialism and Empirico-Criticism* of 1909, V.I. Lenin defined materialism as the "recognition of the objective laws of nature, and of the approximately faithful reflex of this law in the head of the individual".¹¹ The will and conscience of humanity have to adjust themselves "inevitably and necessarily"¹² to the necessity of nature. Yet again, the positivistic paradigm had triumphed.

Despite the harsh ideological conflicts of these years, many of the theoretical elements characteristic of the Second International were carried over into those that would mark the cultural matrix of the Third International. This continuity was clearly manifest in the *Theory of Historical Materialism* published in 1921 by Nikolai Bukharin, according to which "in nature and society there is a *definite* regularity, a *fixed* natural law. The determination of this natural law is the first task of science".¹³ The outcome of this social determinism, completely concentrated on the development of the productive forces, generated a doctrine according to which "the multiplicity of causes that make their action felt in society does not contradict in the least the existence of a *single law of social evolution*".¹⁴

Opposing this conception was Antonio Gramsci, for whom "the positioning of the problem like a research into laws, of constant, regular and uniform lines, is linked to a need, conceived in a puerile and naive way, to resolve peremptorily the practical problem of the predictability of historical events".¹⁵ His clear refusal to reduce Marx's philosophy of praxis to a crude sociology, to "reducing a conception of the world to a mechanical formula which gives the impression of holding all of history in its pocket",¹⁶ was even more important because it went beyond Bukharin's

10. Gheorgii V. Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism* (London, s.a. [1973]), pp. 3–4.

11. Vladimir Ilic Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, in *idem*, *Lenin Collected Works*, XIV (Moscow, 1972), p. 153.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

13. Nikolai I. Bukharin, *Theory of Historical Materialism* (Moscow, 1921), p. 18.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

15. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Valentino Gerratana (ed.) (Turin, 1975), p. 1403.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 1428.

text and aimed to condemn that more general orientation that would later predominate, in an unprecedented manner, in the Soviet Union.

With the construal of Marxism-Leninism, the process of corruption of Marx's thought was given its most definitive manifestation. Deprived of its function as a guide to action, theory became its *a posteriori* justification. The point of no return was reached with "Diamat" [*Dialekticeskij materializm*], "the world outlook of the Marxist-Leninist party".¹⁷ J.V. Stalin's booklet of 1938, *On Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism*, which had a wide distribution, fixed the essential elements of this doctrine: the phenomena of collective life are regulated by "necessary laws of social development", "perfectly recognizable", and "the history of society appears as a necessary development of society, and the study of the history of society becomes a science". That "means that the science of the history of society, despite all the complexity of the phenomena of social life, can become a science just as exact as, for example, biology, capable of utilizing the laws of development of society in order to make use of them in practice",¹⁸ and that, consequently, the task of the party of the proletariat is to base its activity on these laws. It is evident how the misunderstanding of the concepts of the "scientific" and "science" reached its apex. The scientificity of Marx's method, based on scrupulous and coherent theoretical criteria, was replaced by methodologies of the natural sciences in which contradiction was not involved. Finally, the superstition of the objectivity of historical laws, according to which these operate like laws of nature independently of men's will, was affirmed.

Next to this ideological catechism, the most rigid and stringent dogmatism was able to find ample space. Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy imposed an inflexible monism that also produced perverse effects on the writings of Marx. Unquestionably, with the Soviet revolution, Marxism enjoyed a significant moment of expansion and circulation in geographical zones and social classes from which it had, until then, been excluded. Nevertheless, once again, the circulation of the texts involved far more manuals of the party, handbooks, and "Marxist" anthologies on various arguments, than texts by Marx himself. Furthermore, while the censorship of some texts increased, others were dismembered and manipulated: for example, by practices of extrapolation into purposeful pointed assemblages of citations. The recourse to these was a result of preordained ends, and they were treated in the same way that the bandit Proustes reserved for his victims: if they were too long, they were amputated, if too short, lengthened.

In conclusion, the relation between the promulgation and the non-schematization of thought, between its popularization and the need not to

17. Josef V. Stalin, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* (London, 1941), p. 5.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 13–15.

impoverish it theoretically, is without doubt very difficult to realize, even more so the critical and deliberately non-systematic thought of Marx. At any rate, nothing worse could have happened to him.

Distorted by different perspectives into being a function of contingent political necessities, he was assimilated to these and reviled in their name. From being critical, his theory was utilized as Bible-like verses and out of these exegeses was born the most unthinkable paradox. Far from heeding his warning against “writing receipts [...] for the cook-shops of the future”,¹⁹ he was transformed, instead, into the illegitimate father of a new social system. A very rigorous critic and never complacent with his conclusions, he became instead the source of the most obstinate doctrinarianism. A firm believer in a materialist conception of history, he was removed from his historical context more than any other author. From being certain that “the emancipation of the working class has to be the work of the workers themselves”,²⁰ he was entrapped, on the contrary, in an ideology that saw the primacy of political avant-gardes and the party prevail in their role as proponents of class-consciousness and leaders of the revolution. An advocate of the idea that the fundamental condition for the maturation of human capacities was the reduction of the working day, he was assimilated to the productivist creed of Stakhanovism. Convinced of the need for the abolition of the state, he found himself identified with it as its bulwark. Interested like few other thinkers in the free development of the individuality of men, arguing against bourgeois right which hides social disparity behind mere legal equality, that “right, instead of being equal, would have to be unequal”,²¹ he was accommodated into a conception that neutralized the richness of the collective dimension of social life into the indistinctness of homogenization.

The original incompleteness of Marx’s critical work was subjected to the pressure of the systematization of epigones who produced, inexorably, the de-naturing of his thought until it was obliterated and turned into its manifest negation.

THE ODYSSEY OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE WORKS OF MARX AND ENGELS

“Were the writings of Marx and Engels [...] ever read in their entirety by anybody outside of the group of close friends and disciples [...] of the authors themselves?”, asked Antonio Labriola in 1897, regarding what was then known of their works. His conclusions were unequivocal: “reading all

19. Karl Marx, *Nachwort* to *Das Kapital*, Erster Band, MEGA² II/6 (Berlin, 1987), p. 704.

20. *Idem*, *Provisional Rules of the International Working Men’s Association*, MEGA² I/20 (Berlin, 2003), p. 13.

21. *Idem*, *Kritik des Gothaer Programms*, Marx Engels Werke, Band 19 (Berlin, 1962), p. 21.

the writings of the founders of scientific socialism seems to have been up until now a privilege of initiates"; "historical materialism" had been propagated "by means of an infinity of equivocations, of misunderstandings, of grotesque alterations, of strange disguises and unfounded inventions".²² In effect, as was later demonstrated by historiographical research, the conviction that Marx and Engels had really been read was the fruit of a hagiographical myth.²³ On the contrary, many of their texts were rare or difficult to find even in the original language. The proposal of the Italian scholar to give life to "a complete and critical edition of all the writings of Marx and Engels" was an unavoidable necessity. For Labriola, what was needed was neither the compilation of anthologies, nor the drawing up of a *testamentum juxta canonem receptum*. Rather "all the political and scientific activity, all the literary production, even if occasional, of the two founders of critical socialism, needs to be placed at the disposal of readers [...] because they speak directly to whoever has the desire to read them".²⁴ More than a century after his wish, this project has still not been realized.

Aside from these prevalently philological evaluations, Labriola proposed others of a theoretical character, of surprising far-sightedness in relation to the period in which he lived. He considered all the incomplete writings and works of Marx and Engels as "the fragments of a science and of a politics that is in continuous becoming". In order to avoid seeking in them "that which there is not, and that should not be there", or "a type of Vulgate or precepts for the interpretation of history of any time and place", they could be completely understood only if they were placed in the moment and the context of their genesis. On the other hand, those who "don't understand thought and knowledge as a work in progress", or "the doctrinarians and the conceited of every type, who need idols of the mind, the artificers of classical systems valid for eternity, the compilers of manuals and encyclopaedias, vainly seek in Marxism that which it has never thought to offer to anybody":²⁵ that is, a summarized, faithful solution to the problems of history.

The natural executor of the realization of this *opera omnia* could not have been anyone other than the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, holder of the *Nachlaß* and whose members had the greatest linguistic and theoretical competencies. Nevertheless, political conflicts

22. Antonio Labriola, *Discorrendo di socialismo e filosofia, Scritti filosofici e politici*, Franco Sbarberi (ed.) (Turin, 1973), pp. 667–669.

23. Marx's biographers Boris Nikolaevskij and Otto Maenchen-Helfen correctly affirm, in the foreword to their book, that "of the thousands of socialists, maybe only one has read an economic work of Marx; of the thousands of anti-Marxists, not even one has read Marx". Cf. *Karl Marx. Eine Biographie* (Berlin, 1976), p. VII.

24. Labriola, *Discorrendo*, p. 672.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 673–677.

within social democracy not only impeded the publication of the imposing mass of unpublished works by Marx, but caused the dispersal of his manuscripts, compromising any suggestion of a systematic edition.²⁶ Unbelievably, the German party did not curate any, treating their literary legacy with the maximum negligence imaginable.²⁷ None of its theoreticians drew up a list of the intellectual estate of the two founders. Nor did they dedicate themselves to collecting the correspondence, extensive but extremely dispersed, despite the fact that it was clearly a very useful source of clarification, if not a continuation, of their writings.

The first publication of the complete works, the *Marx Engels Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA), occurred only in the 1920s, at the initiative of David Borisovič Ryazanov, director of the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow. This undertaking also ran aground, however, due to the turbulent events of the international workers' movement, which often established obstacles rather than favoured the publication of their works. The Stalinist purges in the Soviet Union, which also affected the scholars working on the project, and the rise of Nazism in Germany led to the early interruption of the publication.²⁸ Such was the contradictory production of an inflexible ideology that drew its inspiration from an author whose works were still in part unexplored. The affirmation of Marxism and its crystallization into a dogmatic *corpus* preceded an acknowledgement of the texts that it would have been necessary to read in order to understand the formation and evolution of Marx's thought.²⁹

The early works, in fact, were only published in the MEGA as late as 1927 for the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, and 1932 for the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844 and *The German Ideology*. As had already occurred with the second and third book of *Capital*, they were published in editions in which they appeared as completed works; a choice that would later demonstrate itself to be the source of numerous interpretative misunderstandings. Later still, some of the important preparatory works for *Capital*, in 1933 the draft chapter 6 of *Capital* on the "Results of the Direct Production Process", and between 1939 and 1941 the *Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy*, better known as the *Grundrisse*, were published in a print run that secured only a

26. Cf. Maximilien Rubel, *Bibliographie des oeuvres de Karl Marx* (Paris, 1956), p. 27.

27. Cf. David Ryazanov, "Neueste Mitteilungen über den literarischen Nachlaß von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels", in *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* (Leipzig, 1925); see in particular pp. 385–386.

28. Ryazanov was dismissed and condemned to deportation in 1931 and the publications were interrupted in 1935. Of the 42 volumes originally planned, only 12 (in 13 books) were printed. Cf. Marx and Engels, *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe. Werke, Schriften, Briefe*, under the direction of the Marx-Engels-Institut (from 1933 Marx-Engels-Lenin-Institut of Moscow), David Ryazanov (ed.) (from 1932 Vladimir Adoratskij) (Frankfurt am Main, [etc.], 1927–1935).

29. Cf. Rubel, *Marx critique*, p. 81.

very limited circulation. Furthermore, these unpublished writings, like those that followed, when they were not concealed for fear that they could erode the dominant ideological canon, were accompanied by an interpretation functional to political needs that, in the best of hypotheses, made predictable adjustments to predetermined interpretations and never gave rise to a serious comprehensive reevaluation of Marx's work.

The first Russian edition of the collected works was also completed in the Soviet Union between 1928 and 1947: the *Sočinenija* [*Complete Works*]. In spite of the name, it only included a partial number of writings, but, with twenty-eight volumes (in thirty-three books) it constituted the most complete collection in quantitative terms of the two authors at the time. The second *Sočinenija* appeared between 1955 and 1966 in thirty-nine volumes (forty-two books). From 1956 to 1968 in the German Democratic Republic, at the initiative of the central committee of the SED, forty-one volumes in forty-three books of the *Marx Engels Werke* (MEW) were published. Such an edition, though far from complete,³⁰ was weighed down by introductions and notes which, following the model of the Soviet edition, guided the reader according to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism.

The project of a "second" MEGA, planned as the faithful reproduction with an extensive critical apparatus of all the writings of the two thinkers, was reborn during the 1960s. Nevertheless, these publications, begun in 1975, were also interrupted, this time following the events of 1989. In 1990, with the goal of continuing this edition, the Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis of Amsterdam and the Karl Marx Haus in Trier formed the Internationale Marx-Engels-Stiftung (IMES). After a difficult phase of reorganization, in the course of which new editorial principles were approved and the publishing house Akademie Verlag took the place of Dietz Verlag, the publication of the so-called MEGA² commenced in 1998.

MEGA²: THE REDISCOVERY OF A MISUNDERSTOOD AUTHOR

Contrary to the forecasts that predicted his definitive fall into oblivion, in the last few years Marx has returned to the attention of international scholars. The value of his thought has been reasserted by many and his writings are being dusted off the shelves of the libraries of Europe, the United States, and Japan. One of the most significant examples of this rediscovery is precisely the continuation of MEGA². The complete project, in which scholars of various disciplinary competences from

30. The publications did not include, for instance, the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844 or the *Grundrisse*, which were added later. Nonetheless, many analogous editions in other languages were based on the MEW. A reprint of this edition started in 2006.

numerous countries participate, is articulated in four sections: the first includes all the works, articles, and drafts excluding *Capital*; the second includes *Capital* and its preliminary studies starting from 1857; the third is dedicated to the correspondence; while the fourth includes excerpts, annotations, and marginalia. Of the 114 planned volumes, 53 have already been published (13 since recommencement in 1998), each of which consists of 2 books: the text plus the critical apparatus, which contains the indices and many additional notes.³¹ This undertaking has great importance when it is considered that a major part of the manuscripts of Marx, of his voluminous correspondence, and the immense mountain of excerpts and annotations that it was customary for him to make while he read, have never been published.

The editorial acquisitions of the MEGA² have produced important results in all the four sections. In the first, *Werke, Artikel und Entwürfe*, research was recommenced with the publication of two new volumes. The first, “Karl Marx–Friedrich Engels, *Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe. Januar bis Dezember 1855*”,³² includes 200 articles and drafts written by the 2 authors in 1855 for the *New York Tribune* and the *Neue Oder-Zeitung* of Breslau. Alongside the complex of better known writings connected with politics and European diplomacy, reflections on the international economic conjuncture and the Crimean war, research has made it possible to add 21 other texts previously not attributed because they were published anonymously in the American newspaper. The second, “Friedrich Engels, *Werke, Artikel, Entwürfe. Oktober 1886 bis Februar 1891*”,³³ on the other hand, presents part of the work of the late Engels. The volume alternates between projects and notes. Among these is the manuscript *Rolle der Gewalt in der Geschichte*, without the interventions of Bernstein who edited its first edition, addresses to the organizations of the workers’ movement, and prefaces for the republication of already published writings and articles. Among the latter, of particular interest are *Die auswärtige Politik des russischen Zarentums*, the history of two centuries of external Russian politics that appeared in *Die Neue Zeit* but was subsequently suppressed by Stalin in 1934, and *Juristen-Sozialismus*, written together with Kautsky, whose authorship of the individual parts has been reconstructed for the first time.

Furthermore, of considerable interest is the first number of the *Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch*, the new series published by the IMES, entirely dedicated to *The German Ideology*.³⁴ This book, anticipating 1/5 of the MEGA²,

31. Detailed information on the MEGA² is available at www.bbaw.de/vs/mega.

32. MEGA² I/14, H.-J. Bochinski and M. Hundt (eds) (Berlin, 2001).

33. MEGA² I/31, R. Merkel-Melis (eds) (Berlin, 2002).

34. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and Joseph Weydemeyer, *Die deutsche Ideologie. Artikel, Druckvorlagen, Entwürfe, Reinschriftenfragmente und Notizen zu, I. Feuerbach’ und, II. Sankt Bruno. Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch* 2003 (Berlin, 2004).

includes the pages of Marx and Engels that correspond to the manuscripts “I. Feuerbach” and “II. Sankt Bruno”. The seven manuscripts that survived the “gnawing criticism of the mice”³⁵ are collected as independent texts and chronologically ordered. From this edition can be deduced, with clarity, the non-unitary character of the work. New and definite grounds, therefore, are given to scientific research for tracing the theoretical elaboration of Marx with reliability. *The German Ideology*, considered up until now as the exhaustive exposition of Marx’s materialist conception, is now restored to its original fragmentariness.

The research for the second section of the MEGA², “*Das Kapital*” and *Vorarbeiten*, has concentrated in recent years on the second and the third book of *Capital*. The volume “Karl Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Zweites Buch. Redaktionsmanuskript von Friedrich Engels 1884/1885*”³⁶ includes the text of the second book, compiled by Engels on the basis of seven manuscripts of varying size written by Marx between 1865 and 1881. Engels had in fact received many different versions of the second book from Marx, but no indications to refer to in order to select the one to be published. Instead, he found himself with material of

[...] careless style full of colloquialisms, often containing coarsely humorous expressions and phrases interspersed with English and French technical terms or with whole sentences and even pages of English. Thoughts were jotted down as they developed in the brain of the author. [...]. At conclusions of chapters, in the author’s anxiety to get to the next, there would often be only a few disjointed sentences to mark the further development here left incomplete.³⁷

Thus, Engels had to make determinative editorial decisions. The most recent philological acquisitions estimate that Engels’s editorial interventions in this text amount to about 5,000: a quantity much greater than had been assumed up until now. The modifications consist of additions and cancellations of passages in the text, modifications of its structure, insertion of titles of paragraphs, substitutions of concepts, re-elaborations of some formulations of Marx, or translations of words adopted from other languages. The text given to the printers only emerged at the end of this work. This volume, therefore, allows us to reconstruct the entire process of selection, composition, and correction of Marx’s manuscripts, and to establish where Engels made his most significant modifications, and where he was able instead to respect faithfully the manuscripts of Marx –

35. Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, Erstes Heft, MEGA² II/2 (Berlin, 1980), p. 102.

36. MEGA² II/12, I. Omura, K. Hayasaka, R. Hecker, A. Miyakawa, S. Ohno, S. Shibata, and R. Yatuyanagi (eds) (Berlin, 2005).

37. Engels, *Vorwort* to Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, Zweiter Band, p. 7.

which, to repeat it once more, did not in fact represent the final resting place of his research.

The publication of the third book of *Capital*, “Karl Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Dritter Band*”,³⁸ the only volume to which Marx did not manage, even approximately, to give a definitive form, involved even more complex editorial interventions. In his preface, Engels underlines how this text was

[...] a first extremely incomplete draft. The beginnings of the various parts were, as a rule, pretty carefully done and even stylistically polished. But the further one went, the more sketchy and incomplete was the manuscript, the more excursions it contained into arising side-issues whose proper place in the argument was left for later decision.³⁹

Thus, Engels’s intense editorial work, for which he spent the better part of his energy in the long period between 1885 and 1894, produced the transition from a very provisional text, composed of thoughts “recorded in *statu nascendi*”⁴⁰ and preliminary notes, to another unitary text, from which the semblance of a concluded and systematic economic theory arose.

This becomes amply apparent from the volume “Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Manuskripte und redaktionelle Texte zum dritten Buch des Kapitals*”.⁴¹ It contains the last six manuscripts of Marx regarding the third book of *Capital*, written between 1871 and 1882. The most important of these is the long section on “The relation between the rate of surplus value and the rate of profit developed mathematically” of 1875, as well as the texts added by Engels during his work as editor. The latter demonstrate with unequivocal exactness the path taken to the published version. A further confirmation of the merit of the book in hand is the fact that forty-five of the fifty-one texts in this volume are here published for the first time. The completion of the second section, now approaching, will finally allow a sure critical evaluation of the state of the originals left by Marx and on the value and the limits of Engels’s editorial work.

The third section of the MEGA², *Briefwechsel*, contains the letters exchanged by Marx and Engels throughout their lives, as well as those between them and the numerous correspondents with whom they were in contact. The total number of the letters in this correspondence is enormous. More than 4,000 written by Marx and Engels (2,500 of which are between themselves) have been found, as well as 10,000 addressed to them by third parties, a large majority of which were unpublished before the MEGA². Furthermore, there is firm evidence of the existence of another 6,000 letters,

38. MEGA² II/15, R. Roth, E. Kopf, and C.E. Vollgraf (eds) (Berlin, 2004).

39. Friedrich Engels, *Vorwort* to Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, Dritter Band, MEGA² II/15, p. 6.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

41. MEGA² II/14, C.E. Vollgraf and R. Roth (eds) (Berlin, 2003).

though these have not been preserved. Four new volumes have been edited which now allow us to re-read important phases of Marx's intellectual biography through the letters of those with whom he was in contact.

The background to the letters collected in "Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Briefwechsel Januar 1858 bis August 1859*"⁴² is the economic recession of 1857. It rekindled in Marx the hope of an upturn of the revolutionary movement, after the decade of retreat that opened with the defeat of 1848: "the crisis has been burrowing away like the good old mole".⁴³ This expectation moved him to a renewed vigour in intellectual production and prompted him to delineate the fundamental outlines of his economic theory "before the *déluge*",⁴⁴ hoped for but yet again unrealized. Precisely in this period, Marx wrote the last notebooks of his *Grundrisse* and decided to publish his work in pamphlets. The first of these, published in June 1859, was entitled *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. On the personal level, this phase was marked by "deep-rooted misery":⁴⁵ "I don't think that anybody has ever written on 'money' with such a lack of money".⁴⁶ Marx struggled desperately in order to ensure that the precariousness of his position didn't stop him from finishing his "Economics" and declared: "I have to pursue my goal at all costs and not allow bourgeois society to transform me into a *money-making machine*".⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the second pamphlet never saw the light of day and the next publication of economics had to wait until 1867, the year in which he sent the first volume of *Capital* to the printers.

The volumes "Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Briefwechsel September 1859 bis Mai 1860*"⁴⁸ and "Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Briefwechsel Juni 1860 bis Dezember 1861*"⁴⁹ contain the correspondence related to the tortuous business of the publication of *Herr Vogt* and the heated controversy that there was between Vogt and Marx. In 1859, Karl Vogt accused Marx of having instigated a conspiracy against him, as well as being the leader of a group that lived by blackmailing those who had participated in the risings of 1848. Thus, in order to protect his own reputation, Marx felt obliged to defend himself. This was achieved by means of a vigorous exchange of letters with militants with whom he had had political relations during and after 1848, for the purpose of obtaining from them all possible documents on Vogt. The result was a polemical pamphlet of 200 pages: *Herr Vogt*.

42. MEGA² III/9, V. Morozova, M. Uzar, E. Vashchenko, and J. Rojahn (eds) (Berlin, 2003).

43. Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 22 February 1858, *ibid.*, p. 75.

44. Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 8 December 1857, MEGA² III/8 (Berlin, 1990), p. 210.

45. Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 16 April 1859, MEGA² III/9, p. 386.

46. Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 21 January 1859, *ibid.*, p. 277.

47. Karl Marx to Joseph Weydemeyer, 1 February 1859, *ibid.*, p. 292.

48. MEGA² III/10, G. Golovina, T. Gioeva, J. Vasin, and R. Dlubek (eds) (Berlin, 2000).

49. MEGA² III/11, R. Dlubek and V. Morozova (eds) (Berlin, 2005).

The refutation of the accusations took up Marx's time for a whole year and forced him to interrupt completely his economic studies. Furthermore, although he had expected to cause a sensation, the German press didn't pay any attention at all to his book. Private matters in this period fared no better. Next to discouraging problems of a financial nature – at the end of 1861 Marx said “if this [year] turns out to be the same as the one just past, for my part, I would rather prefer the inferno”⁵⁰ – there were also invariably those of ill-health, the latter caused by the former. For some weeks, for example, he had to stop working: “the only occupation with which I can conserve the necessary tranquillity of soul is mathematics”,⁵¹ one of the great intellectual passions of his life. Again, at the beginning of 1861, his condition was aggravated by an inflammation of the liver and he wrote to Engels: “I'm suffering like Job, though not as God-fearing”.⁵² Desperate for reading, he took refuge once again in culture: “in order to mitigate the profound bad mood caused by the situation, uncertain in every sense, I am reading Thucydides. At least these ancients always remain new”.⁵³ At any rate, in August of 1861 he took up his work again with diligence. Up until June 1863, he filled 23 notebooks of 1,472 pages in quarto size which included the *Theories of Surplus Value*. The first 5 of these, which concern the transformation of money into capital, were ignored for over 100 years and were published only in 1973 in Russian and in 1976 in the original language.

The principle theme of “Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Briefwechsel Oktober 1864 bis Dezember 1865*”⁵⁴ is Marx's political activity within the International Working Men's Association, founded in London on 28 September 1864. The letters document Marx's actions in the initial period of the life of the organization, during which he rapidly gained the leading role, and his attempt to combine these public duties, which he took up once again as a primary concern after sixteen years, with scientific work. Among the questions that were debated was the function of trade-union organization, the importance of which he emphasized while, at the same time, lining up against Lassalle and his proposal to form cooperatives financed by the Prussian state: “the working class is revolutionary or it isn't anything”;⁵⁵ the polemic against the Owenite John Weston, which resulted in the cycle of papers collected posthumously in 1898 with the name of *Value, Price and Profit*; considerations on the civil war in the

50. Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 27 December 1861, *ibid.*, p. 636.

51. Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 23 November 1860, *ibid.*, p. 229.

52. Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 18 January 1861, *ibid.*, p. 319.

53. Karl Marx to Ferdinand Lassalle, 29 May 1861, *ibid.*, p. 481.

54. MEGA² III/13, S. Gavril'chenko, I. Osobova, O. Koroleva, and R. Dlubek (eds) (Berlin, 2002).

55. Karl Marx to Johann Baptist von Schweitzer, 13 February 1865, *ibid.*, p. 236.

United States; and the pamphlet by Engels on *The Prussian Military Question and the German Workers' Party*.

The novelties of the historical critical edition are also noticeable in the fourth section, *Exzerpte, Notizen, Marginalien*. This contains Marx's numerous summaries and study notes, which constitute a significant testimony to his mammoth work. From his university years, he adopted the life-long habit of compiling notebooks of extracts from the books he read, often breaking them up with the reflections which they prompted him to make. The *Nachlaß* of Marx contains approximately 200 notebooks of summaries. These are essential for the knowledge and comprehension of the genesis of his theory and of the parts of it that he didn't have the chance to develop as he wished. The conserved extracts, which cover the long arch of time from 1838 until 1882, are written in eight languages – German, Ancient Greek, Latin, French, English, Italian, Spanish and Russian – and treat the widest range of disciplines. They were taken from texts of philosophy, art, religion, politics, law, literature, history, political economy, international relations, technology, mathematics, physiology, geology, mineralogy, agronomy, ethnology, chemistry, and physics, as well as newspaper and journal articles, parliamentary reports, statistics, reports, and publications of government offices – as amongst these are the famous “Blue Books”, in particular the *Reports of the Inspectors of Factories*, which contained investigations of great importance for his studies. This immense mine of knowledge, in large part still unpublished, was the building-site of Marx's critical theory. The fourth section of MEGA², planned for thirty-two volumes, will provide access to it for the first time.

Four volumes have recently been published. “Karl Marx, *Exzerpte und Notizen Sommer 1844 bis Anfang 1847*”⁵⁶ contains eight notebooks of extracts, compiled by Marx between the summer of 1844 and December 1845. The first two belong to his stay in Paris and came just after the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844. The other six were written the following year in Brussels, where he went after having been expelled from Paris, and in England, where he stayed during July and August. In these notebooks are the traces of Marx's encounter with political economy and the process of formation of his first elaborations of economic theory. This emerges clearly from the extracts from manuals of political economy by Storch and Rossi, like those taken from Boisguillebert, Lauderdale, Sismondi and, in relation to machinery and the techniques of manufacture, from Baggage and Ure. Comparing these notebooks with the writings of the period, published and non-published, the incontrovertible influence of these readings on the development of his ideas is evident. The totality of these notes, with the historical

56. MEGA² IV/3, G. Bagaturija, L. Čurbanov, O. Koroleva, and L. Vasina (eds) (Berlin, 1998).

reconstruction of their maturing, shows the progress and the complexity of his critical thought during this intense period of work. The text, furthermore, also contains the celebrated *Theses on Feuerbach*.

The volume “Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Exzerpte und Notizen September 1853 bis Januar 1855*”⁵⁷ contains nine extensive notebooks of extracts, compiled by Marx essentially during 1854. They were written in the same period in which he published an important series of articles in the *New York Tribune*: those on “Lord Palmerston” between October and December 1853, and reflections on “Revolutionary Spain” between July and December 1854, while the texts on the Crimean War – almost all of them written by Engels – came out in 1856. Four of these notebooks contain annotations on the history of diplomacy taken, principally, from texts by the historians Famin and Francis, by the lawyer and German diplomat von Martens, by the Tory politician Urquhart, as well as from “Correspondence Relative to the Affairs of the Levant” and “Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates”. The other five, taken from Chateaubriand, from the Spanish writer de Jovellanos, from the Spanish general San Miguel, from his fellow countryman de Marliani, and many other authors are, instead, exclusively dedicated to Spain and demonstrate the intensity with which Marx examined its social and political history and culture. Furthermore, the notes from *Essai sur l’histoire de la formation et des progrès du Tiers État* of Augustin Thierry arouse particular interest. All these notes are of very important because they reveal the sources Marx drew upon and allow us to understand the way in which he utilized these readings for the writing of his articles. The volume contains, finally, a series of extracts on military history by Engels.

Marx’s great interest in the natural sciences, almost completely unknown, appears in the volume “Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Naturwissenschaftliche Exzerpte und Notizen. Mitte 1877 bis Anfang 1883*”.⁵⁸ This volume presents the notes on organic and inorganic chemistry from the period 1877–1883, which allow us to discover a further aspect of his work. This is all the more important because these researches help to discredit the false legend, recounted in a large number of his biographies, which portrays him as an author who had given up on his own studies during the last decade of his life and had completely satisfied his intellectual curiosity. The published notes contain chemical compositions, extracts from books by the chemists, Meyer, Roscoe, and Schorlemmer, and also notes on physics, physiology, and geology – disciplines that witnessed the flourishing of important scientific developments during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, about which Marx always wanted to keep himself informed. These studies constitute one of the least explored

57. MEGA² IV/12, M. Neuhaus and C. Reichel (eds) (Berlin, 2007).

58. MEGA² IV/31, A. Griese, F. Fessen, P. Jäckel, and G. Pawelzig (eds) (Berlin, 1999).

fields of research on Marx and, since they are not directly connected with the execution of the work on *Capital*, they pose unanswered questions regarding the reasons for this interest. Completing this volume, there are also extracts on analogous related themes written by Engels in the same period.

If Marx's manuscripts, before being published, have known numerous ups and downs, the books owned by Marx and Engels suffered an even worse fate. After Engels's death, the two libraries that contained their books with interesting marginalia and underlinings were ignored and in part dispersed and only subsequently reconstructed and catalogued with difficulty. The volume "Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Die Bibliotheken von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels*"⁵⁹ is in fact the fruit of 75 years of research. It consists of an index of 1,450 books in 2,100 volumes – or two-thirds of those owned by Marx and Engels – which includes notes of all the pages of each volume on which there are annotations. It is a publication in advance which will be integrated when the MEGA² is completed by the index of books not available today (the total number of those that have been recovered is 2,100 books in 3,200 volumes), with indications of marginalia, present in 40,000 pages of 830 texts, and the publication of comments on readings taken in the margins of the volumes.

As many who were in close contact with Marx have noted, he did not consider books as objects of luxury, but instruments of work. He treated them badly, folding the corners of pages, and underlining in them. "They are my slaves and have to obey my will",⁶⁰ he said of his books. On the other hand, he indulged in them with extreme devotion, to the point of defining himself as "a machine condemned to devour books in order to expel them, in a different form, on the dunghill of history".⁶¹ To be able to know some of his readings – and one should nevertheless remember that his library gives only a partial cross-section of the tireless work that he conducted for decades in the British Museum in London – as well as his comments in relation to these, constitutes a precious resource for the reconstruction of his research. It also helps to refute the false hagiographical Marxist-Leninist interpretation that has often represented his thought as the fruit of a sudden lightning strike and not, as it was in reality, as an elaboration full of theoretical elements derived from predecessors and contemporaries.

Finally, one would have to ask: What new Marx emerges from the new historical-critical edition? Certainly, a Marx different from that accepted for a long time by many followers and opponents. The tortuous process of

59. MEGA² IV/32, H. P. Harstick, R. Sperl, and H. Strauß (eds) (Berlin, 1999).

60. Paul Lafargue, "Karl Marx. Persönliche Erinnerungen", in Vv. Aa., *Erinnerungen an Karl Marx* (Berlin, 1953), p. 152.

61. Karl Marx to Laura and Paul Lafargue, 11 April 1868, *Marx Engels Werke*, Band 32 (Berlin, 1965), p. 545.

the dissemination of his writings and the absence of an integral edition of them, together with their fundamental incompleteness, the villainous work of the epigones, the tendentious readings, and the more numerous failures to read him, are the fundamental causes of a great paradox: Karl Marx is a misunderstood author, the victim of a profound and often reiterated incomprehension.⁶² Rather than the stony profile of the statue that was found in many squares of the illiberal regimes of Eastern Europe, representing him showing the way to the future with a dogmatic certainty, today one can now recognize an author that left a large part of his writings incomplete in order to dedicate himself, right up until his death, to further studies that would verify the validity of his theses.

From the rediscovery of his work re-emerges the richness of a problematic and polymorphic thought that forms a rich horizon for the future *Marx Forschung*.

MARX, THAT “DEAD DOG”

Due to theoretical conflicts or political events, interest in Marx’s work has never been consistent and, from the beginning, it has experienced indisputable moments of decline. From the “crisis of Marxism” to the dissolution of the Second International, from the discussions about the limits of the theory of surplus value to the tragedy of Soviet communism, criticisms of the ideas of Marx always seemed to go beyond its conceptual horizon. There has always been, however, a “return to Marx”. A new need to keep referring to his work develops and from the critique of political economy to the formulations on alienation or the brilliant pages of political polemics, continues to exercise an irresistible fascination on followers and opponents. Nevertheless, at the end of the century, having been unanimously declared to have disappeared, all of a sudden Marx reappeared on the stage of history.

Liberated from the abhorrent function of *instrumentum regni*, to which it had been consigned in the past, and from the chains of Marxism-Leninism from which it is certainly separate, Marx’s work has been redeployed to fresh fields of knowledge and is being read again all over the world. The full unfolding of his precious theoretical legacy, taken away from presumptuous proprietors and constricting modes of use, has become possible once again. However, if Marx isn’t identifiable with the carved sphinx of the grey “real socialism” of the twentieth century, it would be equally mistaken to believe that his theoretical and political legacy could be confined to a past that doesn’t have anything more to give to current

62. Next to the “Marxist” misunderstanding outlined here so far, the “anti-Marxist” misunderstanding of liberals and conservatives should also be noted, which is just as profound because full of prejudiced hostility.

conflicts, to circumscribe his thought to a mummified classic that has no relevance today, or to confine it to merely academic specialism.

The return of interest in Marx goes well beyond the confines of restricted circles of scholars, as does the significant philological research, dedicated to demonstrating the diversity of it in respect to the large number of his interpreters. The rediscovery of Marx is based on his persistent capacity to explain the present: he remains an indispensable instrument for understanding it and being able to transform it.

Faced with the crisis of capitalist society and the profound contradictions that traverse it, there is a return to question that author set aside too quickly after 1989. Thus, Jacques Derrida's affirmation, that "it will always be an error not to read, re-read and discuss Marx",⁶³ which only a few years ago seemed to be an isolated provocation, has found increasing approval. From the end of the 1990s, newspapers, periodicals, and television and radio broadcasts have continually discussed Marx as being the most relevant thinker for our times.⁶⁴ In 1998, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of its publication, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* was printed in dozens of new editions in every corner of the planet and was celebrated not only as the most read political text in history, but also as the most prescient forecast of the tendencies of capitalism.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the literature dealing with Marx, which had effectively disappeared fifteen years ago, shows signs of revival in many countries and, along with the flourishing of new studies,⁶⁶ there are many booklets

63. Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx* (Paris, 1993), p. 35.

64. The first article in this direction that had a certain resonance was John Cassidy's, "The Return of Karl Marx", published in *The New Yorker*, 20 October 1997, pp. 248–259. Then it was the turn of the BBC, who conferred on Marx the crown of the greatest thinker of the millennium. A few years later, the weekly *Nouvel Observateur* was dedicated to the theme "Karl Marx – le penseur du troisième millénaire?", *Nouvel Observateur*, 1 October 2003. Soon after, Germany paid its tribute to the man once forced into exile for 40 years: in 2004, more than 500,000 viewers of the national television station ZDF voted Marx the third most important German personality of all time (he was first in the category of "contemporary relevance"), and during the last political elections, the famous magazine *Der Spiegel* carried his image on the cover, giving the victory sign, under the title *Ein Gespenst kehrt zurück* (*A Spectre Is Back*); *Der Spiegel*, 22 August 2005. Completing this curious collection, there was the poll conducted in 2005 by BBC Radio 4, which gave Marx the accolade of the philosopher most admired by British listeners.

65. In particular, see Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction" to Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition* (London, 1998), pp. 3–74.

66. It would be impossible here to list the numerous books published in the course of the past few years; but those that have had the most public and critical acclaim will be mentioned. Two new and best-selling biographies – Francis Wheen, *Karl Marx* (London, 1999) and Jacques Attali, *Karl Marx ou l'esprit du monde* (Paris, 2005) – draw much attention to the life of the thinker from Trier. Moishe Poistone's text *Time, Labour and Social Domination* (Cambridge) was unfittingly published in 1993 and since then has been reprinted several times; like this text, Terrell Carver's *The Postmodern Marx* (Manchester, 1998) and Michael A. Lebowitz's *Beyond Capital* (London, 2003, 2nd edn), were also marked by an innovative overall interpretation of Marx's thought. On his early writings a recent work is worth mentioning: that is David

emerging in different languages with titles such as *Why Read Marx Today?* An analogous consensus is enjoyed by the journals open to contributions discussing Marx and various Marxisms,⁶⁷ just as there are now international conferences, university courses, and seminars dedicated to this author. Finally, even if timidly and in often confused forms – from Latin America to Europe, passing through the alternative globalization movement – a new demand for Marx is also being registered in political terms.

What remains of Marx today? How useful is his thought to the struggle for the freedom of the human race? What part of his work is most fertile for stimulating the critique of our times? How can one go “beyond Marx, with Marx”? These are some of the questions that receive answers that are anything but unanimous. If the contemporary Marx renaissance has a certainty, it consists precisely in the discontinuity in respect to the past that was characterized by monolithic orthodoxies that have dominated and profoundly conditioned the interpretation of this philosopher. Even though marked by evident limits and the risk of syncretism, a period has arrived that is characterized by many Marxs, and indeed, after the age of dogmatisms, it could not have happened in any other way. The task of responding to these problems is therefore up to the research, theoretical and practical, of a new generation of scholars and political activists.

Among the Marxs that remain indispensable, at least two can be identified. One is the critic of the capitalist mode of production: the analytical, perceptive, and tireless researcher who intuited and analysed this development on a global scale and described bourgeois society better than any other. This is the thinker who refused to conceive of capitalism and the regime of private property as immutable scenarios intrinsic to human nature and who still offers crucial suggestions to those who want to realize alternatives to neo-liberal economic, social, and political organizations. The other Marx to whom great attention should be paid is the theoretician of socialism: the author who repudiated the idea of state socialism, already propagated at the time by Lassalle and Rodbertus; the thinker who understood socialism as the possible transformation of

Leopold's *The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing* (Cambridge, 2007). In addition, John Bellamy Foster, *Marx's Ecology* (New York, 2000), and Paul Burkett, *Marxism and Ecological Economics* (Boston, MA, 2006) are noteworthy for having related Marx to the environmental question. Finally, as evidence of the widespread interest in the world, a mention goes to the English translation of the main works by the Latin American thinker Enrique Dussel, *Towards an Unknown Marx* (London, 2001); also several studies from Japan collected by Hiroshi Uchida in *Marx for the 21st Century* (London, 2006), as well as the theoretical developments of a new generation of Chinese researchers that is increasingly familiar with Western languages and further away from the tradition of dogmatic Marxism.

67. Among the most important journals are *Monthly Review*, *Science & Society*, *Historical Materialism* and *Rethinking Marxism* in the anglophone world; *Das Argument* and the *Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch* in Germany; *Actuel Marx* in France; *Critica Marxista* in Italy, and *Herramienta* in Argentina.

productive relations and not as a mass of bland palliatives for the problems of society.

Without Marx we will be condemned to a critical aphasia and it seems that the cause of human emancipation needs to continue to use him. His “spectre” is destined to haunt the world and shake humanity for a good while to come.