Marx's Critique of the Political

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FROM THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1848 TO THE PARIS COMMUNE

In this essay, I would like to present some thoughts on Marx's political theory that are the result of a rereading of one of his most famous texts: *The Civil War in France*. It is, I believe, a rather unusual interpretation in that it examines these pages "in light of" some of Marx's earlier writings, works written nearly thirty years earlier. I refer specifically to the writings Marx published in the *Franco-German Yearbook*, as well as to a text commonly referred to as the *Kreuznach Manuscript*, which consists of a critique of sections 261 to 313 of Hegel's *Principles of the Philosophy of Right*. My general thesis here is that the experience of the Paris Commune prompted Marx to "recast" the Revolution of 1848. In other words, it allowed Marx to rework and to rectify, or to be more precise, to repeat the movement of rectification of theoretical elaborations he had exposed around 1848. I say "around," because these writings overlap both before and after the events of 1848. They span a period beginning with the texts of 1843-44, mentioned above, through to the works that assessed the defeat (most importantly: *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*), as well as the most emblematic texts of the revolutionary moment itself; *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, and the articles published in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. In these writings, Marx arrived at a new understanding of revolutionary politics, in its dual dimension consisting of an insurrectional moment (the seizing of state power and the destruction of its former structures), as well as a moment of creativity and experimentation of political forms adequate to the emancipation of the subaltern classes.

1848 AND PERMANENT REVOLUTION

From the point of view of Marx's theory and political strategy, the series of writings that preceded 1848, are characterized by one major concept, that of "permanent revolution," or more exactly, "revolution in permanence." To sum up this notion in the most rudimentary way, one could say that it is a conceptual strategy that works to repeat the revolutionary process unleashed by the French Revolution, and later reactivated by the events of 1830, while aiming to make the process more radical, on a national as well as European level. I should emphasize that radicalization is the very condition of this repetition, and not a kind of optional supplement. Although the

French Revolution cannot itself be repeated, Marx feels that it ought to be "restaged" in order to surpass its own political and historical limitations. This could be achieved by attacking the institution of private property, the very foundations of bourgeois society, as well as the means of production and exchange. A historical Revolution can thus produce a new revolution, carried out by an historical agent that is also new: the proletariat, whose emancipation radically redefines the stakes of the revolutionary process itself. Marx's project was first exposed in the writings he published in the *Franco German Yearbook*. These texts presented Germany as the potential site of a "radical revolution." *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* later reformulated this paradoxical central position given to Germany by affirming that "the attention of the communist should be turned principally towards Germany." In the *Manifesto*, however, the terms of the equation have been modified: Germany is on the verge not of a "radical revolution" but of a "bourgeois revolution." Since this bourgeois revolution will be achieved with the "most advanced conditions," most notably with a "proletariat that is infinitely more developed" than it was in the English or French revolutions, it cannot but be the immediate prelude (*das unmittelbare Vorspiel*) to a proletarian revolution, and should be conceived on a European scale. The *Manifesto* presents the idea of an uninterrupted revolutionary sequence, consisting of distinct moments, but not of stages separated by an historical period of bourgeois domination. Instead, the proletariat is called upon to seize the reins of the revolutionary process and to guide it beyond the limits of the bourgeois revolution. From this idea, Marx derived a series of theses of a more strategic nature. They concerned proletarian alliances (notably with the bourgeoisie), as well as the relations between the other currents in the labor movement and/or the revolutionary movement (the two are not necessarily synonymous); and they also treat this configuration of this "communist party," that for Marx and Engels is not, as we know, a separate organization, but rather a tendency within the labor movement considered as a whole (the "class party").

One can see to what extent Marx's theory of the revolution is, from its inception, politically constituted and removed from economist thinking or from evolutionist views that suppose that only the most industrialized countries could be "ripe" for the proletarian revolution. This, of course, is the reason why such a revolution always seemed so unthinkable to the leading thinkers of the *Second International*. For example, to "revisionists" like Bernstein, it seemed to be nothing better than a form of "blanquism" or a kind of voluntarism by the active minorities. Similarly, the ultra-orthodox like Kautsky could not understand how Marx and Engels could have

imagined skipping over the "objective conditions" and the other "laws of historical development." Thereafter, for more than a century, all the social-democratic wisdom simply recasts these types of arguments.

It should be noted that if the *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* made the idea of proletarian revolution more "strategic" and not merely speculative, and it did so by modifying the conception of the "radical revolution" exposed in the writings of 1843/44, these changes also introduced several uncertainties. In the *Manifesto*, the emphasis is placed, in two ways, on the revolutionary function of the *bourgeoisie*. From an *economic perspective*, the bourgeoisie as a class is the result of a "series of revolutions in the modes of production and exchange;" but, at the same time it, in turn, "can only exist by constantly revolutionizing the means of production and thus the relations of production, that is to say, the entire sphere of social relations," and so it creates an entire world "in its own image." From the *political perspective*, the bourgeoisie has broken with feudal despotism and absolute monarchy and is able to "seize exclusive political sovereignty (Herrschaft) in the modern representative State." The "representative State" designates here the modern liberal state that Marx will oppose to democracy, as we will see later on, and which he conceives as the only adequate form of this *Herrschaft*, (i.e. of the bourgeoisie's "sovereignty" or political "domination"), itself in a necessary correspondence to its economic supremacy. Although this State is representative in its form, from the point of view of its substance, it simply remains a "committee with a mandate to administer the collective affairs of the entire bourgeoisie." In a certain sense, it is the bourgeoisie itself, considered as an organizing function, or as an instrument of coercion, that allows the bourgeoisie to unify itself as a class (specifically as a national class) and to dominate the exploited classes.

This revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie will be a determining factor in the conception of the proletarian revolution presented in the *Manifesto*. If indeed a new revolution, directed this time against the bourgeoisie, is to be the new order of the day, it will result from the articulation of a double approach. On the one hand, at the economic level, bourgeois society is reaching a crisis that must be recognized as final or terminal, and it is a given that the revolt of the productive forces against the forces of production will follow from the absolute pauperization of the proletariat and the definitive incapacity of the bourgeoisie to guarantee the subsistence of the exploited and oppressed class. On the other hand, at the political level, the class struggle waged by the proletariat has already gone through the indispensable preparatory stages, at an accelerated rate even, thus allowing it to

take over from the bourgeoisie and to seek in turn the political direction of the process that will seal the fate of the exploiting class. This process is defined, it should be remembered, as "the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority" and this is precisely what distinguishes it from all previous revolutions that have replaced an exploiting class (minority) with another. It is also no small fact that it remains fundamentally analogous or symmetrical to the bourgeois revolution that preceded it, both economically (it liberates the new forces of production from the fetters of the old relations of production), as well as politically, since it installs the proletariat "as the dominant class," which means the same as the "conquest (*die Erkämpfung*) of democracy."

The proletariat "will use" the "political sovereignty (*Herrschaft*)" it has obtained in order to "centralize all the instruments of production in the hands of the State, that is to say, of the proletariat organized as a dominant class," which in the final analysis is the equivalent to that "administrative committee in charge of the collective affairs of the entire bourgeoisie," which is what the bourgeois state constitutes. In both cases, the State is at the same time an instrument that can be manipulated at will, and an organizing force that unifies the various fractions or constitutive elements of the dominant class. The new character of this process will emerge as a result, since this "development" will lead to the disappearance of classes for the benefit of "associated individuals." However, this horizon is explicitly postulated as meta-political ("*so verliert die öffentliche Gewalt den politischen Charakter*") in so far as the "public power" (in the sense of *Gewalt*, this term can also be translated as violence or force) is no longer the "organized power (*die organisierte Gewalt*) of one class over another." On the basis of this parallel structure, we are expected to understand better why the proletarian revolution and the following collapse of the bourgeoisie are "equally inevitable." The new revolution is imminent and necessary, in the same way as France's Ancien Regime and its aristocracy were, on the eve of the convocation of the *States general* [the legislative assembly at the time, editor's note], necessarily and immediately ordered to give up their places to their gravediggers, to a new historical bloc led by the emerging bourgeois class.

FROM REVOLUTION TO DEFEAT: A FIRST SET OF CORRECTIONS (1849-1850)

It was precisely these uncertainties concerning the role of the proletariat that shall be redefined in the "heat of the moment" of the 1848 revolution and which lead to a first set of corrections that concerned the very foundations of the project of the permanent revolution. I will now focus on three major aspects of these corrections.

1. First of all, following the bloody repression in Paris of the workers revolt of June 1848 and its impact across Europe, Marx, in articles published in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, and especially in the famous "The Bourgeoisie and the counter-revolution" gradually came to realize that the bourgeoisie, and particularly the German bourgeoisie, would not play a revolutionary role, even where it would have to face up to Absolutism and to the power of the aristocracy. In the context of the struggle against despotism and feudal forces, the idea of a "common front" with the bourgeoisie, even in a minimal or transitory sense, would have to be abandoned. In other words, there would no longer be a revolutionary bourgeois "moment" within the revolutionary process. If the head-on collision between the French bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the streets of Paris appeared entirely foreseeable, one should note that Marx and Engels (along with Blanqui) are among the few revolutionaries who were not surprised to see the disintegration of the February Bloc. However, the refusal of the German bourgeoisie to confront the Ancien Regime or to take advantage of the popular uprising in order to play its "role" as a leading social force did catch them off guard.

Now, this situation does not necessarily end up being necessarily reduced to a binary opposition: revolution or restoration. Feeling threatened by the popular fervor and perceiving the specific weight of proletariat, the bourgeoisie moved towards a compromise with the Ancient Regime, a compromise that neutralized its political capacity, while leaving its hands free to manage the level of economic development. The story ends [thirty five years later, translator's note] with the incapacity of the French bourgeoisie to surmount its internal rifts — traumatized as it was by June 48, in a way reminiscent of 1814 — acting in a way that finally was not fundamentally all that different from its earlier history by choosing to hand State power to a Bonaparte. Instead of the "inevitable" victory of the permanent revolution, there arises a *new type* of counter-revolution, based on a compromise between the bourgeoisie and the old dominant class or between bourgeois factions and reactionary populist currents. It is the beginning of the era of

revolutions from the top, the era of bonapartisms and bismarkisms, that completes the destruction of the idea of what the "modern representative State" should be, as outlined in the *Manifesto*, that is to say, as the highest political form and most necessary accomplishment of bourgeois society.

2. Indeed, beyond the upheavals and the contingent and brutal transitions that occur between the various regimes and forms of States, the dialectic of the revolution and the counter-revolution affords a glimpse of another history, this one much more regular and "organic": the history of the modern State. In the last section of the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx sketches out a different course for the State that begins with the centralizing and anti-feudal objectives of the Absolute Monarchy, which continued with the French Revolution and were, then, perfected by Napoleon and all the regimes that followed, including the republican one that came out of the revolution of February 1848. Much has been said, and rightly so, of a Tocquevillean type of narrative that placed the French Revolution in continuity with the centralizing goals of the monarchy. Yet, Marx will, as we shall see, abandon this view during the writing of *The Civil War in France*. Above all, it is important here to see that Marx returns in this text to a series of analyses that he first developed in the *Kreuznach Manuscript*.[1] On this occasion, he resumes his analysis of bureaucracy and of the supremacy of the executive power over the legislative powers, perceiving them as fundamental characteristics of the modern State. This analysis invalidates the notion, spread most notably through the Althusserian readings, and paradoxically followed by François Furet, according to which the young Marx was incapable of thinking about the specificity of the modern State in terms other than that of a pure allusion, an imaginary ("alienated") projection of civil-bourgeois society, that alone could be considered as "real," etc.

Behind the succession of the most varied political regimes, Marx sees one overt tendency at work, the construction of a "State machine" (*Staatsmachinerie*) with an ever increasing density and ramifications. This machine de-possesses the society of its "common" interests in order to transform them into the "objects of governmental activities" and to entrust them to this State machinery. The "common" thus becomes the "general interest" to be managed exclusively by a specialized machinery which confiscates "initiatives" that come from the bottom. This is the specific reality that prevents us from thinking about the proletarian revolution on the

[1] See chapter 5 of my book *Philosophy and Revolution from Kant to Marx*, London, Verso, 2003.

same level as the bourgeois revolution, and which bars us from thinking about "the formation of the proletariat as the dominant class" in a way analogous to that of the bourgeoisie. This reality refers to what Marx called the modern State itself in terms of "state machinery," beyond the multiplicity of forms of political regimes that succeed each other according to various conjunctions. As Marx phrased it in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*; if "all the revolutions" of the past have "perfected this machine instead of breaking it," the revolution of the future, and the "state centralization" which it will establish should impose the "destruction of the State machinery" (*die Zertrümmerung des Staatsmachinerie*).

3. The third and last correction concerns the articulation of the political and the economic from the point of view of the category of crisis. This is intended to bring about a fusion of the two in the form of a final crisis of bourgeois society, the economic crisis automatically taking on a revolutionary configuration as it causes the pauperization of the proletariat, the failure of the middle class and the resulting simplification of class contradictions. Yet, Marx realized, as early as the summer of 1850, that the economic crisis that began in 1848, and that precipitated the revolutionary crisis (proof that not everything is wrong in the previous conception) was not the final crisis of bourgeois society. The economic cycle gave signs of recovery, and this finally convinced Marx that the revolutionary period was over. This observation leads him to break off with the "voluntarist" tendency of the reconstituted Communist League, the "Willich-Schapper fraction." For Marx, the proletarian revolution was no longer necessarily "immanent," and this is because, from a political point of view, avenues other than the revolution/restoration duality were becoming available, and because he felt that the revolutionary crisis could not be directly deduced from the economic cycle. Although they do not stand apart from economic trends, the temporality and rhythm of revolutionary crisis has its own specificity, the political realm precisely.

AFTER THE COMMUNE OR THE "POLITICAL TURN"

That is, in a very simplified and condensed fashion, how things stood for Marx at the end of the 1848 revolution. It is the experience of the Paris Commune, as an unprecedented case of political power in the hands of a dominated class, that will prompt him to resume the course of his reflection. This is manifest in the articles published in *The New Rheinish Gazette* and more importantly in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Within

this set of writings, I would like to concentrate on two main aspects, which in my view, reactivate the task of correction I mentioned above, or more precisely, that reactivate his analysis by advancing it and producing innovation. They are, 1) the question of the "political form" appropriate to proletarian power, and 2) the question of the State machine and its destruction.

Let us begin with the question of political form: we have seen that the *Manifesto* linked the "constitution of the proletariat as the dominant class" to the "conquest of democracy" but said nothing of the political forms of this class domination that without a doubt has a state character, even if it is only transitory. In my view, this is an important point which has rarely been commented upon, the fact that "democracy" *does not appear as a State form in the Manifesto*, but only as a movement or as the "substance," (I use this term here by default) of the political domination of the proletariat, a movement that all "democratic parties" share, including the communists. In articles published in *The New Rheinish Gazette*, Marx also speaks of the proletariat as the "organ of democracy." Democracy, as opposed, of course, to the "republic" (a catchword in the France of 1848), thus appears as *something in excess* of all instituted political forms. Here we find ourselves in clear continuity with the terms used in the *Kreuznach Manuscript* to describe democracy as the "truth of all state forms" and as the "resolved enigma of all constitutions." In his later pamphlet, *The Civil War in France*, Marx took a more decisive step: simply because of the "multiplicity of interpretations to which it has been subjected," and of the "multiplicity of interests that claim it as its principle objective," the Commune demonstrated that "it was a political form that was likely to expand." The Commune appeared to many as the "truth," the "resolved enigma" of these interests and interpretations, and that is for Marx what its capacity for expansion is grounded on. He continues with another famous phrase: "here is its real secret: it was essentially a working class government," the result of the class struggle of the producers against the class of those who appropriate. They had finally found the political form that would allow them to achieve the economic emancipation of labor. Thus, the "economic emancipation of labor" requires a "political form," and, as we will see later, even an expansive political form. It is a novel political form, however, because it results from the class struggle of the producers, and it is the "government of the working class" ("government" meaning also "public power" or even the "State"). One could say that it was the self-government of the working class, in reference to a following section that qualifies the "particular measures taken by the Commune" as an "indication" of the "tendency towards a government by the people for the people." Here we are, once again, returning to

immanent definitions of democracy as "self-government of the *demos*," already contained in the *Kreuznach Manuscript*.

It remains for us to understand the real importance of the "expansive" character of this form. Marx's comments on this matter are brief, but substantial. He writes: "the political domination of the producer can not coexist with the externalization of his social slavery. The Commune was supposed to serve as a lever to extirpate the economic basis on which the existence of classes and of class domination are founded". The self-government of the working class appears to open onto a displacement of the relation between the political and the economical. Not in the sense of the disappearance of the political in favor of a social sphere left to itself, to its harmonious spontaneity, as have claimed those who have read Marx as an anti- or im-political thinker; on the contrary, it is the expansion of politics, which define its power to transform, that forces the reassessment of class relations. In other words, in its immanent political expansiveness, the proletarian political form confronts conditions that are non-political, that are more precisely socio-economical. It recognizes these conditions as part of itself, that is to say, as eminently political in the process of their transformation. "Without this last condition (the achievement of the economic emancipation of labor)," writes Marx, "the Constitution of the Commune, would have been a mere illusion." Without advancing a detailed program, something that would have been difficult in light of the limited experience of the Commune, Marx nevertheless outlines, in a clear fashion, a general framework, or more precisely the internal tendency of this expansive form of proletarian politics: it consists of assuming the tasks of collective management of the economy based on cooperation and planning. The "abolition" of "class property" and the "management according to a common plan of national production" by "all cooperative associations," are the only means to keep cooperative production from reaching a dead end or falling into a trap; these are the two pillars of what is clearly characterized as "communism."

Indeed, this expansive view of the politics of proletarian power would remain enigmatic if we did not keep in mind one fundamental fact, that the very existence of the Commune is a consequence of a radical break with the preexisting State Machinery. It produced this "destruction of the Staatsmachinerie" already described in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*. It is, above all, at this level that it can be affirmed as a "positive form," because it does not only destroy, it constructs a new political structure on the ruins of this oppressive machine. The basic principles are well known, so I shall only

briefly list them, beginning with the dissolution of specialized repressive bodies, the election and recall of officials, the election of delegates at all times subject to recall and subordinated to the imperative mandate, the reconstruction from the bottom of a national unity by permitting a greater autonomy at the local level, and the amalgamation of legislative and executive power in order to produce an "acting body" rather than a "parliamentary organism." These last three dispositions aim, especially, to counteract the formation of relations of representation, the practical function of elected officials being that of preventing the delegates from constituting themselves as representatives, as imaginary doubles who would place themselves as substitutes of the people's activity. The meaning of these measures as a whole is clear: they aim to destroy the State as an instance of specialized, centralized and strictly hierarchical machinery, a machine cut off from all popular control, establishing itself by this means as a transcendent instance that "wills itself as even independent of the nation, and even superior to it," while it is only "the means to subordinate labor to capital."

Briefly stated, Marx resumed his conceptual line, which he had already elaborated in the years 1843-1844, on the abolition of the political State as a separate entity, in its reality as a bureaucratic and representative abstraction. I would simply add that the amalgamation between the legislative and the executive powers in the context of the communal "acting organism" should be read as being in direct continuity with the theory of legislative power developed in the *Kreuznach Manuscript*. It should also be remembered that by "legislative power" Marx does not designate, in the text of 1843, a power that is already operating in the context of the constitutional separation of powers, but more accurately a power to produce and transform constitutions, a power which has as its explicit model the French Revolution and, more precisely, the Jacobin convention, a model that was indeed for a long time insurmountable, with its many commities all subordinated to it, and its "acting body" shattering the traditional limits of the separation of powers (cf. the Robespierrist doctrine of "revolutionary government"). That is undoubtedly why, at the time of the final draft of *The Civil War in France*, after considering the texts written during the Commune (these authors all see themselves as determined by the experience of 1792-93), Marx abandoned the de Tocquevillian narrative of the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, which he had nevertheless maintained until the preparatory manuscript. In his definitive version, "the establishment of the modern State," centralized and autonomous, is explicitly conceived as the "First Empire," and this does not apply to the Revolution, which is simply credited as having produced the "enormous clean up" that swept away all feudal residues. The Revolution is

rehabilitated as a moment of rupture, instead of being assimilated to the pursuit and the amplification of the monarchy's task of centralization. In other words, unlike most commentators of the time, whether favorable or hostile, Marx refuses to assimilate the Commune's project to a return to archaic forms, or even to a federalist project as in Montesquieu, or of the type proposed by the Girondins. This forced him to reconsider his early analysis of the experience of the French Revolution. He can thus abandon the project of a rigorous centralization of revolutionary political forms at a national level, vigorously defended all along the 1848 revolution, for the benefit of a more "dialectical" version that states the necessity of centrality and of national unity as an ascending process, which goes beyond the limits of the local by constructing a capacity to govern that is founded on its own autonomy. We know that Engels would later give this theme a wider scope, making the first French Republic a model for proletarian power, although not without some liberal ambiguities (in the style of de Tocqueville), since he often referred in the same vein to the United States and even at times to Holland or Australia.

Many have tried to read Marx's project as an abolition of the political, by arguing, for example, that for him, universal suffrage was rather a technical tool for the expression of a unified social body rather than the means, properly speaking, of political deliberation, allowing one to resolve a conflict and to separate majorities from minorities. In the *Civil War in France*, doesn't Marx speak of the use of universal suffrage by the people constituted into communes as being similar to an employer's recruitment of qualified personnel for his business? Indeed, it would be accurate to say that, for Marx, universal suffrage cannot function effectively without "becoming the instrument of deceit," if it is not combined with a tendency towards social homogenization (questioning class divisions). It would be equally accurate to say that a technical-functional division of governing tasks seems possible, and he defends this most notably against Bakunin. It seems to be even inevitable under developed conditions of production, as opposed to those small rural and artisan communes so dear to the libertarian tradition, without necessarily becoming automatically a relation of political domination. For Marx, what is most important is not to make universal suffrage a purely technical means of validation of a preestablished inter-individual harmony, but rather the opposite, to understand the conditions of its politicization. That is to say, of its insertion into the social and political mechanisms of the popular self-government, at every level, as a tool to struggle against the "hierarchical investiture" and as the optimal means to correct the mistakes. As opposed to the Rousseaunian "general will," the communal will does not define itself as "always right," but rather open to its own corrections.

CONCLUSION

It is generally admitted that the Paris Commune signaled a decisive turn for the labor movement, a turn, with a clear political character, illustrated by the dissolution of the *First International* and the establishment of a strong nationalist workers party. Gramsci has adamantly insisted on the notion that the period inaugurated by the Paris Commune led Marx to abandon the idea of a "permanent revolution," because it had perhaps lost its relevance in the epoch of mass politics, and also because the "revolution from the top" of the years of 1850-1860 had produced the extension of suffrage and the stabilization of the modern representative State. Without wishing to enter into a frightfully complex discussion of its evolution in the work of the later Engels, I have simply wanted to make the point here that these matters evolved somewhat differently for Marx. It was not so much an abandonment of the permanent revolution, but rather the pursuit of the task of rectification of this idea, that was undertaken as early as 1848, in the heat of the action. I have tried to show that this task was both productive and innovative.

How can we define in a more precise manner this dialectic of continuity and rupture? If the task of correction is a continuing one, we must admit that Marx would no longer attempt to reformulate an integrated thesis, theoretically and strategically, as he had in 1848, regardless of the uncertainties and the blind spots of the latter. In a sense, the Paris Commune appears to mark the end of a cycle, rather than the beginning of a new one. From the point of view of strategy, the Commune was not of any great use. Marx himself was clear on this point, especially in the famous, and often misunderstood, letter of February 22, 1881, to Domela Nieuwenhuis. Its concerns were not so much the abandonment of the idea of "permanent revolution," but rather the relinquishing of a *determined insurrectional form*, marked by the heritage of the successive "days" and the barricades of revolutionary Paris. Yet, what has been lost on one side has been gained on the other, in the understanding of the revolutionary practice in terms of a political practice that is *specific* and *expansive*. What defines it as such is the process of "creative destruction" in which the break with the old State machinery conditions the construction of "lasting institutions" (Marx uses this term to describe the Commune's military organization) irreducible to a State apparatus, the institutions of popular self-government tending towards the transformation of the whole of economic life and of the "non-political" social life. In this respect, the proletarian revolution ceases to appear as symmetrical to the process of the bourgeois revolution, not in the

meta-political sense that was still evident in the *Manifesto*, but rather in the new expansive horizon of the political. This horizon understands itself as a recasting and a deepening of the tendency towards popular self-government that affirms from the outset the founding moment of its Jacobin origins, which nourished the analyses of the young-Marxists of the "true democracy" and of the end of the "separate political State." In this sense also, the Commune will have renewed the relationship between the French revolutionary experience and the German theory that is the foundation of our political modernity.

Translated by Jean Klucinskas