

# **The Blind Prometheus of German Social Science**

Eugen Dühring as Philosopher, Economist, and Controversial Social Critic

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To Andre Brown “Brownie” Moore (1911-1987)

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Acknowledgements .....  | 3 |
| Abbreviation Index..... | 9 |

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

A Scholar Apart/Shifting Institutional Framework/Complexities of a Dühring  
Biography/Dühring and a Typology of Scholars/A Unification of the Contradictions

## PART ONE: THE ASCENT OF A CONTROVERSIAL SCHOLAR 1833-1877

### Chapter One

#### FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EARLY EDUCATION

1833-1868

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Ancestry, Childhood, and Schooling .....                                | 27 |
| 2. University Years: Disappointment with “Pseudo- Historicism”.....        | 31 |
| 3. Eye Illness, Decision to Become an Academic and Scientific Writer ..... | 34 |
| 4. Habilitation in Philosophy, Early Teaching and Publishing Success ..... | 36 |

### Chapter Two

#### CAREER AS AN ACADEMIC AND SCIENTIFIC WRITER

1868-1877

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Brush with the Prussian Ministry: The Social Exposé Scandal of 1868..... | 40 |
| 2. Academic Accolades amid Mounting Conflict at the University .....        | 43 |
| 3. Lectureship at Victoria Lyceum.....                                      | 50 |
| 4. Rising Influence in the Social Democratic Movement .....                 | 52 |

PART TWO:  
DÜHRING'S WELTANSCHAUNG AND SCIENTIFIC BEARING

**Chapter Three**

PHILOSOPHY

|    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 1. | Paragons: Comte, Schopenhauer, Feuerbach ..... | 60 |
| 2. | Basic Concept of Philosophy .....              | 67 |
| 3. | Epistemology and Metaphysics.....              | 70 |
| 4. | Estimation of Life .....                       | 78 |
| 5. | Critical Summary .....                         | 80 |

**Chapter Four**

POLITICAL ECONOMY

|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| 1. | Foundations: American School, List, Carey .....      | 85  |
| 2. | The Method of "Pure" and "Political" Economics ..... | 97  |
| 3. | Practical Proposals .....                            | 100 |
| 4. | Natural Law and the "Principle of Balance".....      | 102 |
| 5. | Critical Summary .....                               | 104 |

**Chapter Five**

HISTORY

|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| 1. | Paragons: Comte and Buckle .....               | 107 |
| 2. | History as the Progressive Work of Nature..... | 114 |
| 3. | History as Isolated Individual Striving .....  | 117 |
| 4. | "Critical History": Concept and Works .....    | 125 |
| 5. | Critical Summary .....                         | 135 |

PART THREE:  
DÜHRING'S SYSTEM OF  
SOCIOPOLITICAL ECONOMICS

**Chapter Six**

EARLY GROUNDWORK

|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| 1. | The Social Question.....                 | 142 |
| 2. | The Concept of Capital.....              | 144 |
| 3. | Capital and Labor .....                  | 149 |
| 4. | Group Interests and Economic Power ..... | 152 |
| 5. | The Prussian Social Exposé.....          | 156 |
| 6. | Critical Summary.....                    | 158 |

**Chapter Seven**

THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES

|    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 1. | The Essence of Political Economy .....                | 160 |
| 2. | Methodological and Terminological Clarification ..... | 162 |
| 3. | Production and Distribution.....                      | 169 |
| 4. | Valuation and Money .....                             | 183 |
| 5. | Critical Summary.....                                 | 187 |

**Chapter Eight**

SOCIAL IMPERATIVE

|    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 1. | Towards a Post-Utopian Socialism.....                   | 191 |
| 2. | Advancement of Labor through “Conscious Strength” ..... | 197 |
| 3. | Liberation from Criminal Government.....                | 202 |
| 4. | “Universal Socialization” of Living Conditions.....     | 208 |
| 5. | Critical Summary.....                                   | 214 |

**Chapter Nine**

CONSEQUENCES

|    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 1. | The Emancipatory Process .....                  | 218 |
| 2. | Equality and the Postulate of Destruction ..... | 221 |
| 3. | A Revised Framework of Left-Liberalism .....    | 224 |

**PART FOUR:  
THE DESCENT INTO ISOLATION  
AND OBSCURITY 1877-1921**

**Chapter Ten**

**FIGHTING ON ALL FRONTS (1877-1899)**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. Remotion and the Student Protest Movement .....  | 229 |
| 2. From Friend to Foe of the Social Democrats.....  | 233 |
| 3. New Phase of Productivity amid Trials and Tribulations.....                              | 238 |
| 4. Dühring Movement of the 1890s:“Sozialitärer Bund” and “Der Moderne<br>Völkergeist” ..... | 244 |

**Chapter Eleven**

**BEYOND ALL CONTROVERSY (1899-1921)**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. Personalist und Emancipator .....       | 248 |
| 2. The Turn to Extreme Individualism ..... | 252 |
| 3. Dühringianism at Work .....             | 258 |
| 4. The Will to “Die Completely” .....      | 260 |

**CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTUS**

Discrepancy and Consistency/The Crisis of the Mind/ Socialism Proper/ Dühring and the  
Current Age

|                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| <b>Appendices</b> ..... | 274 |
|-------------------------|-----|

- I Lecture Notes from Dühring’s “Geschichte der Philosophie” (ca. 1870)
- II Unpublished Essay „Über die Entstehung der Judenfrage in Europa“ (1880)
- III Portraits
- IV Lectures Given at Friedrichs-Wilhlems Universität 1864-1877

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| <b>Bibliography</b> ..... | 288 |
|---------------------------|-----|

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| <b>Vita</b> ..... | 320 |
|-------------------|-----|

## ABBREVIATION INDEX

*Dühring's Works:*

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| CA    | Capital und Arbeit  |
| CNS   | Cursus der National- und Sozialökonomie                               |
| CP    | Cursus der Philosophie  |
| CU    | Careys Umwälzung der Volkswirtschaftslehre                            |
| ER    | Ersatz der Religion durch Vollkommeneres                              |
| GMLI  | Die Größen der Modernen Literatur (Erste Abteilung)                   |
| GMLII | Die Größen der Modernen Literatur (Zweite Abteilung)                  |
| JF    | Die Judenfrage  |
| KGP   | Kritische Geschichte der Philosophie                                  |
| KGN   | Kritische Geschichte der Nationalökonomie und des Sozialismus         |
| KGM   | Kritische Geschichte der allgemeinen Prinzipien der Mechanik          |
| KGV   | Kritische Grundlegung der Volkswirtschaftslehre                       |
| KKB   | Kritik des Kapitalbegriffs  |
| LW    | Logik und Wissenschaftstheorie  |
| MV    | Der moderne Völkergeist   |
| ND    | Natürliche Dialektik  |
| PE    | Personalist und Emancipator   |
| RMI   | Robert Mayer: der Galilei des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts (Erster Teil)  |
| RMII  | Robert Mayer: der Galilei des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts (Zweiter Teil) |
| SLF   | Sache, Leben und Feinde   |
| SR    | Soziale Rettung   |
| VC    | Die Verkleinerer Careys   |
| VGP   | Vorlesungsmitschrift zur Geschichte der Philosophie                   |
| WBF   | Der Weg zur höheren Berufsbildung der Frauen                          |
| WCA   | Waffen, Capital, Arbeit   |
| WL    | Der Werth des Lebens  |
| WP    | Wirklichkeitsphilosophie  |

*Archives:*

HN/SBB Handschriftlicher Nachlass/Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

HSP Historical Society of Pennsylvania

UA/HUB University Archive/Humboldt University zu Berlin

UG/AS Universitätsbibliothek Graz/Abteilung Sondersammlungen

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

*A Scholar Apart*

EUGEN DÜHRING was a unique scholar in many respects. One of the most remarkable aspects of his academic career was how it began: an eye ailment, which would lead to complete blindness at the age of twenty-eight, caused him to give up a promising career in law in order to become an academic and a writer. Aside from his physical handicap, which forced him to use unconventional methods to carry out his academic duties as a blind man, Dühring stood apart from his contemporary academic colleagues in other respects. He received his ‘habilitation’ (qualification for professorship) in two different fields of study, philosophy and political economy (something uncommon in Germany at the time). He wrote essays, articles, and books at a rate unmatched by his most successful colleagues. He drew more students to his lectures than many of the most well-known professors of the era. He broke taboos of the German academia of his day by championing the rights of women to study and by endorsing the writings of foreign scholars such as Henry C. Carey, Thomas Buckle, Auguste Comte, and others (at a time where fervent German patriotism had become the norm). He became an outspoken critic of the conditions of the Frederick William University of Berlin, Prussia’s most prestigious institution for higher learning, as well as of its renowned professors, men such as Trendelenburg, Ranke, Helmholtz, and Wagner. Finally, through a scandal he did not create, he became a well-known public figure, using his fame thereafter to become involved in politics, finding favor among the leaders of the German workers movement and later in German *völkisch* circles.

Dühring did not merely pursue an academic career, but rather, in the words of Joseph A. Schumpeter, “embarked upon an intellectual effort that resulted in the conquest of a vast domain extending from mathematics, mechanics and theoretical physics in general to ethnology, economics, and philosophy.”<sup>1</sup> Owing different talents which rarely exist in one mind, he was a master of mathematics and natural science, while at the same time possessing an exceptional gift of language and clear and eloquent expression. Like David Hume, whom he greatly admired, Dühring became an authority in the areas of philosophy, political economy and history, going on to write important works in all three fields – something also without precedence in the Germany of his day. He became a best-selling academic writer in the 1870s, exerting influence on intellectuals from different occupations and classes throughout German society. His academic work received high accolades, with one of his

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph A. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 509.

books winning the renowned Benecke Prize of Göttingen University in 1871.<sup>2</sup> In 1883 George Holmes Howison, the founder of the philosophy department at the University of California, Berkeley, although critical of Dühring's philosophy, spoke of him as a man of "really great and thorough attainments, of positive originality, and of a certain delicacy of intellectual perception essential to a great thinker."<sup>3</sup>

From the heights of his success came a steep fall, which would leave Dühring's reputation ruined and his work relegated to obscurity. His downfall was precipitated by a furious sense of justice and a political will to challenge authority which put him on a collision course with his colleagues, university officials, as well as with forces in the world at large. Being merely a scholar was not enough for Dühring: he felt impelled to challenge authority or to "defy the Gods" with the weapons of science and modern humanitarian ideals. It might be argued that politics overwhelmed Dühring. Controversy and animosity are, of course, nothing unusual in the field of academia; heated rivalries and even intense quarrels among colleagues vying for recognition and positions are something commonplace at all universities all over the world. Although increasingly disregarded by the public today, academics still frequently delve into party politics, taking positions on various issues such as civil rights, global warming, economics, etc. Dühring's brand of politics was, we will argue, different. He was an intellectual in a continental tradition, and a representative of a convention that has never really become established in the Anglo-American world rooted primarily in empiricist and analytical discourse. Thoughts, ideas, and general humanitarian ethics had deeper philosophical underpinnings on the European continent and were given a societal value hardly imaginable in Great Britain or America. Following his direct precursors, the Young Hegelians, Dühring truly believed in the "realization of philosophy" and his ability to change society through his own intellectual trajectory.<sup>4</sup> With Promethean recalcitrance, he challenged not only the God of traditional religion, but also the "Gods" of the powerful status quo who, as Dühring saw it, forcefully shaped man in the image that they saw fit.

The humanitarian ethos which had been represented in Germany by the intellectuals belonging to the school known as the Young Hegelians, a generation earlier, was in Dühring's day vanishing institutionally due to the drive towards specialization and the implementation

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<sup>2</sup> The judges of the committee for the Benecke Prize, which included the renowned physicists Alfred Weber and the philosopher Hermann Lotze, issued the statement that the level of Dühring's writing was far beyond what would have been needed to win.

<sup>3</sup> George H. Howison, "Some Aspects of Recent German Philosophy," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 17 (January 1883): 12.

<sup>4</sup> On the Young Hegelian's liberal interpretation of Hegel see Robert C. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (Cambridge: University Press, 1961), 73-80.

of the rigid requirements and restrictions of what Adolf von Harnack labeled “*Großbetrieb der Wissenschaft*” (the big business of science). Dühring fought strongly against this trend of German bourgeois society, stressing the importance of the individual at a time when the anonymity of academic work was becoming the norm. When he began his publishing career in the 1860s, it was commonplace for journals not even to publish the names of the authors writing for them, and Dühring did anonymous work himself for *Mayers Konversations Lexika* and *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* to earn a living. When an exposé that he had written for the Bismarck government was published without his consent - at first anonymously and then under the name of one of a government minister - he took legal action and won a battle in court. Believing in the virtue of individualism from the beginning of his career onwards, he went against the current of German academia and challenged the established authorities. From the early 1860s until his dismissal from the Berlin University in 1877 and for some time beyond, Dühring found strong resonance in a German public which, particularly among the educated middle class, was open to his interpretations of science.

#### *Shifting Institutional Framework*

The philosopher and anthropologist Arnold Gehlen argued that one of the salient features of the spirit of the Enlightenment was a polemic against institutions.<sup>5</sup> Dühring, as a self-proclaimed adherent to the liberal values of the French Revolution, became one of the strongest critics in his day of the two institutions within which he was working, namely, the university and the state. His autobiography *My Cause, My Life, My Enemies* indicates that his discontentment with the conditions of the university dated back to his days as a student at the University of Berlin in the 1850s and carried on to when he was a lecturer there in the 1860s and 70s. He was extremely wary of authority and in his theoretical writings in the field of political economy developed a concept of unjust government based on force (*Gewaltstaat*), which was to be overcome to create a “free society”.<sup>6</sup>

While his discomfort with the university mounted, the system of education in Germany that Dühring criticized was undergoing fundamental institutional change. Science up to that point had been inextricably connected with the state, which for the most part sponsored and

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Arnold Gehlen, *Moral und Hypermoral* (Frankfurt am Main/Bonn: Athenäum Verlag, 1969), 95.

<sup>6</sup> It should, however, be emphasized that Dühring was not against institutions in a fundamental sense as were - and are - some members of the far Left. As will be shown below, Dühring did not reject the institution of private property. In one of his early essays he writes: “Die Angriffe, die man gegen die Fundamentalinstitutionen des sozialen Daseins gerichtet hat, nahmen also die verkehrteste Richtung, die nur irgend möglich war. Anstatt das Eigentum auf strenge natürliche Grundlagen zu stellen und auf diesen auszubauen, bekämpfte man es. Anstatt das Kapital zugängliche zu machen und ihm durch natürlichen Einfluss auf seine Vertheilung seine absolutistische Rolle unmöglich zu machen, findet man es in seinem ganzen Wesen als verderblich.“ KKB, 328.

monitored it; as of the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century the concept of the *Staatswissenschaften*, the sciences of the state, of which Dühring would one day be a part, became established at German universities. The sciences of the state are a complicated historical entity, but in the main entailed all knowledge and teachings that referred to the state, be this the actual conditions of the state itself or its goals, i.e. the teachings of what the state had to do in order to fulfill its specific purposes. The state was both the subject of their inquiry as well as the point of departure of their research and findings.<sup>7</sup> As Dühring's career unfolded, the state was beginning to be viewed within a societal context itself, rather than as the point of departure for research and teaching; it thus became the object of social science (*Gesellschaftswissenschaft*). The connotation of the state became more general, entailing now a multitude of associations, which were both rational and irrational.<sup>8</sup> With the rise of social science, the sciences of the state lost influence and would ultimately become a mere part of the social science, which viewed them as being a component of general society, although in the strict sense, "society" and "state" would remain opposing entities.<sup>9</sup>

Despite Dühring's opposition to the institution of the university as he saw it before him, his education was shaped within its institutional framework. According to Lindenfeld, the *Staatswissenschaften* involved a combination of "calculating, instrumental rationality and non-substantive, value-orientated rationality" and had an Aristotelian flare.<sup>10</sup> These attributes all left their mark on Dühring, but it may have been the cultivation of general encyclopedic knowledge which influenced him most. The kind of all-round knowledge and interdisciplinary research cultivated by the sciences of the state, which is apparent in Dühring's work, was becoming outdated at the time as the trend towards specialization set in.<sup>11</sup> In a sense, in terms of institutional development, history was working against both Dühring's brand of scholarship and the *Staatwissenschaften*.<sup>12</sup> Although not predictable at the time, it might be claimed that

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<sup>7</sup> Rüdiger vom Bruch emphasizes the complexity of the *Staatswissenschaften* by saying that "a logical systematic classification or the changing content and not conceptually fixed 'sciences of the state' in Germany is next to impossible." Cf. "Zur Historisierung der Staatswissenschaften: von der Kameralistik zur historischen Schule der Nationalökonomie," in *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 8, ed. Fritz Kraft (Weheim: VCH Verlagsgesellschaft, 1985), 132. Cf. Walter Tauber, "Staatswissenschaft," in *Handwörterbuch der Sozialwissenschaften*, vol. 9 (Stuttgart, et al, Gustav Fischer, et al, 1956), 763-770.

<sup>8</sup> David F. Lindenfeld, *Practical Imagination: The German Sciences of the State in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 198.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 763.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. Dühring's doctoral advisor, Adolf Trendelenburg, was known as an Aristotelian for his work in the field of logic. Cf. Klaus Köhnke, *Entstehung und Aufstieg des Neukantianismus. Die deutsche Universitätsphilosophie zwischen Idealismus und Positivismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 39-41.

<sup>11</sup> Gustav Schmoller, arguably the most successful *Staatswissenschaftler* of his day, came under attack for his interdisciplinary approach. Cf. Kurt Breysig, *Das neue Geschichtsbild* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1944), 70.

<sup>12</sup> Gerhard Lehmann saw a parallel between the trend towards limiting philosophy through epistemology and specialization and the efforts to strain the influence of the state through constitutionalism. Cf. Gerhard Lehmann,

history was also working against the historical German state, which, in its traditional form, was to be done away with at the end of the First World War in 1918.

*Complexities of an Intellectual Biography of Dühring*

Aside from Gerhard Albrecht's monograph from 1927, there has been no scholarly biography written on Dühring and this is surely not a coincidence.<sup>13</sup> There are certain challenges standing in the way of biographical historization of Dühring as a scholar. One of the difficulties is how to deal with the vast quantity of literature he authored, and to accommodate the broad scope of his scholarship. Due to his expertise in various fields of science, such as philosophy, political economy, history, physics, mathematics, chemistry and mechanics, it is hard to competently summarize and to offer critical insight into his voluminous work. When viewing the entirety of his collected works it is difficult to avoid the impression of an overwhelming chaos. It would have been more appropriate and beneficial to have several different scholars working simultaneously on the biography.<sup>14</sup> Without this luxury, it has been important to try to concentrate on the most essential aspects of his thought and career. Inevitably, much has had to be left out.<sup>15</sup>

Another difficulty is how to address the problem of what Theodor Lessing termed "Dührings Haß" (Dühring's hate). Dühring's writings in the second half of his career have a rebarbative quality that is particularly offensive to the contemporary reader, often bringing forth disapproval and even outrage on the part of scholars today.<sup>16</sup> Pejorative and often effusively

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*Die deutsche Philosophie der Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1943), 53.

<sup>13</sup> Gerhard Albrecht, *Eugen Dühring, Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Sozialwissenschaften* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1927) - henceforth abbreviated ED. There is also the book of the Dühring follower Emil Döll which, although one-sidedly in favor of Dühring, contains valuable biographical information. Cf. Emil Döll, *Eugen Dühring: etwas von dessen Character, Leistungen und reformatorischen Beruf; eine populäre Gedenkschrift aus eigenen Wahrnehmungen, mündlichem und brieflichem Verkehr* (Leipzig: C.G. Naumann, 1893).

<sup>14</sup> In a review that he wrote of a biography on Alexander von Humboldt, Dühring elaborated on the difficulties of writing biographies; he contrasted the difference between having a biography written by one author as opposed to having several people work on the project. The latter option has the advantage of lessening the chance that the outcome will be eulogy. "Die Gelehrtenbiographie und das neue Werk über A. von Humboldt," *Die Gegenwart* 46 (1872): 359.

<sup>15</sup> Any one of the many aspects touched upon in this general intellectual biography could be more deeply researched and elaborated upon. Dühring's complete works consists of thirty volumes (some of which are updated editions of the same work) and 15,000 pages of articles from his bi-monthly journal *Personalist und Emancipator*.

<sup>16</sup> Wolfgang Drechsler has labeled Dühring a "medical case" and "ridiculously and insanely vile". Drechsler, „Herrn Eugen Dühring's Remotion," *Journal of Economic Studies* 29 (2002), 266. At the end of his article Drechsler effusively speaks of "a clearly destructive, threatening and downright evil central streak in his work and personality." Ibid., 284. In her polemical summary of Dühring's philosophy Peggy Cosmann speaks of Dühring's "raping of thought" (*Denkvergewaltigung*) and "superficial twaddle" (*seichten Gewäsche*), and of his "vain destruction of philosophy" (*eiteles Plattmachen der Philosophie*). Cosmann, *Physiodicee und Weltneimesis. Eugen Dührings physiomoralische Begründung des Moral- und Charakterantisemitismus* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), 115-116.

polemical value judgments of Dühring seem to be the rule rather than the exception among scholars who have written on him in recent decades, and Dühring's vitriolic polemics and hostile outbursts during the second half of his career have rendered him unattractive to serious scholarly research. Without wishing to downplay Dühring's worst remarks and most indecent comments, it should be seen that he was what Hans Vaihinger terms a "destructive thinker" with a penetratingly wounding and uncomfortable humor. He was also a Berliner, who like Alexander von Humboldt, had a type of "Mephistophelean spirit" unique to the capital city of Germany.

The "unattractiveness" of Dühring's later writing from our perspective today should neither cast doubt on the justification of the topic, nor prevent the merit of Dühring's scholarly work from being recognized. We will argue that Dühring is a significant figure of 19<sup>th</sup> political economy and philosophy, and that his turbulent academic career, which Ernst Nolte has labeled "a kind of epos", is a notable chapter in the history of German academe.<sup>17</sup> The trajectory of Dühring's thought was powerful from the 1870s until the 1890s and we find his name mentioned in most philosophical and political economic reference books, in numerous contemporary works, and his work is reviewed by the widest spectrum of thinkers. Particularly noticeable is Dühring's influence on Friedrich Nietzsche, which was brought to light by the publication of the Nietzsche Papers in the 1880s.<sup>18</sup> The prominent neo-Kantian Alois Riehl borrowed a fundamental concept of his thinking directly from Dühring; Ludwig Erhard's doctoral mentor, Franz Oppenheimer, derived a core principle of his theory of "liberal socialism", as he admitted, largely from Dühring.<sup>19</sup>

### *Dühring and a Typology of Scholars*

A scholarly biography should aim not only at illustrating the life, career, and works of its subject, but also at creating general systematizations in order to facilitate scientific critique. One such method is the typology. Typologies, induced from recurring data that gravitates

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<sup>17</sup> Ernst Nolte, *Nietzsche und der Nietzscheanismus. Mit einem Nachwort: Nietzsche in der deutschen Gegenwart* (München: Herbig, 2000), 21.

<sup>18</sup> Rudolf Steiner believed that Nietzsche created his concept of „eternal recurrence“ by taking Dühring's ideas and intentionally contradicting them. Cf. *Rudolf Steiner. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kultur- und Zeitgeschichte 1887-1901*, eds. Edwin Froböse und Werner Teichert (Dornach/Schweiz: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 1989), 556.

<sup>19</sup> On Dühring's influence on Riehl, cf. Köhnke, *Entstehung und Aufstieg des Neukantianismus*, 373-376. His significance for Franz Oppenheimer's thought can be seen throughout the sociologist and political economist's writings, which caused Albrecht to conclude that "Dühring is the father of the basic ideal of Oppenheimer's system." Albrecht, "Zur sozialen Theorie der Verteilung," *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik* 47 (1914): 76. Paul Mombert also speaks of Dühring's „deeply penetrating influence on Oppenheimer“. Cf. *Geschichte der Nationalökonomie* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1927), 413. Oppenheimer mentions Dühring in connection with his concept of „liberal socialism“ see Franz Oppenheimer, *Theorie der reinen und politischen Ökonomie* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1923), XVI et seq. and 206.

together in certain patterns, can be an effective instrument at bringing forth solid deductive knowledge. Despite Dühring's physical handicap, which lends his biography an exceptional status, it can be shown that his career contains elements of "ideal types" which modern society has brought forth in the area of academe. A basic or ideal type should reflect a natural classification of material that is valid despite all variation from the pure essence of the type.<sup>20</sup>

In an extensive article he wrote on Alexander von Humboldt, Dühring reflected on the "basic types" (*Grundtypen*) of scholars.<sup>21</sup> He refers to the typology developed and used by a Russian academic named Théodore Wechniakof. Wechniakof had conducted extensive research on scientific production and created three basic types of scholars to aid critical biographies, which can be usefully applied as they relate to Dühring: the mono-typical, the poly-typical and the philosophical. "Mono-typical scholars" are specialists concentrating primarily on one main aspect alone. They are a product of the division of scientific labor and serve, so to speak, as one cog in the wheel of science. They have a monographic character and retain an isolated perspective in their research and writing. By and large, their work can be termed "intensive" and they usually remain constant and consistent. The counterpart to the mono-typical scholar is the "poly-typical scholar", who has only a small level of concentration and gravitates to diverse fields of intercourse. He offers little resistance to the arbitrary intellectual on goings and often becomes the victim of circumstance. He is receptive to many things, but is destined to become a slave of the many different spheres which he tries to accommodate. The third type is the "philosophical scholar" – not the philosophy professor - who in any given field of study attempts to pursue science with rational general explanations often creating a system for his work. He tends to be less acknowledged than the other types unless he builds an influential school around himself.

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<sup>20</sup> The most prominent typology applied to German academia has been Fritz Ringer's controversial concept of the German mandarin to which Dühring can hardly said to have belonged: Cf. Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins. The German Academic Community 1890-1933* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969). Dühring also considered the university professors of his day as belonging to a caste. He writes: "Das Zunftgerüst und seine Wirkungen können auch an den heutigen deutschen Universitäten zur Genüge in Augenschein genommen werden. Die ausschließende Körperschaft kopiert nach persönlichem Belieben; denn die Staatsgenehmigung ist fast nur formell. Ein Fachprofessor entscheidet darüber, wen er zum Kollegen haben will und sieht sich natürlich nach einem möglichst gefälligen und zahmen Konkurrenten oder vielmehr Nichtkonkurrenten um. Wo er sich nicht gerade Nullitäten besorgen kann, weil seine Fachkollegen auf anderen Universitäten mit ihm in vetterschaftlichem Kartell stehen und auch ihre Leute untergebracht sehen wollen, arrangiert man sich nach dem Prinzip der Gegenseitigkeit und teilt innerhalb der Kameraderie das Monopol nach jedesmaliger Konvenienz [...] Der Professorenstand ist eine Art Kaste, die sich vornehmlich durch Inzucht fortpflanzt. Schwiegervater und Schwiegersohn sitzen innerhalb derselben Fakultät und fungieren innerhalb derselben Kommission als Examinatoren. In die Professuren heiratet man sich ein wie früher in die Handwerksgilden." WHB, 2nd edition, 40-42.

<sup>21</sup> Dühring, "Die Gelehrtenbiographie und das neue Werk über A. von Humboldt," 361 et seq.

To further our understanding of Eugen Dühring, we will apply a fourth ideal type of scholar: the “controversial scholar”. The German phrase “*umstrittener Gelehrter*” brings the essence of this type to life: he is a scholar who is “fought around” (*um-gestritten*). This figure offends or breaches the “sensitivities” either of the scholarly community or of society. The first prerequisite of this type is exceptional academic performance of some sort, usually the publication of books, but also research results and successful lecturing hold weight. This scholar holds solid credentials, but has come to have views that are unpopular and seen by influential people or the public at large as being “dangerous”; warnings are issued about him and books by him should not be read and their ideas should not be discussed. Often *ad hominem* attacks are made on the author and he is judged as being “morally bad”; his books become ignored, his lectures often boycotted. This type has existed from the days of Socrates (not a scholar in the strict sense of course) up through Galileo and Bruno, on to men such as Nearing, Jenson, or Nolte and Finkelstein in recent decades. The controversial scholar tends to take on the role of a “martyr” for science, becoming the victim of the powers that he challenges through his intellectual discourse.

As we progress, we will consider how Dühring relates to these ideal types of scholars and, as he wrote about them himself, how he viewed himself in relationship to them. As indicated already, there was a narrowing down or specialization of scholarly activity in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and as Dühring taught two different disciplines, he was somewhat of an anomaly, although from the perspective of the present quite modern. After over a century of specialization scholars are beginning to realize that, as Susan Strange puts it, “there have been serious losses to set against the gains from specialization”.<sup>22</sup>

### *A Unity of the Contradictions*

Although a man of exceptional talent and mental ability, Dühring has been most remembered for his flaws. In contrast to his early writings, his later work, as we have hinted to already, is marred by subjective outbursts, bitter cynicism, name-calling and vitriolic insults - all of which are of course an anathema to serious scholarly endeavors. Despite his great erudition, his intelligence, his ability of linguistic expression, and his scholastic achievements, he has been seen - not without good reason - as a man who overestimated himself to the point of

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<sup>22</sup> Susan Strange, *Paths to International Political Economy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), ix. Strange describes this development with an allusion to the American West. Social science “was once a vast, wide open range where anyone interested in the behavior or men and women in society could roam just as freely as the deer and the antelope”. Like the West, which has now been enclosed, social science has “been divided into exclusive territories where trespassers meet with plenty of discouraging works, ominous warnings and keep-out notices.”

megalomania (a trait that is hardly rare among even great philosophers by the way). It should be noted, however, that Dühring was never *just* a scholar, in some ways more than one, and in many ways less. Despite the great antagonism he felt towards the institutions within which he learned and studied, through his education, he was firmly entrenched in the classical German culture from which he was raised. Dühring was molded by its science, its language, its value, and its knowledge of history. Yet, at the same time, he was intensely modern, expressing himself in the self-confident, rebellious and often offensive terms that were common in the Western modernist trajectory.<sup>23</sup> In his day, the far-reaching changes facing Western Society were just beginning to be internalized and expressed. As we will see, Dühring became convinced early on that the traditional forms of Western culture had become outdated in the new economic, social, and political conditions of the emerging fully industrialized world. He believed that new societal forms could be inspired through intellectual discourse whose effectiveness involved pessimism and aggressive attacks. He ultimately dedicated his whole existence to this cause.

Nietzsche likened Dühring to a “band dog” (*Kettenhund*) who would bite out at anyone who critically approached his work and indeed there can be no doubt that at times he crossed the line of human decency and honorable behavior. It is unfortunate, however, that he has been remembered more for his flaws than for his virtues. Ortega y Gasset once claimed that biography involves the unity of the contradictions; this dissertation aims to view the whole Dühring. The vicissitudes of his career and the fact that he came to change some of his key theoretical positions provide a challenge for an all-encompassing portrayal of Dühring’s life. Whereas Albrecht and Köppe chose to portray his thought in distinctly different stages, we have chosen to handle his *Weltanschauung*, his scientific bearing, and his system of social economics in a largely unified fashion.<sup>24</sup> Our biographical depiction - divided into two main parts - devotes one chapter to each of the four major phases of his life and intellectual development: his early education, his career as an academic and scientific writer, his activity

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<sup>23</sup> Being an academic is uncommon for a modern. The most important modernists were writers and painters.

<sup>24</sup> Although his thought will be portrayed comprehensively we will make reference to the different phases, which we see as being divided roughly into the four main periods which we have delineated for his biography. Albrecht defines an “early phase” of preparation and of acquiring knowledge as well as creating the first concepts of his own teachings, where Dühring acts as a civil reformer, followed by “a main phase” in which Dühring laid down the clear foundation of his own ideas in his main philosophical and social scientific work turning more to socialist discourse and the “ruinous phase” where Dühring’s thoughts were no longer clear and objective but rather marred by vitriol and unscientific polemical outbursts. Cf. ED, 12-23. Köppe’s division is closer to ours in that he distinguishes four phases. Cf. “Das ‘Sozialitäre System’ Eugen Dührings,” *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* 4, ed. Carl Grünberg (Leipzig: C. L. Hirschfeld, 1914), 394-395. Friedländer, writing in 1901, distinguishes three phases. *Die vier Hauptrichtungen der modernen sozialen Bewegung. II. Teil Eugen Dührings sozialitäres System und Henry Georges Neophysiocratie* (Berlin: S. Calvary & Co., 1901), 31-32.

as freelance publicist, and the end of his career, as the editor of his own journal *Personalist und Emancipator*. The turning point in Dühring's life came in 1877 with his dismissal from the Berlin University after fourteen years of successful teaching. This event coincided with Friedrich Engels' polemical attack on Dühring's philosophy and worldview, known as "anti-Dühring", originally a series of articles that began to be published in 1877. Both events were to seal Dühring's fate, on the one hand, isolating him from fellow scholars, and, on the other, ultimately ruining his credibility in the labor movement. Although the second phase of his life, depicted in Part Four, amounts to a kind of denouement it is, in our opinion, unfair to Dühring to automatically overemphasize the inconsistency in his thinking in the later phase. The "more successful" phase of his life exhibits traces of the indignant pessimism that would later come to dominate his literary output. As we proceed it will be important to ascertain the degree to which his philosophy and general *Weltanschauung* remained consistent and dictated his behavior throughout his entire biography.

While it may be argued that Dühring's philosophy is rightly not given much credence today, his role as theoretician of political economy should not be underestimated. Gustav Schmoller, a man of great esteem and one of the most influential *Staatswissenschaftler* of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, labeled Dühring a "highly talented philosopher from the natural scientific school of thought" and recognized him a "significant theoretician".<sup>25</sup> Scholars of political economic history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as Albrecht and Kruse, have shown that Dühring's work in the field of economics deserves a place in the history of economic thought.<sup>26</sup> Thus we have devoted an entire section to "Dühring's System of Sociopolitical Economy". Considering the enormous influence which Marxism had as a mass movement throughout the world in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it may be surprising to many that the philosophical formulation of its tenets as an ideology was achieved to no small degree through its dealing with and in reaction to Dühring's writings. Indeed one of the most important factors making Dühring interesting for the present was that, unique among German thinkers following Hegel and Marx, his approach to economic theory was philosophical.<sup>27</sup> In a time of practical and theoretical disorientation in

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<sup>25</sup> Gustav Schmoller, *Zur Literaturgeschichte der Staats- und Sozialwissenschaften* (Leipzig: Dunker & Humblot, 1888), 162; Schmoller, "Ein offenes Sendschreiben an Herrn Professor Dr. Heinrich von Treitschke über einige Grundfragen des Rechts und der Volkswirtschaft. VII: Ihr Urtheil über die socialpolitischen Bewegungen und Erscheinungen der Gegenwart," *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik* 24 (1875):110.

<sup>26</sup> Kruse refers to Dühring as "one of the most significant German political economists of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century". Alfred Kruse, "Eugen Dührings wissenschaftliche Isolierung," in *Festgabe für Friedrich Bülow zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. Otto Stammer and Karl C. Thalheim (Berlin: Dunker und Humblot, 1960), 211. Mombert says that Dühring has been "underrated for so long". Paul Mombert, *Geschichte der Nationalökonomie* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1927), 413.

<sup>27</sup> Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche. The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Thought* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), 282. Here Löwith writes: "Except for E. Dühring, no one made any attempt to

the field of political economy, as we are experiencing in the present, it may prove helpful to look back to accomplished but largely forgotten theoreticians of the past such as Dühring. Through his “Philosophy of the Actual”, an idealistic, if not metaphysical, system, he attempted to integrate philosophy and history with exact science in order to offer a vision for a better society.

The structure of our analysis is organized to place Dühring’s thought within the framework of his life. The treatment of his *Weltanschauung* and scientific bearing (Part Two) as well as the depiction his system of sociopolitical economics (Part Three) have intentionally been placed in between the historical portrayals of the early and later stages of his career (Parts One and Four). This has the advantage, we hope, of highlighting the close connection between his life and his work. Each section of Part Two, dealing with his philosophy, political economy, and his perspective on history begin with an in-depth look at his paragons and the intellectual foundation of his thought. Part Four is divided into four chapters: Chapter Six deals with the preparatory work which formed the basis of his system; Chapter Seven covers the complicated theoretical components of his system; Chapter Eight provides an excursion into the social imperative or practical postulates that his system entails, seen within the framework of leftist utopian thought; Chapter Nine attempts to illustrate the ultimate conclusions which his system implies. It will also be important to offer a critical analysis of his thought, and to try and understand Dühring as he saw himself and in terms of what he wished to accomplish.

PART ONE:

THE ASCENT OF A CONTROVERSIAL  
SCHOLAR 1833-1877

IN THE BEGINNING was the French Revolution. This “glorious sunrise” forty-four years before Dühring’s birth would be a guiding light of his philosophical and social-political pursuits. “Putting man on his head”, as Hegel described it, with the will to govern and to lead society by the power of the human intellect would prove to be no easy balancing act. What exactly does the human intellect entail? Not the same thing for Hegel as it did for Dühring and yet both men were sure that a new eon of political freedom had begun. Hegel died of the bubonic plague in the Berlin in 1831, the same place where Dühring just over one year later would be born. The “Ideals of 1789” were about to morph and take on new meaning amid the changing social conditions of the incipient Industrial Revolution in Germany. The new and final era of humanity, which Dühring, following St. Simon and Comte, avowed, was set to be one of progress and science, but also one of the destruction of religion, unjust violence, and evil corruption. The inspirational values for which he would fight were individual freedom and emancipation, hence the name the journal he founded, edited and contributed to until his death entitled *Personalist und Emancipator*.

If the human mind was in position to revolutionize society, as Dühring thought it was, its requisite instrument for doing so, philosophy, was in a state that hardly seemed up to the task. In Dühring’s formative years, philosophy was rapidly losing its status as the “mother of all science” amid advances in science and technology. Hegel and Goethe’s deaths in 1831 and 1832 respectively have been seen as the end of an era symbolizing the “great crash” of German Idealism as well as the end of the romantic “Goethe-Zeit”.<sup>28</sup> Philosophy did not know where to go, but Dühring’s compatriots did not seem to care. Germans were now in the process of finding their great talent as a nation in the field of natural science and were becoming increasingly wary of nebulous metaphysical speculation. The *Geisteswissenschaften*, or “moral sciences” as John Stewart Mill labeled them, had long been more advanced than natural science and up to then had led the way in all scientific discourse. But by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this had changed. Philosophy was rapidly losing its self-confidence, and in the decades to come was fighting for its life against several different foes:

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Herbert Schnädelbach, *Philosophie in Deutschland 1831-1933* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 15. Karl Löwith, *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche. Der Revolutionäre Bruch im Denken des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1986), 17. Arnold Gehlen dates the end of German Idealism with the deaths of Schelling and Schopenhauer (1854 and 1860 respectively). Cf. “Der Idealismus und die Gegenwart,” in *Arnold Gehlen Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 2, ed. Lothar Samson (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1980), 352. Dühring spoke with contempt for the classical period of German philosophy, which he saw ending in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. RMII, 1.

anthropology, empirical scientific psychology and materialism, as well as positivist or inductive logic.<sup>29</sup>

Science to a large degree presupposes technology and after generations of slow technological advance German science was now beginning to bear the fruit of past labor. Justus von Liebig came up with a theory of organic metabolism and applied it to agriculture to create artificial fertilizer – an invention that was to provide one of the cornerstones of Carey and Dühring’s refutation of the British classical school of political economy. Swann created a new theory of organic development with his cell theory. Mayer, whom Dühring would fervently champion and go on to write two books on, discovered the law of energy equivalence. Instead of being led by philosophy, as it had been up to then, natural science turned towards pressing worldly matters and issues such as increasing wealth, alleviating economic misery, technological research and the needs of transport.

At the time of Dühring’s birth in 1833, social science and political economy were also in a phase of transition which mirrored the deep social and economic changes, and the political crises of the thirty-year period between 1815 and 1848 known as the European Restoration. Following the Napoleonic Wars, the developing Industrial Revolution and its concomitant economic turbulence had proven to be a challenge for the aristocratic forces that strove to restore traditionalist absolutist order. The Holy Alliance attempted to maintain order in the countries it controlled, but political uprisings led by democratic forces occurred repeatedly. By 1830 well-developed theories of growth, wealth, and distribution had been established by the British classical school of political economy lead predominantly by David Ricardo and Thomas Robert Malthus. The ominous social conditions, wherever industrialization advanced, brought forth counter positions that disparaged the new economics of the British free traders. Thomas Carlyle suggested that the new science of political economy, instead of being labeled a “gay science”, as it had been by Emerson, should be called “the dismal science” because it did not consider the human factor.<sup>30</sup> Auguste Comte was motivated by what he saw as a “necessary intellectual reorganization” of a society, which had been in a “great crisis” by the

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<sup>29</sup> Köhnke, op. cit. 138. The influential Prussian politician Friedrich Stahl, a Jewish convert to Protestantism, of whom Dühring wrote disparagingly in his autobiography, spoke of the danger philosophy poses for religion. Although he did not advocate getting rid of philosophy all together, he supported banning the “rational pantheistic world view”. Ibid., 140-142. Vaihinger writes: „Als nach dem ‚großen Krach‘ der Hegel’schen Philosophie sich alles in wirrer Auflösung getrennt hatte, zerfiel die deutsche Philosophie, noch mehr als zuvor, in eine Menge von Schulen und Richtungen, und verlor dadurch mit Recht die Bedeutung und die Geltung, die ihr bis dahin zugekommen war. Hans Vaihinger, Hartmann, *Dühring und Lange. Zur Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie im XIX. Jahrhundert* (Iserlohn: Verlag von J. Baedeker, 1876), 1.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *The Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question* (London: Bosworth, 1853), 9.

first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>31</sup> Karl Marx spoke of “a crisis in political economy arriving once and for all” in 1830 in the afterword to the second edition of *Das Kapital*.<sup>32</sup>

In a time of crisis, one urge of intellectuals is to turn to history and an historical movement in political economy had been crystallizing for some time. Whereas the physiocrats and the classical school of economics (which largely developed from it) saw the economy as a natural order determined by the laws of nature, the German Historical School emphasized less the “being” of political economy, than its “becoming”; not only nature, but also history became important for the science. The roots of the historical consideration of society, as opposed to the rational and mathematic- natural scientific thought of Descartes and Quesnsay, went back to Giambattista Vico (*New Science*, 1725), who postulated the world of history, to be conquered by science, alongside the world of nature. In France, Bodin, Montesquieu and Turgot strengthened the historical method with their emphasis on the individual and concrete in political, social and economic affairs.<sup>33</sup> In Germany, as Meinecke has shown, the preoccupation with the past known as history had developed into a powerful movement through Möser, Herder, and Goethe.<sup>34</sup> Adam Müller’s romanticism with its historical consciousness and emphasis on the totality of economic life provided a link to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and influenced Friedrich List, who saw the value of national entities for trade and industry. List’s ideas of “nurturing protective tariffs”, to be dealt with below, reflect the historical consciousness embodied in this movement and represented a theory which directly opposed the individualism of classical liberalism.<sup>35</sup>

In January 1834, just one year after Dühring’s birth, the precursor of a German national unification, the German Customs Union (*Zollverein*), came into existence. Efforts towards creating economic centralization went hand in hand with cultural standardization, and history became a vehicle for unifying the country. The central intellectual figure and political pioneer of the union was Friedrich List, who can be considered a most important precursor of the German Historical School of economics. At the same time, men such as Niebuhr and Ranke were instituting scientific methods of historical research that emphasized the importance of

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<sup>31</sup> Auguste Comte, *Entwurf der wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten, welche für eine Reorganisation der Gesellschaft erforderlich sind*, ed. Wilhelm Ostwald (Leipzig: Unesma, 1914 [1822]), 1.

<sup>32</sup> Karl Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie, Erster Band, Buch I: Der Produktionsprozess des Kapitals* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1955), 13.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Das 18. Jahrhundert und die geschichtliche Welt* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1927).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (München: Leibnitz Verlag, 1946).

<sup>35</sup> On the turn to history in political economic theory cf. Alfred Kruse, *Geschichte der volkswirtschaftlichen Theorien* (Berlin: Dunker und Humblot, 1959), 155-179.

the nation.<sup>36</sup> The views that List developed on political economy (influenced by his stay in America during the late 1820s) stood in direct contrast to the classical school of economics, further complicating the crisis of economic thought as the time of Dühring's birth.

Dühring's career thus began in a transitional period for the fields which he would specialize in, philosophy and political economics. He took time to gain his bearings and to carefully solidify his own positions before establishing his own system of thought. Once his own views had been established, he stood behind them, advocating his ideas with an intensity that never seemed to fade. A noticeable general characteristic in the development of his career stands in stark contrast to the usual tendencies in a person's life, where one gets older, wiser, and inevitably more conservative; the basic tone of Dühring's thought and actions intensifies and becomes far more radical as he gets older. In the first half of his life, he is a proponent of liberal emancipatory views, advocating more or less conservative social reform, based on current conditions. Later in the 70s, he proposes a fundamental restructuring of society and the creation of a "free society". In the second half of his career, which began following his dismissal from the University of Berlin, his views radicalizes and he begins directing his efforts towards criticizing Judaism, Christianity, as well as religion in general. A spectacular academic career that brought Dühring wide acclaim, fame, and notoriety began under modest circumstances in Berlin.

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. Wolfgang Hardtwig, *Geschichtskultur und Wissenschaft* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1990), 43. Niebuhr, writing during the French occupation of Prussia, chose to write about the great ancient nation of Rome in order to strengthen his own mind and that of his listeners. G. P. Gooch, *History and the Historians of the Nineteenth Century* (London/New York/Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co.), 17 et seq. Ranke, who was the first historian to develop objective methods of historical research, spoke of "creative forces, moral energies at work" which gave history meaning. Ibid., 80. Cf. also Hardtwig, *Geschichtskultur*, 16.

## CHAPTER ONE

### FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EARLY EDUCATION

#### *1. Ancestry, Childhood, and Schooling*

Dühring's paternal ancestors originally came from the region of Thuringia. In his autobiography, he is knowingly or unknowingly guilty of romanticizing the origin of his family by claiming that his great-grandfather crossed the Baltic Sea from Sweden to Brandenburg, where he went on to run and own several watermills and found a large family.<sup>37</sup> In an article published after his father's death, Dühring's son Ulrich sets the record straight asserting that the Dühring family never crossed the Baltic Sea, but actually originated from the heart of Germany in Thuringia (the German name "Thüringen" bears a similarity to "Dühring"). Although Dühring apparently liked the idea of being the descendent of the Germanic tribes of the north, his ancestors lived on the continent, dwelling in Thuringia before settling in Bremen, which was then part of Sweden, just before the thirty years war.<sup>38</sup>

Dühring's great-grandfather moved to Prussia under the reign of Fredrick the Great and settled on an estate near Landsberg an der Warthe that came to be called Dühringhof. Being of noble descent, the elder Dühring had the choice of entering into military or court service or giving up his noble title. He chose the latter and became a miller. Through his profession he had an affinity for architecture and mathematics, which he passed on to his children, one of whom was Eugen's grandfather Johann Christian Dühring, born on 3 December 1761 in Uckermarkt. At the request of his father, Johann Christian gave up his study of medicine to learn the building trade. He married and became a castle architect in Berlin, later going on to be a military and architectural advisor in Marienwerder. Eugen's father Wilhelm Ferdinand was born on 25 July 1789. Johann Christian served as a soldier in the Napoleonic Wars and died of an illness contracted while on duty in 1807. Johann Christian Dühring's premature death brought hardship upon his family. Eugen's father had to give up his architectural studies to earn money to support his siblings. Wilhelm Dühring was a resourceful man and he used the talent for mathematics and draftsmanship, which he had inherited from his father, to make ends meet. He earned money working as a math tutor and utilizing his technical drawing skills. Through strenuous effort, Wilhelm was able to improve his social status to become the

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<sup>37</sup> The main source for Dühring's life is his autobiography *Sache, Leben und Feinde. Als Hauptwerk und Schlüssel zu seinen sämtlichen Schriften* (My Cause, My Life, My Enemies. As Main Work and Key to his Complete Writings.) first published in 1882 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1903). SLF, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Ulrich Dühring, „Geneologisches,“ PE 454 (July 1929): 127.

private secretary of influential General Field Marshal Friedrich Adolf Graf von Kalckreuth, a man of unconventional political views and a positive view of the French nation. Although he was exempt from military service being a Berliner and a Prussian civil servant, Wilhelm volunteered to take part in the military campaigns against Napoleon in 1813 and 1814, where he became stricken with severe illnesses that would follow him the rest of his life. After the war, he became a privy secretary at the Prussian Supreme Building Deputation, a position he would carry out until his early retirement when Eugen was seven years old.

Dürring's early childhood was heavily influenced by his father, who, following his retirement, was able to devote a great deal of time to the education of his son. As Eugen would later do with his own sons, Wilhelm set out to educate his son by himself. The most important lesson that he received from his father was *the way* in which to learn. Wilhelm, who liked to get out of the big city and into the fresh air of the country, attempted to convey to his son a sense of a healthy life and an understanding of nature. Wilhelm was an unusually free-spirited man for his day and was skeptical of public schools and educational institutions. Like James Mill, the father of the English philosopher John Stewart Mill, Wilhelm Dürring considered the interference of schools in the early lives of children to be harmful. Dürring later emphasized that his father was religious and that he possessed a clear concept of God, which, according to Dürring, "hindered neither his intellect nor his disposition".<sup>39</sup> He writes that his father acted in the spirit of Giordano Bruno and Jean Jacques Rousseau, two men who would be role models for Eugen Dürring for all of his life. Although Wilhelm Dürring had fought against the French in the War of the Sixth Coalition, he was a great admirer of the values of the French Revolution, as his son would also be. Much like James Mill, Wilhelm Dürring was critical of the institution of the church even though he believed in God and had respect for the teachings of Jesus Christ. According to Eugen, his father had sympathy with the Jews, whom he viewed as a religiously persecuted minority. Wilhelm passed this positive view of Jews on to his son.<sup>40</sup> In contrast to Nietzsche, who as a child dreamed of becoming a priest, Dürring seems to have had a disliking of the church from his childhood onwards.

In his early years Dürring was educated by both of his parents. His mother, who he mentions only briefly in his autobiography – although she lived until 1884 – instructed him in the necessities of reading and writing, while his father taught him mathematics by introducing

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<sup>39</sup> SLF, 10.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 14.

him to the difficult formulas of algebra, analysis, and geometry.<sup>41</sup> According to Dühring, both of his parents tried to convey a feeling of righteousness and self-reliance to him. His father's goal was to motivate his son to learn how to study on his own. He was, however, careful to warn against too much studying. Dühring relates that at one point his father took away his books for fear that his son was reading too much. Like Schopenhauer and Lichtenberg, as well as many thinkers of the Enlightenment before them, Dühring would later warn of the evils of "too much reading". In his autobiography, Dühring proudly claims that there were no novels or history books in his house as a child.<sup>42</sup> Wilhelm Dühring placed more value on essential demonstrative techniques of learning. He would give his son practical tasks, for example, to pretend he was a surveyor and needed to measure the size of certain fields. He once asked Eugen to measure the space of a mill which had been made inaccessible by a lake. Wilhelm taught his son to concentrate on non-human nature. Dühring characterizes his father's philosophy as being "realistic" and geared towards "truth and reality".<sup>43</sup>

Eugen's exceptional intelligence and particularly his gift for mathematics became noticed when he was just a boy.<sup>44</sup> His father decided to send him to the Köllnische Realgymnasium, a municipal (not a state-run) school known for its excellent natural science program.<sup>45</sup> One year later, on 8 June 1845, Wilhelm died of lung tuberculosis, leaving the family with very little money. With his mother not able to look after him sufficiently, Eugen received support from his father's sister Charlotte Dühring, an unmarried governess who had moved from the country to Berlin to look after the wealthy widow of a privy councilor.<sup>46</sup> A government

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<sup>41</sup> Voelske rightfully draws attention to the odd fact that Dühring, as someone who particularly later in his career would lend so much importance to a person's ancestry, writing in his fifties (and as his mother was still alive), would not even mention his maternal ancestors in his autobiography. Cf. Voelske, *Die Entwicklung des "rassischen Antisemitismus" zum Mittelpunkt der Weltanschauung Eugen Dührings, Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde der Philosophischen Fakultät der Hansischen Universität* (Hamburg: Hans Christian Druckerei und Verlag, 1936), 10. In an article announcing his father's death to the *Personalist und Emancipator* readers, Ulrich Dühring relates that his father's mother was of a weak constitution, although she had a lot of energy. He writes that she suffered from senility at an early age and was unable to recognize her son and grandson who visited her at Elisabeth hospital in Berlin where she lived for many years before dying in 1884. Ulrich Dühring, "Eugen Dühring gestorben," PE 414 (November 1921): 3305.

<sup>42</sup> SLF, 14-15.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-20. This method of education, which Dühring would use with his two sons, was advocated by Schopenhauer, who believed that children should become acquainted with "the ways of the world without getting wrong ideas in their head". *Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer*, trans. T. Barry Saunders (New York: A.L. Burt Company, n.d.), 429.

<sup>44</sup> A mathematician from the Berlin astronomical observatory, Dr. J.W.H. Lehmann, visited him in his home when Dühring was twelve and spoke in different circles of the young Dühring's exceptional knowledge of math. SLF., 53-54.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>46</sup> This widow, Frau Hartmann, took an interest in Dühring at an early age. She was convinced that big things were to come of him and, having read in a biography of a woman who had assisted Martin Luther as a boy, decided to leave Dühring an inheritance in her will. Because her intent was solely to support someone who would achieve great things later in life, which if he had died at an early age would not have been possible, he could not obtain the money (2000 Thalers) until he was 30 years old, although he could receive the interest

custodian decided that Eugen would have to be placed in the Kornmesseschen Orphanage while he remained in school at Köllnische Realgymnasium.

Three years later, while he was still a student at Köllnische School, Dühring experienced the 1848 Revolution up close, in an experience that would affect his worldview substantially. Up to that point, internal German politics had hardly been a concern of his, but Eugen became deeply moved by the events of March 1848, taking notice of the liberal ideas of the revolution. One of his teachers sympathized with the revolution and turned his math lesson into a political discussion. According to Dühring's autobiography, some days later an actual battle took place on the school premises, destroying many of the facilities including the school director's apartment.<sup>47</sup> The young students were pleased to be granted vacation while the schoolhouse was repaired. The failure of the revolution seemed to have disappointed Dühring and brought about a disliking of the authoritarian, conservative European tradition, which he associated especially with England and which he would soon be confronted with at the Berlin University. From this time on Eugen developed an aversion to the "periwig-pated" medieval England and found sympathy for the liberal French.<sup>48</sup>

After graduating from Köllnische Realgymnasium, Dühring became a boarding student at Joachimtaler Gymnasium, one of Prussia's best schools, located in Berlin-Mitte on the Spree directly across from what is today the Berlin Cathedral on the Museum Island. Life in the dormitory was strictly regimented and guarded. Any infraction resulted in house detention.<sup>49</sup> He received excellent grades, but did not like the method of learning, which he considered more narrow-minded than the Köllnische Realgymnasium. Looking back on his school years in his autobiography he was highly critical of his teachers' methods and particularly disliked the religious character of the institution, especially resenting the compulsory church attendance.<sup>50</sup> Although Dühring would later be an opponent of classical language teaching and criticized his school for its overemphasis on grammar and scholasticism, he was among

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payments on the money. *Ibid.*, 21, 53. It is worth noting that Dühring's career was benefited through the private efforts of a member of the upper-middle class.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-29.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-36. In defense of Dühring it should be said that there were others who were equally as critical of the state of the German high schools. Henry Adams (1838-1917) of Boston, who came to Germany to study Civil Law in 1858 and attended Friedrich-Wilhelm Gymnasium to learn German, called the German high school "something very near an indictable nuisance". *The Education of Henry Adams* (New York: The Modern Library, 1946), 79.

the best Latin and Greek students at his school.<sup>51</sup> After finishing secondary school as class valedictorian, he began studying law at Berlin's Friedrich-Wilhelm University in 1853.

## 2. *University Years: Disappointment with "Pseudo-Historicism"*

In the summer semester of 1853 Dühring began studying law at the University of Berlin, which was only forty years old at the time. Although he would ultimately move into the fields of philosophy and political economy, he decided to study law. His philosophy, as we will see below, would exert a leaning towards legal discourse and background in law, influencing not only his style, but also the content of his writings. It was common for German students to study at different universities, enabling them to become acquainted with other towns and regions of the country, but due to financial considerations Dühring did not have this luxury. He lived with his Aunt Charlotte and was forced to remain in Berlin for the duration of his studies, which was not a pleasant prospect at the time.<sup>52</sup> The university disappointed him considerably. Looking back on this time in his autobiography written in 1882, he emphasizes that the conditions in the law department were weak, and that the whole university did not live up to his expectations. He especially did not like the historic-philological intellectual atmosphere at the university, whose curriculum had become less orientated towards philosophy since the days of Hegel. According to Dühring, a philosophical foundation of science was lacking completely; the philosophical roots of law had been the very thing that he had hoped to find, and he became greatly disappointed that only history was being taught. Since the days of Friedrich Carl von Savigny (1779-1861), there had been mostly historically and philologically-orientated teachers of law at the Berlin University. The philosophy faculty was also dominated in a similar way by August Boeckh (1785-1867) and later Adolf Trendelenburg (1802-1872), Dühring's doctoral mentor. The historical school of law was in full swing and, according to Dühring, there was not a single professor who did not belong to this school. True Natural Law was not taken into account, and legal principles were only conveyed historically.<sup>53</sup> The theological and medical faculties did not deserve mentioning, in his opinion. Theology was not scientific and medicine only imparted physiological

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<sup>51</sup> SLF, 45.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 55. Henry Adams spoke very disparagingly of Berlin and believed that the entire country was ripe for reform. He wrote, "In 1858 Berlin was a poor, keen-witted, provincial town, simple, dirty, uncivilized, and in most respects disgusting. Life was primitive beyond what an American boy could have imagined. Overridden by military methods and bureaucratic pettiness, Prussia was only beginning to free her hands from internal bonds". *The Education of Henry Adams*, 77. Heinrich von Treitschke also described the living conditions in Berlin at that time as deplorable. See "Der Sozialismus und seine Gönner," in H. v. Treitschke, *Deutsche Kämpfe 1865-1874. Schriften zur Tagespolitik* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1874), 547.

<sup>53</sup> Fifty years after his study of law, Dühring came to see the German historical school in a different light, giving particular credit to the Göttingen legal scholar Hugo. SR, 127-128. Dühring remained highly critical of Hegel and the lawyer Julius Stahl, who to his mind was not a worthy heir of Savigny. Cf. Ibid., 133-136.

knowledge. A philological-historical approach was omnipresent at the expense of the natural sciences. Dühring became increasingly alienated from the university.

He did not see everything at the university in a negative light, however. A Swiss teacher of Romance languages, Friedrich Ludwig Keller vom Steinbeck (1799-1860), made a positive impression on him. Showing that Dühring was not opposed to emphasis on history in general, he praises Keller as "a true researcher of primary sources" because he "advocated the emancipation from text books by turning to the Latin documents in which the classical Roman lawyers wrote down their knowledge."<sup>54</sup> He liked Keller's disdain for theology and his critique of university philosophy and logic as well as his advocacy of mathematics. The Swiss professor told of his student days in Göttingen where there was a much less formal atmosphere – dogs were admitted, pipe smoking was allowed – and where the advanced students never wrote down what the professor was saying; there were first semester students who were required to take notes which could be copied if necessary by the other students later. Dühring, who had been instructed by his father to learn in a lively manner, avoiding books wherever possible, frowned upon the practice of mindlessly recording whatever the professors presented in their lectures. Aside from Keller, most of the professors, according to Dühring, had a stuffy, formal manner, and he found their method of lecturing appalling; they would simply read texts that the students would write down uncritically in their notebooks.<sup>55</sup>

His critique of the university may seem surprising in light of the fact that the German university enjoyed a great reputation throughout the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Approximately 9,000 Americans came across the ocean in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to study in Germany, so many that Johns Hopkins University, one of America's best colleges, became known as "Göttingen in Baltimore".<sup>56</sup> The British writer Mathew Arnold praised German education and Mme de Staël quotes a French saying that "the German university begins where many nations of Europe finish".<sup>57</sup> In contrast to the Oxford scholars, who lived an isolated existence in the ivory tower of academe, the German professors were known for their active participation as facilitators between the realm of education and the state. Since the Reformation, the power of the professors in Germany had grown and would continue to grow until the time of the Weimar Republic. Unlike the oldest universities in Europe, the German universities had been endowed

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<sup>54</sup> SLF, 58-59.

<sup>55</sup> Dühring was of the opinion, especially as technology advanced through the use of phonograph and telephones, that this form of lecturing would become outdated. He envisioned a university reform that would make such professors obsolete. SLF, 63.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted from David Phillips, "The German Universities – Citadels of Freedom or Bastions of Reaction?" *Comparative Education* 17 (Oct. 1981): 344.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

by the nobility, and most of them were municipal foundations. The universities were thus subjugated to local authority and had a territorial character. With the Reformation, sacral consecrations were replaced by scholarly theological training. There was strong competition between the different territories and princes would often forbid their subjects to study at foreign universities. On the other hand, foreign academics were sought for important civil service positions that allowed the influence of science on state and political life, as had never been seen in the older European universities. The princes came to rely on scholarly councils to administrate their land, and as the power of the councils increased, a new social group was created.<sup>58</sup>

Through the generations they had gained substantial power and had attained a sort of demigod status in the eyes of most students. Max Müller wrote, for example: “People have no idea in England what kind of worship is paid by German students to their professors. To find fault with them or to doubt their *ipse dixit* (he himself said) never entered our minds. What they said of other classical scholars from whom they differed [...] was gospel and remained engraved on our memory for a long time”.<sup>59</sup> The American historian Henry Adams, who came to Berlin to study Civil Law in 1858, was critical of the methods of teaching at the University of Berlin. The scion of the famous Adams family wrote in his autobiography: “The professor mumbled his comments; the students made or seemed to make notes; they could have learned from books or discussion in a day more than they could learn from him in a month, but they must pay his fees, follow his course, and be his scholar if they wanted a degree. [...] Neither the method nor the matter nor the manner could profit an American education”.<sup>60</sup>

Dühring detested the, as he saw it, false reverence given to the professors. As mentioned, his father had instilled in him a strong sense of justice and he had hoped to become acquainted with the true spirit of the law, i.e. its moral origins; all he found was dry philology and historicism. He was willing to accept Roman law as a model for his studies, but in reading the ancient theoreticians he always tried to find traces of a general united sense of justice that existed above all history. In the field of legal philosophy, he saw his professors as being equally closed-minded and dogmatic. Aristotle and Hegel were put on a pedestal and viewed

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<sup>58</sup> Helmut Schelsky, *Einsamkeit und Freiheit. Idee und Gestalt der deutschen Universität und ihrer Reformen* (München: Rohwohlt, 1963), 18.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted from Phillips, op. cit., 343-344.

<sup>60</sup> *The Education of Henry Adams*, 75-76. Nietzsche also condemned the state of learning at the German universities: “Everything that matters has been lost sight of by the whole of the higher educational system of Germany: the end quite as much as the means to that end. People forget that the education, the process of cultivation itself is the end – and not the empire – they forget that the educator is required – for this end- and not the public school teacher and university scholar”. *Twilight of the Idols* (Herdfordshire: Wordsworth, 2007), 44.

uncritically, according to Dühring. He came to believe that he had wasted a lot of time reading unnecessary material, and if he had to do it all over again, he wrote that he would have concentrated exclusively on Hobbes and Rousseau.<sup>61</sup> Generally, Dühring viewed the methods and the content of the teaching at the university as having a thwarting effect on the students. He considered himself lucky that his talent for mathematics, which he had inherited from his ancestors, had allowed him to be protected from the distracting sophistry of the university. Dühring was convinced that the majority of the students were not able to see through the airs and graces of the professors due to the large number of people who attended their lectures.

Dühring relates that it took him years to break the chains of the “intellectual incarceration” to which his university studies sentenced him. Henry Adams had seen a silver lining to the dark cloud of the University of Berlin in that it ultimately made its students become more orientated towards leisure time: “The curious and perplexing result of the total failure of German education was that the students’ only clear gain – his single step to a higher life – came from time wasted; studies neglected; vices indulged; education reversed; - it came from the despised beer garden and music-hall; and it was accidental, unintended, unforeseen.”<sup>62</sup> Never an idler in any respect, Dühring did not partake in leisure activities, but turned towards extracurricular studies in the area of economics, which were not offered at the university. He read the works of Adam Smith, which originally turned him off for lacking sufficient quantitative consideration, as well as for being, as he put it, somewhat blasé. He also began reading French socialist writers whose emphasis on justice he appreciated, but who, according to his autobiography, he remained intellectually detached from.<sup>63</sup> He went on to attain a legal degree, completing a dissertation and habilitation (both written in Latin) by 1861. Both manuscripts can be found in the Dühring Papers of the *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz*. The dissertation is entitled *De juris quaesiti notione dissertation critica*, and the habilitation *De methodo ratio vinandi in jurisprudentia observationes quaedam*.

### 3. *Eye Illness, Decision to Become an Academic and Scientific Writer*

The role that circumstance would play in Dühring's biography has already been mentioned. The precarious financial situation of his family following the death of his father was not without influence on his worldview, giving him a realistic sense of the dangers that could affect individuals and groups of people, seemingly ruining them without any fault of their own. The roots of his sense of social justice were to be found in his personal experience. With

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<sup>61</sup> SLF, 68.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 71-73.

the concerns of his sustenance now relieved, Dühring faced what would become the greatest crisis of his life: an eye illness that would lead to complete blindness at the age of twenty-eight.<sup>64</sup>

After receiving his degree and beginning work as a lawyer, Dühring began to have serious problems with his eyes. The reading of files which his work required became increasingly difficult, and finally he decided to give up his legal career to become a scholarly writer. In his autobiography, he states that he did not envision an academic career, but he felt that he would be able to sell himself better a writer if he took a doctoral degree.<sup>65</sup> His negative view of the university as an institution remained, but he believed that pursuing postdoctoral qualification would help him establish a reputation as a writer and give him the necessary contacts for this goal. Dühring proceeded to complete a doctoral thesis in the area of epistemology under Adolf Trendelenburg. Despite a few negative remarks from the mathematician Kummer, he completed his degree magna cum laude.<sup>66</sup> Soon thereafter he became completely blind and began his career as a writer "without eyes and the assistance of others".<sup>67</sup>

As dramatic a personal misfortune as his blindness was, it should be noted that he was very fortunate that it came at a relatively young age, where he was still able to adapt himself professionally and privately to his handicap. With regard to his private life, some assistance was soon to come, as he met Emilie Gladow, five years his junior, working as a nurse in the house of his Aunt Charlotte.<sup>68</sup> The young couple lived in a small apartment on Oranienstraße and soon had two sons, Ulrich and Ernst, born in 1863 and 1864 respectively. Dühring decided that he would make the most of his blindness and turn a handicap into strength. To do this he would have to go his own way, as it were, and build upon the (mostly negative) experience from his studies and the sense of justice that he had developed since his childhood. As stated in his autobiography, his blindness actually increased his enthusiasm for justice, truth, and trying to create a new unique approach to scholarship. He believed that fate had instructed him to give up the advantages of academic life in his own way. He would now

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<sup>64</sup> Although Dühring considered his blindness to be one of the more minor setbacks in his life, he complained that his eye doctor, the famous Prussian ophthalmologist Albrecht von Graefe, had not treated his eyes properly. SLF, 78-81.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>66</sup> On Dühring's relations to his math teachers Kummer and Weierstraß from a Marxist government perspective see K.-R. Biermann, *Die Mathematik und ihre Dozenten an der Berliner Universität* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973), 89-91.

<sup>67</sup> SLF, 92-93.

<sup>68</sup> Her family came from Swedish Pommerania and were the descendents of nobility. On Emilie Dühring see a book published to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her birth, containing a compilation of the articles written about her under the title "One of Us" (*Eine von uns*) in *Personalist und Emancipator* following her death. *Zum Andenken an Frau Emilie Dühring*, ed. Frau L. Michaelis (Rostock: Carl Hinstorff, 1939).

strive for what he had missed in his studies. Instead of dry historicism with heaps of facts and rhetorical language, he would approach science in a different, fresher way. He writes, "The sudden exceptional nature of my situation forced me to break through intellectual barriers."

Dühring was forced to develop a way of working and researching suitable to his handicap; what was lost in one direction could be made up in another. He would develop a method of scholarship that would emancipate him from the "rotten scholarly manner" that he detested so much as a student. His wife and later his sons read aloud to him. Not being able to use his eyes, he was forced to have his works clearly organized in his head in order to dictate them to his wife, who wrote them down by hand. He was able to take on an optimistic outlook towards his handicap and seems to have developed a sense pride at being able to overcome the hardship he faced. Through his personal crisis, he generated a defiant spirit which gave birth to the cause that he sites in the title of his autobiography, a fight against injustice in science and society.

#### *4. Habilitation in Philosophy, Early Teaching and Publishing Success*

Despite being inspired by the path that he had chosen or been forced to choose, it was initially very difficult for Dühring to find publishers for his work. Being an unknown writer without connections to speak of, his articles and manuscripts were rejected one after the other. Notwithstanding the misgivings he had concerning university life, he decided that it would be in his interest to pursue a habilitation. This degree was required at the time to attain the *venia legendi*, or permission to lecture, and he hoped it would open doors for him as a writer. He had maintained contact with Adolf Trendelenburg, his doctoral advisor, and was soon able to complete a habilitation for the faculty of philosophy. In the winter semester of 1863, Dühring began giving private and public lectures. In 1864 he succeeded at having his first writings published in newspapers and journals for which he was also remunerated. In 1866, he decided to do another habilitation, this time in the field of political economy, an area that he been eyeing for potential publishing activity for a long time. Soon he was giving lectures in this field as well.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> To specialize in philosophy and political economy was uncommon in Germany at the time. There is indication that Dühring did not think very highly of the philosophy reading public in Germany. The fact that John Stuart Mill, who he considered to be an average thinker, became so popular in his country was frustrating for Dühring. It is "kein Kompliment für den deutschen Markt, daß sich ein Stuart Mill auf ihm behaupten". In „Die Philosophie im Jahre 1865,“ *Ergänzungsblätter zu Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 1 (1866): 578. Cf. Dühring's critique of Mill in favor of William Whewell, "John Stuart Mill," *Unsere Zeit* 2 (1866): 919-939.

Dürring's lectures, whose popularity has been compared with that of Sartre and Marcuse in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were known for being demonstrative and lively, and he soon gained a popularity which the other lecturers, many of them tenured professors, did not have.<sup>70</sup> His free style of delivery contrasted with the more formal style of his colleagues, who usually read manuscripts or excerpts from books that they had written. His lecturers belonged to the best attended at the University of Berlin and he placed great value on receiving an echo from the young students.<sup>71</sup> In a letter to Gersdorf from 1868, the young Friedrich Nietzsche referred to Dürring's "fine classes on Schopenhauer, Byron, and pessimism".<sup>72</sup> The strong attendance of his lectures increased his income, because at the time students had to pay attendance fees to attend lectures. He could not, however, live from his university income alone and was fortunate to find more and more commissions as a scholarly writer. Particularly important for his career as a publicist was his acquaintance with the editor of the *Vossische Zeitung*, Ernst Otto Lindner (1820-1867), who accepted his first publications. Lindner had substantial influence on Dürring. Listening attentively to the stories of Lindner's negative encounters with the "university cliques", he must have felt a confirmation of his own negative experience at the university. Lindner took a liking to Dürring, but expressed concern that the young man would be ruined by the atmosphere of the university.<sup>73</sup>

Lindner was a disciple of Arthur Schopenhauer. He knew Schopenhauer personally, having come into contact with author of *The World as Will and Representation* in the 1850s. Lindner defended and supported Schopenhauer at a time when the philosopher had found very little resonance among academics in Germany. Despite all of the sympathy he had for the great philosopher, Lindner vehemently rejected Schopenhauer's metaphysics, as Dürring would also do later. Perhaps some of the pessimistic indignation which would later characterize Dürring's writings can be traced to Lindner's influence on him. Lindner was actively interested in music and wrote articles and reviewed literature on music history, as well as writing a history of music himself. He was an avid supporter of the *Bachgesellschaft* and

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. Stewart, Theodor Herzl, *A Biography of the Father of Modern Israel* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1974), 81.

<sup>71</sup> In his autobiography the well-known German dramatist and novelist Hermann Sudermann (1857-1928) reminisced on the admiration he once had for Dürring as a twenty-year old student attending his lectures. He writes: "Was er (Dürring) gelehrt hat war Offenbarung, was er verwarf, sank in den tiefsten Abgrund der Hölle." Sudermann, *Das Bilderbuch meiner Jugend* (München:Langen Müller, 1981), 229.

<sup>72</sup> Nietzsche to Carl von Gersdorff, 16. February 1868, in eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, *Nietzsche Briefwechsel, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Erste Abteilung, Zweiter Band* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 258.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. SLF, 101. Also Gustav Michaelis, "E.O. Lindner und sein Verhältnis zu Schopenhauer und Dürring," *Sendbogen für Dürringsche Geisteshaltung und Lebensgestaltung* 70, ed. Hans Reinhardt (March 1938): 7-9.

wrote pamphlets to propagate the music of Bach, Mozart, and Gluck much in the way that Dühring created propaganda for his heroes of science such as Carey, List, and Mayer.

Once Dühring had published his first articles, more and more commissions began to come his way. Among the journals that he worked for were *Unsere Zeit* and *Grenzboten*, both published in Leipzig, and *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift* from Stuttgart. He also began working for the *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* of *Meyers Conversationslexikon*, where in the coming years he would publish numerous book reviews and articles on philosophical and political economic subjects. His work there gave him the opportunity to consider a wide range of thought trajectories. He wrote encyclopedic entries and articles on numerous philosophical and economic topics, giving him a solid, all-round historical context for his own work. Friedrich Lange called this “*Dühring’s Kostprobe*”, i.e. a sampling for his own philosophy. In the volumes of this well-known German encyclopedia he wrote detailed excerpts on Comte, Schopenhauer, Humboldt, Lotze, Feuerbach, Fechner, Whewell, Marx and many others. Through these writings, Dühring became well-versed in the history of philosophy and was provided with a solid background for his own work.<sup>74</sup>

In his early writings, one can see that Dühring was already assuming the role of the defiant outsider. He largely ignored the work of German scholars, choosing instead to write about thinkers from abroad, most of whom were either private scholars or had in their careers come into conflict with universities. In 1864, Dühring had discovered the writings of Henry C. Carey, and he soon became a strong supporter of the writer and publisher from Philadelphia, who had been ignored by university scholars and was virtually unknown to the German public. Dühring published several articles on Carey and Friedrich List, who had lost recognition for his original work in the field of political economic theory. He wrote in his autobiography that the outsider List, who had suffered through many trials and tribulations in his efforts to establish a German customs union, was a role model for him. Other major writings dealt with Auguste Comte, Henry Thomas Buckle, and Arthur Schopenhauer. Dühring became taken by what he called the “modern spirit” of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which, in his eyes, was the very opposite of the dry historicism prevailing in the sciences of the state. He began to focus on the challenge of taking the fruits of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and applying them to the newly formed material and social questions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>74</sup> This historical background has not necessarily been an advantage for posterity for, like the 19<sup>th</sup> century which is known for the borrowing and the compiling of various forms and styles from the past, Dühring has often been - unfairly in our opinion - labeled an eclectic thinker. In a book which otherwise provides insight into Dühring’s critique of history, Jürgen Große has renewed the eclectic label. Cf. *Kritik der Geschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 179.

Much like his paragon Friedrich List, Dühring possessed an enormous capacity for work and produced a voluminous amount of literature. He published five books within two years in 1865-1866: *Natural Dialectic*, *Carey's Revolution in the Teachings of Political Economy and Social Science*, *The Worth of Life, Capital and Labor* and finally *Critical Foundation of Political Economy*. Whether Dühring's claim that the university professors were jealous of his intellectual productivity is valid or not cannot be determined, but this flood of publications was probably not beneficial for an academic career in Germany at the time, which was known to develop slowly over a long period. In 1866, Dühring sought a promotion to become an associate professorship based on his academic achievements and teaching success. His dissertational mentor Prof. Trendelenburg advised him to apply for the subject of political economy as there were currently too many philosophy professors. Dühring took this advice, but his application remained unanswered. In the meantime, a philosophy chair opened with the sudden death of a professor. He applied immediately, but Prof. Trendelenburg, despite the friendly advice he had given six months earlier, explained to the university officials that the post must be filled by a "real philosopher", not with a "cameralist" like Dühring.<sup>75</sup> Dühring had published two philosophical works the year before, *Natural Dialectic* and *The Worth of Life*, and had held successful lectures on philosophy, but was apparently disparaged because he had extended his studies to the field of political economy.<sup>76</sup>

The faculty also hurt his pride. Without any initiative from Dühring, a petition to the minister of cultural affairs was issued to have Dühring granted a yearly salary to be paid for, not by the university, but by the ministry. He saw this offer as condescending pity and rejected it. Despite this disappointment, his voluminous publishing had won him a good reputation and his writings on political economy had begun to receive the interest of men in high places. He was soon to receive a commission from the Prussian government which would have serious consequences for his career.

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<sup>75</sup> „Cameralists“ were the political economists of the *Staatswissenschaften*. In defense of Trendelenburg, it really could be argued that Dühring was heading more in the direction of political economy. At the time in 1866, Dühring had just published his book *Critical Foundation of National Economy* and, with his scholarly opposition to the proponents of free trade, had gained notoriety within the Bismarck government. As described in the General Introduction, there was a tendency towards specialization which was working against state scientists. Even Gustav Schmoller was disparaged (from the other side of the coin) for not being a "real economist". Cf. Breysig, *Das neue Geschichtsbild*, 70.

<sup>76</sup> The veracity of this claim is challenged by Dühring's colleague Jürgen Bona Meyer. Cf. idem, "Dühring's Wirklichkeitsphilosophie," *Nord und Süd. Eine deutsche Monatsschrift* 15 (1880): 43. Meyer was also of the opinion that Dühring underestimated the administrative functions of a tenured professor in applying for the chair, and that a blind man would not be able to uphold the oath to "alle Pflichten gleich den Collegen zu übernehmen." Ibid., 42.

## CHAPTER TWO

## CAREER AS AN ACADEMIC AND SCIENTIFIC AUTHOR (1868-1877)

*1. Brush with the Prussian Ministry: The Social Exposé Scandal of 1868*

In our discussion of typologies of scholars in the General Introduction, we invoked the “controversial scholar”, who draws attention from the public. Dühring was soon to take on this role through a public scandal which he did not create himself, but which would entail unforeseen consequences for his career as an academic and as a writer. He had already become a well-known figure in university circles, as Nietzsche had indicated in 1868, but he was about to become well known to the public at large.

In contrast to the ruling circles of England and France, the ethos of the middle class was not especially pronounced in the German government.<sup>77</sup> Whereas in both England and France the bourgeoisie had staged successful revolutions in (1688 and 1789 respectively), the German national state of Dühring’s day was not the product of a revolution. After 1848 parts of the German middle class gravitated towards the protection of conservative forces; some allied themselves with economic liberalism, others became apolitical and turned to “culture”. In short, there was no unified bourgeois tradition in Germany. In line with this, Dühring’s own bearing towards the middle class in his country was ambivalent. He venerates the French Revolution and its values, but exactly how “liberty, equality, and brotherhood” were to be achieved remained open. Despite his enthusiasm for the rise of the bourgeoisie as a class in Europe since 1789, and despite his own middle-class origin, Dühring became extremely wary of *laissez-faire* economic liberalism, which was rapidly gaining a stronghold in Germany at the time. Put off by British “Manchesterism”, as British economic liberalism came to be called in Germany, he sought favor with the working class, but also maintained a rapport with members of the upper class, as would soon be evidenced.

In 1865 Dühring came into contact with Lothar Bucher, one of Chancellor Bismarck’s closest advisors and a man whose writings on Comte and Hegel Dühring had read with interest in the Berlin *Nationalzeitung*.<sup>78</sup> Bucher had read Dühring’s books and recommended him for a position to take over the political economic articles for a leading journal, the *Preußische*

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<sup>77</sup> Hanno Kesting, *Geschichtsphilosophie und Weltbürgerkrieg*, 131.

<sup>78</sup> Bucher was critical of the Hegelians, calling them the “priests of the absolute”. This is mentioned by Dühring. Cf. “Die Philosophie im Jahre 1865,” *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 1 (1866): 579.

*Staatsanzeiger*.<sup>79</sup> This position did not pan out, but Bucher suggested that Dühring try to write a “social exposé” for Chancellor Bismarck, which might help him gain a professorship.<sup>80</sup> Dühring was visited in April by a high counselor from the Prussian state ministry, Hermann Wagener, who asked him if he would write a social exposé for the state on policies that could be undertaken to improve the situation of the workers, along the lines of those already suggested by Dühring in his writings. Wagener, the former editor of the conservative *Kreuzzeitung*, said that Chancellor Bismarck had taken an interest in Dühring’s *Critical Foundation of Political Economy* and would like a position paper on how this policy could be achieved.<sup>81</sup>

According to his autobiography, Dühring took the commission not only because he was honored, but also because he felt that it would be good for him to have support in the government for his debates with the free traders and the historical school.<sup>82</sup> He finished the writing by the middle of June 1866 and sent it to the ministry only to have it apparently lost in a sea of bureaucracy, or so he thought. Soon thereafter, the political goals of the ministry were changed when the Austro-Prussian War broke out on 14 June. The issues regarding the social question and the workers movement, the subject of the social exposé, seemed to have no longer been a priority for Bismarck, and Dühring believed that his writing had been forgotten completely.

The next year Dühring was paid a visit by the economist Karl Heinrich Rodbertus, who informed him that he had recently read a vituperative review in the journal *Vierteljahresschrift*

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<sup>79</sup> According to Hugo Ball, who quotes Mehring, Karl Marx was offered the position before Dühring but turned it down. Hugo Ball, *Critique of the German Intelligentsia*, translated by Brian L. Harris (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 256.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Bucher to Dühring, 22 October 1865, Box 6, HA/SBB. In this letter Bucher wants to arrange a meeting between Dühring and the Prussian minister Zitelmann, presumably to discuss Dühring writing an exposé for the government. Bucher mentions he has just read a review Dühring’s *Natural Dialectic*, which he has, with some difficulty, also begun reading, and now, “inspired by the memory of his deceased friend Lassalle” looks forward to reading Dühring’s other book (presumably *Capital and Labor*). Dühring commented in his later years that Bucher, who lived as a correspondent in London after fleeing from Germany amid the 1848 revolution, let himself be influenced by the anti-revolutionary conservative manner of the English. PE 369 (May 1917): 2946.

<sup>81</sup> The Prussian government’s motive in commissioning the social exposé is not certain. As Nipperdey points out, Bismarck and Wagener were interested in trying to generate support among the working class for the monarchy. *Deutsche Geschichte 1800-1866*, 247. One method of doing this would be to show support for labor coalitions in Prussia – as Dühring did in the exposé (cf. Chapter Six below), which had been banned in Prussia since 1844. Vollgraf points out that the Bismarck government was interested in instituting a series of measures designed to attain a level of domestic stability in order to prepare militarily for an inevitable conflict with Austria. One of Bismarck’s tactics, according to Vollgraf, was to politically engage his opponents in reform projects for the government in order to neutralize them; gestures had been made to Lassalle and Marx which were unsuccessful. Carl-Erich Vollgraf, „Ein ‚Handgemenge‘ im Vorfeld des ‚Anti-Dühring,““ in *Kritik und Geschichte der MEGA*, ed. Carl-Erich Vollgraf et al. (Hamburg: Argument-Verlag, 1992), 109. The fact that Dühring’s exposé was later published by the government would seem to contradict this thesis, though.

<sup>82</sup> SLF, 137.

*für Volkswirtschaft und Kulturgeschichte* of an anonymously published paper, which seemed to bear an uncanny similarity to Dühring's work in style and content. Indeed, without Dühring's knowledge and permission, the social exposé he had been commissioned to write had been published anonymously under the title *Exposé on the Economic Associations and Social Coalitions (Denkschrift über die wirtschaftlichen Assoziationen und sozialen Coalitionen)*. Dühring was taken aback as the exposé had been written for Chancellor Bismarck alone and was not intended for publication. For him it was an egregious breach of the agreement made with Wagener, and he felt his honor had been insulted. Upon ordering the publication from a book dealer (now in its second edition), he was shocked, and further outraged, to read that Wagener himself was credited as author! Dühring petitioned Bismarck to have disciplinary action taken against Wagener and called for Wagener's resignation as well as a public apology - both of which did not follow. As things would have it, Wagener himself felt insulted by Dühring's harsh critique of his person and he threatened to file a lawsuit against Dühring. Wagener then gave a public declaration in the *Vossische Zeitung*, which was then printed by other newspapers and also found an echo in the satirical magazines. The Berlin *Kladderadatsch* in particular highlighted the incident in several polemical commentaries.<sup>83</sup> The controversy did not die down as Wagener soon tried to place the blame for the affair on the publisher of the text in Leipzig, who in turn publicly denied any blame. Dühring launched a civil suit for damage incurred which was first rejected in court and then accepted in appeal. He declined to accept the money awarded to him in order to show the public that it was not a money issue but a matter of principle. Between the two court decisions, Dühring published a book on the incident titled *The Fate of My Social Exposé for the Prussian State Ministry. Likewise a Contribution to the Rights of Authors and the Use of Justice*.<sup>84</sup>

As Vollgraf has shown, the *social exposé* scandal made waves among leading socialist intellectuals. Karl Marx was informed about the event by his friend Sigismund Borkheim, a revolutionary democrat, as well as by Louis Kugelmann. Karl Wilhelm Eichorff was also sent

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<sup>83</sup> In one issue, the magazine had a caricature of two men, one of whom was standing on the cover of a book which read "Exposé for Wagener" and the other standing next him making threatening gestures. *Kladderadatsch. Humoristisch-satyrisches Wochenblatt* 14 and 15(29 March 1868).

<sup>84</sup> *Kladderadatsch* magazine reacted to Dühring's almost pedantically detailed account of the incident as follows: "Der Privatdozent Dr. Dühring soll als Motto zu seinem neusten Werk und zur Sicherung vor unbeugter Aneignung seiner Gedanken den bekannten Schulkinderspruch gewählt haben: 'Dieses Büchlein hab ich lieb; Wer mir's stiehlt, der ist ein Dieb.'" (As a motto for his new book to prevent the unlawful acquisition of his thoughts, the university lecturer Dr. Dühring should have used the well-known schoolchild's saying: 'I love this little book. Whoever steals it from me is a thief.')

*Kladderadatsch. Humoristisch-Satyrisches Wochenblatt* 12 (15 March 1868).

a copy of the exposé.<sup>85</sup> Dühring had suddenly become a well-known and likeable figure for socialist agitators who were looking for intellectual leadership. The confrontation between Dühring and Wagener would continue to surface in the press from time to time in the years that followed. Dühring was seen as a courageous fighter against the arbitrary measures of the Prussian state and its inscrupulous civil servants.<sup>86</sup> The incident appears not to have tarnished Wagener's career, although he later ran into trouble when in 1873 he was forced to resign from the Prussian ministry due to charges of illegal profiteering made by Eduard Lasker. Wagener, of whose life the poet Theodor Fontane said contained "much light and many shadows", died in 1889. He is still listed today as the author of Dühring's exposé.<sup>87</sup>

## 2. *Academic Accolades amid Mounting Conflict at the University*

The social exposé scandal was a harbinger of conflict yet to come with the university. The Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin had been established in 1809 during the occupation of Prussia by the French. It was unique in that it was founded specifically upon philosophical ideals, and it would become a model for all German universities as well as for many universities abroad. Under the influence of the linguistic scientist Wilhelm von Humboldt, the Berlin University was meant to follow a philosophical concept which advocated a combination of research and teaching, free science for its own sake and the development of character. Schelsky has emphasized that the salient point in the ideals of the university's founding was the concept of "seclusion and freedom" (*Einsamkeit und Freiheit*). The advocacy of seclusion for scholars and students was based on the old and often confirmed assumption that truth, and even more the continual search for truth, involve seclusion. As soon as truth is applied to practice, it inevitably becomes entwined with the interests of society that then serve to compromise it. The pure search for truth becomes then socially cancelled. Therefore, true freedom in science involves seclusion; seclusion and freedom are two sides of the same coin.<sup>88</sup>

Another aspect of the ideals set forth at the founding of the university was the function of the free lecturer who was not paid by the university, but rather exercised his trade freely, apart from the influence of the state. The lecturer announced his lectures and waited to see if

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Vollgraf, "Ein ‚Handgemenge‘," 115-117.

<sup>86</sup> Vollgraf cites an article from the journal *Die Wage*, titled "Hermann Wagener. Ein Schattenbild", where Wagener is unfavorably portrayed as having stolen a poor blind man's intellectual property. Vollgraf, op. cit., 117.

<sup>87</sup> For the Fontane quote, see M. Kramer, "Theodor Fontanes Erinnerungen an H.W.," *Deutsche Rundschau* 192 (July-Sept. 1922, article written 1890): 50. Wagener is still listed as the author of Dühring's paper in the online encyclopedia Wikipedia's entry on Hermann Wagener.

<sup>88</sup> Schelsky, *Einsamkeit und Freiheit. Idee und Gestalt der deutschen Universität und ihrer Reformen*, 79 et seq.

students would attend. The bulk of his pay was the money which he received from the students who paid to attend the lectures. The credits given to the students for attending the lecture of the *Privatdozent* were the same as those for attending the tenured professors' lectures, but because the lecturers were not involved in the testing of students, the students tended to attend the lectures of the professors who would be testing them later. Generally, the position of *Privatdozent* was seen in a negative light. As Köhnke has pointed out, it was not easy to make a living as a non-tenured lecturer, and in Berlin it was only privately wealthy individuals, such as the philosophers Prantl and Bona Meyer, who were not forced to struggle to make ends meet.<sup>89</sup> Dühring had to supplement his income from the university with private tutoring, the most lucrative of which was preparing candidates to prepare for state exams required to become government administrators.<sup>90</sup>

Dühring occupied the position of lecturer with great success, however, earning a good reputation throughout Germany. The aggressive insulting tones, which his writing would take on later, and for which he would become known for, contradicted his outward appearance as a distinguished-looking scholar.<sup>91</sup> He was a likeable and popular professor. Hundreds of students came to his lectures, which were held twice a week in the university's largest auditorium. Through the public attention that the *exposé* scandal received, he had attained a degree of notoriety in the German public. Public sympathy was clearly on the side of the blind lecturer whose work had been taken by a Prussian high official. In the coming years, Dühring would gain more notoriety through further conflict he had with the administration of the university. Following his unsuccessful attempt to become a professor of philosophy in 1866, he had already begun to become more vocal in his critique of the university.<sup>92</sup> Although he had upset the university establishment, his popularity among the student body increased enormously. His lectures were filled and he soon gained a good reputation not just in Berlin but throughout Germany. Dühring appealed not only to students, but also to young political activists. He relished being in the spotlight of the nation's capital, when other professors were less enthusiastic about the politicized setting. The conservative historian Heinrich von Treitschke, for example, who had just moved from Heidelberg to Berlin, frowned upon the conditions of the University of Berlin, which, as he wrote, were influenced by the "scandal

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<sup>89</sup> Köhnke, *Die Entstehung und Aufstieg des Neukantianismus*, 147.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. SLF, 123-127.

<sup>91</sup> Dühring was above average height and had a lively high-pitched voice. Despite the hard knocks which life dealt him, his face had no deep wrinkles and was evenly proportioned; he had blue eyes and light brown hair. (cf. Appendices). Like his son Ulrich, he had distinguished-looking nose and a high forehead.

<sup>92</sup> Dühring applied for and did not get the chair for philosophy which was vacated by the Hegelian Leopold von Henning (1791-1866).

hungry press” and “screamers like Dühring”.<sup>93</sup> It is doubtful that Treitschke ever attended a lecture of Dühring’s, because according to all accounts he was anything but a screamer, although the content of his lectures did create turbulence.<sup>94</sup> One of the main reasons for Dühring’s popularity among students and young intellectuals of the day was his ability to present complex abstract concepts in a clear, demonstrative fashion. Gustav Landauer would later speak of this aspect of Dühring’s thought. His work, according to Landauer, was more “visually perceptive” (*anschaulich*) and understandable than Marx’s. It seems that Dühring was able to use his handicap to his advantage: unable to rely on notes or written material, he spoke freely in his lectures, making his teaching easier to follow.<sup>95</sup>

Not only did his style of delivery contrast with the established professors, Dühring’s lectures presented more than mere academic discourse; they advocated a *cause* backed up by the personal convictions of a man who did not have the security of being a civil servant with an insured position with the state. As will be shown in our treatment of his *Weltanschauung*, Dühring’s thought, although inherently rational, was based on forces deeper than reason; his lectures and his writings were conceived to incite emotion and a will to action among his listeners. His ideas were more than just a dry theory; they were above all a command to take part in the reforming of society. Not surprisingly, he was increasingly seen as a *persona non grata* by the tenured professors, and his writings were often condemned.<sup>96</sup> Overall, despite the disfavor of the faculty, he was able to build on the popularity that he had gained from his teaching and the public sympathy he received from the *Exposé* scandal through successful book publishing. As mentioned, after he had established himself by writing for various journals and magazines, he was able to find publishers for his first four books (*Carey’s Revolution of Political Economy*, *The Worth of Life*, *Natural Dialectic* und *Capital and Labor*), which had been laying and waiting to be published for some time. In 1866 he published *Critical Foundation of Political Economy* which laid the basis of his own teachings. Up to this point, his writings had been mostly scientific in their nature and free from the

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<sup>93</sup> Treitschke to Gustav Freitag, 19 December 1875, in *Gustav Freytag und Heinrich von Treitschke im Briefwechsel*, ed. Alfred Dove (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900), 171.

<sup>94</sup> The Swiss philosopher and then student in Berlin August Stadler wrote to Friedrich Albert Lange that Dühring seemed to him to be a gifted and unusually well-read man who holds his lectures in the tone of a conversation and intentionally shows the audience his partiality through bitter comments. Stadler to Lange, 19 July 1872, in *Friedrich Albert Lange. Über Politik und Philosophie. Briefe und Leitartikel 1862-1875*, ed. Georg Eckert (Duisburg: Walter Braun, 1968), 365.

<sup>95</sup> Gustav Landauer, „Referat über Eugen Dühring’s ‚Kursus der National- und Sozialökonomie‘“, *Der Sozialist* 35 (27 August 1892). It is known that the spoken word, or rather the word in general, has an intense meaning for the blind; the word becomes a substitute for the sense that is lost through a redirection of energy.

<sup>96</sup> Wilhelm Dilthey cites Dühring’s “passion of polemic which entices immature readers, but appalls more level-headed ones”. Dilthey, “Karl Eugen Dühring, Kritische Geschichte der Nationalökonomie und des Sozialismus,” in *Wilhelm Dilthey Gesammelte Schriften* 17, ed. Karlfried Gründer (Leipzig: Teuber, 1974), 360-361.

polemical style which was to characterize his later work. With his 1867 book *Carey's Belittlers and the Crisis of Political Economy*, Dühring gave a taste of the harsh polemics which he would become known for. Whereas the first book on Carey two years earlier was a positive portrayal of the American's teachings, this book was an open attack on Carey's opponents and the professors who disparaged the American scholar. Dühring was a great admirer of Carey's clear and popular style, and at this time his ambitions began to center not only around recording his own views on science and philosophy, but also on formulating them in a way that would find resonance in a young reading audience. He saw the publication of this book in defense of Carey as his having "crossed the Rubicon".<sup>97</sup>

Although critical of the historical school of political economy, Dühring published a series of histories himself, which will be dealt with in detail below. As will be shown, he saw history primarily as having an ancillary role to science and – at least in his day – not yet science itself. His histories were designed to support his own system of thought, which had taken form in the *Critical Foundation of Political Economy*. In 1869, he published his *Critical History of Philosophy*, which emphasized not only the teachings of the great philosophers, but also their characters and dispositions (*Gesinnungen*). This book represented the beginnings of the "personalism" which he would advocate later in his career; individualism became an important principle for Dühring of evaluating science. The book was heavily criticized in the academic world, but was a publishing success. In 1871 he published a book on the history of political economy and socialism titled *Critical History of Political Economy and Socialism*, as well as his economics textbook *Cursus of Political Economy (Cursus der National- und Socialökonomie)*.

In these early years, Dühring became perhaps the most prolific scholar of his generation, a feat made all the more impressive when one considers that he was working as a blind man. It was in these years that two of his most scholarly works were completed. The first was *The Law of the Geneva Convention. History, Analysis and Experience; Critique and Suggestions for Continuation*, written shortly after the end of the Franco-Prussian war in 1871 and *Critical History of the General Principles of Mechanics*.<sup>98</sup> The books were written completely free from any of the subjective and politically motivated outburst, which would characterize all of his work from 1873 onwards; the former book argues for the implementation of more humane customs of war and gives testimony to Dühring's study of law as well as being a strong

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<sup>97</sup> SLF, 135.

<sup>98</sup> *Das Recht der Genfer Convention. Geschichte, Erläuterungen und Erfahrungen; Kritik und Vorschläge zur Fortbildung*, unpublished manuscript, in Dühring Papers, HA/SBB.

indication of his left-wing credentials. The work, which may have been written for a literary contest, was never published.

The second book, *Critical History of the General Principles of Mechanics*, was submitted to a competition of the Benecke Foundation at Göttingen University.<sup>99</sup> Among the judges of the contest were the physicist Wilhelm Weber and the philosopher Hermann Lotze.<sup>100</sup> Of the five anonymously submitted papers, Dühring's work won first prize. His paper was praised in a public meeting of the faculty on 11 March 1872. The committee spoke of "complete and free command of the matter and amazing extension of exact literary knowledge". Dühring succeeded in showing the "whole intellectual signature of the age". His writing style was emphasized as was the book's "warm recognition of each achievement, the explanation of the unsuccessful and the conservation by which the mistakes were overcome". Dühring's talent for instruction was also cited. Lotze spoke of Dühring's manuscript in a letter that the book was "more fitting, more intelligent and aesthetic" than anything he had read in a long time.<sup>101</sup> Not to be forgotten is that up to that point Dühring was known for his work in the field of philosophy and political economy, and none of the judges would have expected him to be a candidate. He was sure that if they had known who had written it, he would not have received the award.<sup>102</sup> He was awarded 500 Thalers of gold for his efforts and the official final judgment released on 13 March 1872 read as follows:

The fifth work with the saying "S'il y a quelque-chose" etc. comprising 586 closely written folio pages required a considerable though agreeably worthwhile effort from the faculty. On

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<sup>99</sup> The foundation sponsoring the award was created through the will of councilor C.G. Benecke, who wished to leave a commemoration for his brother F. E. Benecke, who had also been somewhat of a "controversial scholar" in his day. Professor Benecke taught philosophy at Berlin University but was dismissed in 1822 at Hegel's behest for allegedly advocating materialism. He was ultimately readmitted to the university after Hegel's death, but took his own life at the age of 57 in 1854. KGM, VI-VII.

<sup>100</sup> Wilhelm Weber (1804-1891), a physicist who invented the electromagnetic telegraph, was known for controversy himself, having been one of the "Göttingen Seven" professors who lost their positions at the university for refusing to sign an oath to the King of Hannover. Hermann Lotze (1817-1881) was a philosopher and physiologist who held the notion that the inorganic and organic world is determined mechanically. In a letter to the publisher Salomon Hirzel, Lotze issued great praise for Dühring's writing and looked forward to finding out who had written the work. "Bisher war ich durch zwei Dinge verhindert; zuerst hatte ich fünf Preisschriften für die Facultät zu lese, worunter eine, 586 enge Folioseiten, mir viele Zeit kostete, freilich auch die Mühe lohnte. Es war eine Geschichte der Prinzipien der Mechanik, so vortrefflich, so klug und schön, wie ich seit lange kein Buch gelesen; ich bin höchst neugierig, am 2. April in feierlicher Fakultätssitzung den Verfasser kennen zu lernen und ich wünsch ihm, daß er mit seinem prächtigen Buche den Weg zu Ihrem Verlag finden möge." *Hermann Lotze. Briefe und Dokumente. Zusammengestellt, eingeleitet und kommentiert von Reinhardt Pester*, ed. Ernst Wolfgang Orth (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003), 558. Ironically, Dühring had written two less than favorable reviews of Lotze's books, one published one year before the contest. Cf. Dühring, "Lotze, Mikrokosmos, Ideen zur Naturgeschichte und Geschichte der Menschheit," *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 1 (1866): 513-516. "Lotze, Geschichte der Aesthetik in Deutschland," *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 3 (1868): 385-388.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Lotze's letter to his publisher Hierzel from 28 December 1871, in Siegmund Posner, *Abriß der Philosophie Eugen Dührings* (Breslau: H. Fleischmann, 1906), 16.

<sup>102</sup> SLF, 149.

account of its extensive index, the work excites the hope that all questions which the faculty recommended for treatment will indeed be given careful consideration by the author. And this hope is fully justified in the realization of the work. Not only are all the essential points treated with consummate command of the topic and an extraordinarily precise knowledge of the literature, but also a large number of more minor discussions – which the faculty would not have deemed indispensable, but welcomes nevertheless since they contribute everywhere to a fuller understanding – testify to the great love and care with which the author has gone about his task. The extraordinary material thus amassed is mastered with a competence no less extraordinary. The author does not separate presentation and criticism, but combines them as he charts the successive epochs in the history of mechanics; thanks to his fine feeling for clear structuring of the mass of material, the author is able to cast an instructive historical light, such as the faculty desired most of all, on the intellectual spirit of the age, the scientific character of the leading personalities, and the evolution of the various principles and theorems. Furthermore, none of the particular requirements set for the task has been overlooked. The original problems which led to the emergence of each new principle or theorem are reproduced with perfect clarity, and the gradual transformation to which each has been subject is pursued meticulously through all its intermediate stages. There is no shying away from points of contact between ideas of mechanics and philosophical speculation; on the contrary, they are discussed in separate sections, and the author's subtle philosophical instinct, which guides him on this terrain too, is clearly revealed in a large number of general explanatory remarks which are skilfully woven into the presentation of mechanical investigations at judicious junctures. The pleasant impression made by the whole is enhanced by a style of writing very simple yet rich in felicitous turns of phrase, in which accomplishments are warmly acknowledged, failures are explained and excused, and mistakes are graciously passed over. The faculty has but one reservation. The author goes into great detail when recapitulating earlier passages and referring to them; if one imagines the work as a series of lectures, then these recapitulations are a well judged method attesting an outstanding gift for teaching; were the text printed, they would trouble the reader less than they do in the manuscript version. It is worth considering nonetheless whether it may be advisable to lessen the repetitions at least in the second half of the manuscript where, on the one hand, the nature of the topic anyway necessitates the repetition of the same ideas in different forms, and on the other, the points which the author wishes to bring over can be regarded as having been adequately made in previous sections. The faculty has no other points to mention. Deeply gratified to be the instigator of so fine an achievement which fully meets the requirements and exceeds many additional expectations, the faculty has no hesitation in awarding first prize to the author.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> KGM, IV-V (Translation by Giles Shephard).

The award increased Dühring's prestige throughout Germany and abroad.<sup>104</sup> Despite the often immature and polemical tones that his work had shown, as well as the lack of reverence that he had displayed towards the tenured professors of the German universities, the award and his other publishing successes offered him a chance of gaining a professorship. A letter from Karl Snell to Hermann Lotze shows that Dühring was seriously considered for a position in Jena which had opened up by the retirement of the philosopher Conrad Fischer in the fall of 1872. Snell, a professor in Jena, wrote Lotze saying that several of his colleagues had been eying Dühring because of his prize writing on the history of mechanics. Snell mentions that there were some reservations because of the disrespectful tone with which Dühring spoke of the greatest philosophers in his history of philosophy. He writes, however, that the sample of Dühring's comments gave him the impression of "unruly creative energy combined with youthful cockiness"; he cannot believe that Dühring would continue this "offensive tone of judgment" after his successful prize writing.<sup>105</sup> He asks Lotze to write a short comment on Dühring. If Lotze replied is unknown. Dühring did not get the position and Rudolf Eucken became Fischer's successor.

Despite the award given to him by the academic establishment, Dühring's critique of the university persisted, and even escalated in the second edition of *Critical History of Political Economy and Socialism*, which was published at the end of 1874. Here he went on the offensive against some of his professor colleagues at the University of Berlin, citing the names of the "socialists of the chair" (*Kathedersozialisten*), e.g. Gustav Schmoller, Adolph Wagner, Lujo Brentano and Adolf Held. Dühring expressed open disdain for the *Kathedersozialisten*, of whom H. L. Mencken once disparagingly wrote "flirted with radicalism with one eye and kept the other upon his chair, his salary and his pension".<sup>106</sup> It did not take long for a reaction to follow, and soon Dühring was engaged in yet another public conflict, involving another "Wagner": this time Prof. Adolph Wagner. Wagner, who was called to the chair of political economy instead of Dühring in 1870, polemically attacked Dühring in the *Börsenzeitung*. In his writings, Dühring had made disparaging personal remarks against Wagner and his father Prof. Rudolf Wagner, implying that the former had been appointed professor due to his father's connections. Adolf Wagner used his university lectures to issue

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<sup>104</sup> The world renowned physicist Ernst Mach considered Dühring's book "valuable". Mach, *Die Mechanik in ihrer Entwicklung. Historisch-Kritisch dargestellt* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1883), VII. Regarding his influence abroad, see the effusively positive treatment of Dühring's book in a well-known British journal *Westminster Review*. "Science," *Westminster Review* 43:2 (April 1873): 592-593.

<sup>105</sup> Karl Snell to Hermann Lotze, 18 November 1872, *Briefe und Dokumente. Hermann Lotze*, ed. Ernst Wolfgang Orth (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2003), 576-577.

<sup>106</sup> Mencken, "The Dismal Science," in *Prejudices: First, Second, and Third Series* (New York: The Library of America, 2010), 466.

polemics against Dühring.<sup>107</sup> Dühring published a strong reply to Wagner on 15 December 1874, but did not mention Wagner in his lectures although students were expecting that he would. Wagner and the university took measures to have Dühring removed, citing his article from the *Börsenzeitung*. Dühring was notified of the case against him by Prof. Zeller and given 48 hours to defend himself. The public was clearly on Dühring's side as several magazines attacked Wagner. Due to the attention that the case had received, Wagner soon had to worry that there would be pressure calling for his own removal should Dühring be dismissed. Dühring reports that he was approached by a third party and asked if he would be satisfied with the arrangement of a compromise where he would receive a warning, which would allow him to continue teaching. Dühring agreed, but only on the condition that Wagner receive a warning from the faculty as well.<sup>108</sup> The faculty agreed, but to Dühring it was clear that his time as a university lecturer would soon be over. He was warned against making polemical attacks against his professor colleagues and against the university as an institution. After the warning from the faculty Dühring would have five semesters left to teach before he would finally lose his position for good. Knowing that he was, as it were, teaching on borrowed time, his goal was to "dig in" and prepare for the coming battle. The problems he had at the university would soon be extended to a lectureship which he had taken on at Victoria-Lyceum, a secondary school for girls which stood at the center of the Berlin women's liberation movement.

### 3. Lectureship at Victoria Lyceum

Dühring had received the commission to teach at Victoria-Lyceum from the recommendation of the women's rights activist Hedwig Dohm, the wife of the satirical magazine *Kladderadatsch* editor Ernst Dohm.<sup>109</sup> Frau Dohm belonged to a women's movement which in recent years had made progress through the founding of multiple women's associations. The *Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* was founded in Leipzig in 1865 with the goal of attaining women's right of owning property, and also of having the opportunity to be trained as teachers and doctors; soon thereafter, the *Lette-Verein*, named after Adolph Lette, the

<sup>107</sup> Wagner notified Dühring that he had denounced him in his lecture. Wagner to Dühring, 2 December 1874, Dühring Papers, Box 6, HA/SBB.

<sup>108</sup> SLF, 161. Cf. Wagner accepted being reprimanded by the university, but was greatly disappointed that the measures against Dühring were not harsher. Cf. Adolf Wagner to Hermann Wagener, 29 January 1875, in *Adolf Wagner. Briefe, Dokumente, Augenzeugenberichte 1851-1917*, ed. Heinrich Rubner (Berlin: Dunker und Humblot, 1978), 131. Wagner was so upset by the incident that he expresses his intention to resign his position and leave the university (which he ultimately did not do). Cf. Wagner to Hermann Wagener, 17 March 1875, in *ibid.*, 133.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. WBF, 65 et seq.; Jakubowski, „Eugen Dühring – Antisemit, Antifeminist und Rassist,“ 73. Reményi, „Der Fall Eugen Dühring und die Diskussion um das Frauenstudium,“ in *Geschlechtsverhältnisse in Medizin, Naturwissenschaft und Technik* (Bassum: GNT-Verlag, 1996), 270-273.

president of the *Centralverein*, an association for the prosperity of the working class, was founded.

Dohm and her daughter attended the Victoria Lyceum, an institution in close contact with the *Lette-Verein*, founded in 1868 by the Englishwoman Georgina Archer with the goal of giving women instruction similar to what was offered at the universities. She originally approached Dühring to hold tutorials in her home, hoping to supplement the instruction she was receiving at the Lyceum.<sup>110</sup> Having enjoyed Dühring's lectures, she approached Archer about having Dühring teach at the Lyceum, and Ms. Archer agreed.<sup>111</sup> Beginning in 1873, Dühring gave lectures on subjects ranging from philosophy to the greats of modern literature. It appears that the lectures were a success.

Dohm's letters to Dühring indicate that the two of them had a cordial relationship.<sup>112</sup> She showed him support and sympathy during the public controversy with Adolph Wagner, speaking of an "unbelievable and dishonorable persecution". In the same letter, she passes along the message from her husband that an article to Dühring's defense will appear in the *National Zeitung*.<sup>113</sup> Some weeks later Dühring asked Dohm if she could help him by finding someone to write an article against the university on his behalf. She responded: "My husband has agreed to write the article in question from your material and will submit it to *Die Gegenwart*". The letter indicates that the matter was apparently important enough to Dühring for him to arrange a visit to the Dohms' home.<sup>114</sup>

The board of trustees of the school consisted of Rudolf Virchow as well as Anna Helmholtz (née von Mohl), the wife of Hermann Helmholtz.<sup>115</sup> After three years of successful teaching at the school, due to pressure from the board, he was dismissed in what Dühring saw as an indirect university measure taken against him.<sup>116</sup> The exact reason for his dismissal is unclear. In a letter from 2 May 1876 Mrs. Archer wrote:

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<sup>110</sup> Hedwig Dohm to Dühring, 14 November 1872, in the Dühring Papers, Box 6, HA/SBB.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Georgina Archer to Dohm, no date, in the Dühring Papers, Box 6, HA/SBB.

<sup>112</sup> The fact that the Dohms were Jewish does not seem to have been an issue for Dühring, who, as we will see below, would later be known for his strong anti-Semitic views.

<sup>113</sup> Hedwig Dohm to Dühring, 19 January 1876, in the Dühring Papers, Box 6, HA/SBB.

<sup>114</sup> Dohm to Dühring 11 February 1876, in the Dühring Papers, Box 6, HA/SBB. Ernst Dohm's article in support of Dühring was published shortly thereafter. Optimus (Dohm), "Aus der philosophischen Facultät," *Die Gegenwart* 10 (1876): 154-155.

<sup>115</sup> Anna Helmholtz was the daughter of the well-known law professor Robert von Mohl. Dühring made a point of pointing out that the university elite intermarried among themselves, an issue which is also expounded upon by the Dühringian of the Weimar Republic Gustav Michaelis in his article "Beiträge zur Vorgeschichte der Remotion Eugen Dührings," *Propagandablätter für Dühringsche Geisteshaltung und Lebensgestaltung* (Juli 1927): 13.

<sup>116</sup> SLF, 166.

Dear Sir

I regretted exceedingly having been forced to be absent last Wednesday at your closing lecture. I had to wait for my Dr. who did not keep his time, I was thus forced to omit my usual duty. – Closing has always something very sad about it. More especially when it comes to a last close. The lyceum has enjoyed the fruit of your labors now for quite a series of years, and for what you have given in that time we desire to return our warm thanks. Many (...) have increased their store of knowledge and ideas. With kind regards I remain

Yours truly Archer<sup>117</sup>

Upon his dismissal, Dühring felt obliged to give a public statement as to what occurred and believed that using his “old means” of going to the press - a critical weapon of the “controversial scholar”- was also necessary to protect himself from being fired by the university right away.<sup>118</sup> Soon thereafter he published his short pamphlet *Women’s Path to Higher Vocational Training and the Means of Teaching at the Universities*. As will be shown in detail below in the portrayal of his system, Dühring held very liberal views for his day on the role of women in society. Although the charge was publically denied by Helmholtz, it seems plausible that the discontinuation of Dühring’s contract came about due to Dühring’s rows at the university.<sup>119</sup>

#### 4. *Rising Influence in the Social Democratic Movement*

As will be shown in the portrayal of his worldview below, Dühring moves from an intense study of Schopenhauer’s philosophy towards creating his own concept of reality (or “the actual”, as we will translate it) which involves ideas of socialist reform. The social exposé scandal of 1868 had captured the eyes of some of the most influential intellectuals of the Social Democratic movement, Karl Marx included. The fact that Dühring was a real opponent of the Prussian state spoke for Dühring in their eyes, and thus they began to give him more attention. Dühring’s evening lectures at the Berlin University became very popular among Social Democrats and socialists, as did his presentations in front of union organizations. His books were available in union libraries.<sup>120</sup> Here was a young socialist thinker seemingly uninfluenced by the, as many saw it, flawed and conservative Hegelian philosophy, who was

<sup>117</sup> Georgina Archer to Dühring 2 May 1876, in Dühring Papers, Box 6, HA/SBB.

<sup>118</sup> SLF, 2nd edition, 176.

<sup>119</sup> Interestingly, Dühring’s successor at Victoria Lyceum, the philosopher Friedrich Paulsen, was years later also dismissed from the school by Ms. Archer, apparently for making a “politically incorrect” remark critical of the banker Bleichröder, which may have been interpreted by a board member attending the lecture (Bleichröder’s sister-in-law) as being anti-Semitic. Cf. James C. Albisetti, *Schooling German Girls and Women* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) 118-119.

<sup>120</sup> Vollgraf, “Ein ‘Handgemenge’,” 117. Vollgraf makes reference to the *Berliner Handwerker-Verein* at Sophienstr. 15, where Dühring also held lectures.

completely independent of Marx and now espousing his own concrete plans for changing society through science. For many young socialists, Dühring's vivid, demonstrative style of presenting his theories was a breath of fresh air from the abstract often clumsily expressed concepts of Marx.

In the years that followed the exposé scandal, he sharpened his critique of the Prussian government and its ideological representatives. The unification of Germany and the Paris Commune seem to have caused him to all but abandon his views of the nation as being a viable intermediary for social development.<sup>121</sup> His book *Critical History of Political Economy and Socialism*, published in 1870 but dated 1871, was an attack on the various “Gods” of the German intellectual elite. In the events that would lead to Engel’s “anti-Dühring” in 1877, Dühring drew first blood, so to speak, already in 1870. He maintains that if one takes away the plump pseudo-dialectic, the only thing left in *Das Kapital* is the determination of value through work and here, in his opinion, Marx has two different portrayals of value, one of which aims to be popular and is completely “illogical, clumsy and convoluted” and an “effrontery to the taste of a clear wording and structure”.<sup>122</sup> Dühring also attacked Marx in public lectures, where he labeled Marxism a “symptom for the influence of a branch of new sect scholasticism”.<sup>123</sup> At the same time Dühring began a battle on a second front against the leading university political economists Wilhelm Roscher and Adolf Held (in the second edition he widened the scope of his critique to include the *Kathedersozialisten*, i.e. the socialist of the chair).<sup>124</sup> In a letter to Engels, Adolf Hepner writes of Dühring: “He walks to the beat of a different drummer, hating Marx and Roscher with the same fire, independent in political economy as well as in philosophy and yet so independent that you don’t know at all where he stands.”<sup>125</sup> It was Dühring’s recalcitrance combined with scholarly erudition which seems to have attracted many prominent leaders such as Wilhelm Liebknecht, August Bebel, and Johann Most to Dühring.<sup>126</sup> His theoretical concept of unjust government armed with

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<sup>121</sup> As will be shown below, Dühring would continue to hold on to List’s “national principle”, but not only as it applied to whole nations in an international context, but rather as applied to small societal groups vying to better their positions. In the decades to come he would gravitate more towards the idea of “race” as a metaphysical intermediate reality between the individual and mankind. Cf. Voelske, *Die Entwicklung des “rassischen Antisemitismus” zum Mittelpunkt der Weltanschauung Eugen Dührings*, 22.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Carl-Erich Vollgraf, „Marx‘ ‚Randnoten‘ zu Dührings ‚Kritische Geschichte der Nationalökonomie‘“, MEGA, 236-237.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>124</sup> For a comparison of Dühring and Roscher’s perspectives on history cf. Jürgen Distler, *Ursprung und Entwicklung der deutschsprachigen Literatur zur Lehrgeschichte der Nationalökonomie*. (Dissertation Johannes Gutenberg-Universität in Mainz: 1971), 111 et seq.

<sup>125</sup> Vollgraf, 239.

<sup>126</sup> Regarding Dühring’s influence on the workers movement see Rjazanov, D. B. „Fünfzig Jahre Anti-Dühring“, *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus* 2 (1928): 446-487. Adamiak, Richard, „Marx, Engels, Dühring“, *Journal of*

force (*der Gewaltstaat*) as a historical entity also struck a chord with Social Democrats, who were worried about the worshiping of the state done by many socialists. Eduard Bernstein in particular was interested in Dühring's underlining of the liberal elements in socialism (an aspect of Dühring's thought which would later be developed by Franz Oppenheimer). Dühring's futuristic vision of a free society, which would do away with the salary system, socialize all human conditions, and establish equality through economic communes captured the minds of many young socialists. Bernstein remembered:

Instead of the battle cry hail Marx, hail Lassalle, another battle cry seemed to appear, namely: hail Dühring, hail Marx and Lassalle. My efforts were more than a little to blame for this [. . .] Eugen Dühring's *Cursus der Nationalökonomie und des Sozialismus* appeared in late autumn of 1872. This greatly strengthened my interest in the blind scholar, whose book *Critical History of Political Economy and Socialism* I had already read. He was wholeheartedly devoted to socialism, and the pragmatic-positive form which he taught it spoke to me all the more, as the socialism in those days in Germany, since the days of Marx and Engels Communist Manifesto, had brought forth no all encompassing portrayal of the basic thoughts and the goals of the socialist movement; the manifesto limited itself to sweeping declarations which appeared to me to no longer be sufficient for the needs of the socialist movement as it had developed. Nearly all of the socialists who I, an enthusiast of his works, introduced to Dühring saw this the way that I did.<sup>127</sup>

We see that it was the realism inherent in Dühring's approach which found favor with Bernstein. It is also worth noting that this "incipient Dühringianism" germinated, like other radical movements of history, in prison, isolated from the on-goings of the discourse of everyday political activism. Both Bebel and Most, the two key figures involved in spreading Dühring's ideas, read Dühring in prison. Bernstein continues:

One of the first men I introduced to Dühring was August Bebel, imprisoned in Hubertusberg, whom I visited in the summer of 1873 and gave a copy of *Cursus of National and Social Economy* to. He wrote me an enthusiastic letter about the book and celebrated Dühring with an article titled "A New Communist" which appeared in the Leipzig *Volksstaat*, the central organ of the Social Democratic Eisenach Program. Johann Most was captivated no less by the book when I gave it to him and other party officials of the Eisenachs. [...] You could call it eclecticism all you want, I felt like the socialist movement was big enough to embrace a Marx and a Dühring at the same time.<sup>128</sup>

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*the History of Ideas* 35 (January-March, 1974). Dowe, Dieter and Tenefelde, Klaus, "Zur Rezeption Eugen Dührings in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung in den 1870er Jahren," 26.

<sup>127</sup> Bernstein, *Entwicklungsgang eines Sozialisten*, 9 et seq.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. See also Bernstein's *Sozialdemokratische Lehrjahre*, 52.

The fact that that it was assumed by many that the ideas of Dühring and Marx were compatible indicates how little credence was given to Marx's theoretical deliberations in the first volume of *Das Kapital*, which had appeared in 1877, or perhaps to theory in general. What seemed to count most was that Dühring, a man of science "from the higher classes" (Bebel), was fighting for the workers. When Wilhelm Liebknecht told Bebel that about the incompatibility of Dühring and Marx's method, Bebel replied, "To hell with the method if the cause is good".<sup>129</sup>

Later, Franz Mehring spoke of the "glaring emptiness" of the intellectual character of the socialist movement at the time.<sup>130</sup> A socialist named D.B. Rjazanov looked back on the why Dühring became an attractive figure for socialist comrades: "He was a man with encyclopedic knowledge who was orientated towards the questions of natural science, philosophy, political economy as well as to socialism in an open-minded way". For Rjazanov, Dühring's popularity lay in that he gave the revolutionary youth a "worldview and a system of opinions with answers to damned questions".<sup>131</sup> A Marxist had the Communist Manifesto, but there were no facts here to work from; his doctrines were less understandable than Lassalle's program for the workers.<sup>132</sup> Dühring's philosophy became popular because it was directed to concrete issues and gave impetus to practical action while at the same time retaining a general philosophy to back it up.<sup>133</sup>

Ferdinand Lassalle was killed in a duel in 1864 and the fact that his cooperative plan failed to reach its goals left many looking for guidance elsewhere. Franz Mehring remarked after

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<sup>129</sup> Quoted by Bernstein, "Entwicklungsgang," 10. August Bebel found Dühring's idea of nationalizing property especially good, but disagreed with him when it came to the question of international socialism. Dühring was of the opinion that the socialist movement had to be led by the country that was most advanced economically and socially, whereas Bebel thought that socialism could be realized by simultaneous international revolutions. Cf. Bebel, "Ein neuer Kommunist," *Volksstaat* 30 and 33 (12 and 20 March 1874).

<sup>130</sup> Mehring, „Sozialistische Chronik," *Die Grenzboten* 37/II, (1878): 31.

<sup>131</sup> Rjazanov, "Fünfzig Jahre Anti-Dühring," 467.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 480. Dowe and Tenefeld also underline the impotence of Marxism in this respect: "Von besonderer Bedeutung ist, daß, wie auch Dühring gesehen hat, Marx and Engels nach dem Kommunistischen Manifest, das in den 1870er Jahren eine der wesentlichen Propagandaschriften war, keine den Erfordernissen der Zeit entsprechende, zusammenfassende, systematisch den Marxismus erschließende Schrift veröffentlicht hatten, die zur breiten Agitation hätte herangezogen werden können, zumal das Kapital von ganz wenigen Sozialdemokraten gelesen, geschweige denn verstanden und rezipiert worden war." "Zur Rezeption Eugen Dührings," op. cit., 38.

<sup>133</sup> Georg John, a Dühring follower writing in the 1920s, writes that he turned to Dühring after giving up on Schopenhauer's philosophy. He wrote: "Ich suchte mir ein anderes praktisches Feld der Betätigung. Ich ließ die Philosophie beiseite, um Kenntnisse in der Volkswirtschaftslehre und Sozialökonomie zu sammeln und der sozialen Frage näherzutreten, vor allem aber das meinem Stande am nächstliegende, das Bauerntum zu meiner Hauptaufgabe zu machen. In diesen Zeitpunkt meiner geistigen Entwicklung fällt nun die Kenntnisnahme Dühringscher Werke. Als erstes las ich den "Wert des Lebens", sodann andere Schriften, um mich dann mir dem Inhalt seiner volkswirtschaftlichen Werke vertraut zu machen." John, "Mein Weg zu Dühring," in *Gemeinverständliche Einführungsschriften*, eds. Emil Döll and Hans Reinhardt (Leipzig: Reiland, 1928), 3.

Lassalle's death that his followers and the people who "did not understand Marx's *Kapital* in its complicated historical dimensions" were strongly drawn to Dühring.<sup>134</sup> Dühring's relationship to Lassalle offers further insight into his popularity among socialists. As we have seen, Dühring had little but contempt for Marx and his theory, but he held Lassalle in higher esteem as a man "with sound instinct". He credited Lassalle with creating a bridge for the workers to receive general suffrage, which went against the Marxist credo of economic determination.<sup>135</sup>

As will be shown in detail below, Dühring's suggestions were largely realistic and practically orientated. His conviction was that the way to socialism was through peaceful, lawful means, as opposed to class struggle, violence, and revolution as proposed by the Marxists, and this won him followers. The path which the revisionist movement under Bernstein would later take had its foundation in Dühring's teachings.<sup>136</sup> Paradoxically perhaps, although Dühring was to no small degree a realist and offered pragmatic impulse to the workers' movement, he was philosophically and ideologically to the left of Marxism in that he attempted to take the Enlightenment's ideals of equality and justice to their farthest and most consistent extremes.<sup>137</sup>

As we conclude the portrayal of the first half of his career in 1877, shortly before his dismissal from the university, Dühring stood at the pinnacle of his career, having completed his system of social economics and having laid the foundations of his general worldview and ideological bearing which we will now examine. The portrayal of Dühring's life will be resumed in Part Four after his *Weltanschauung* and system of social economics are portrayed and critically analyzed (Parts Two and Three).

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<sup>134</sup> Franz Mehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. 3 (Berlin and Stuttgart: Dietz, 1924), 10. Even one of the leading communists, Karl Liebknecht, was of the opinion that *Das Kapital* was less than inspiring; Liebknecht said that the book was primarily useful for providing material for parliamentary speeches on workers' legislation and commemorative occasions when he needed to show the level of exploitation against the workers and little more. In 1874, Liebknecht was convinced that Buckle and not Marx was the greatest creator of a new perspective on history; Marx was merely the creator of a new economic system. Rudolf Rocker, *Johann Most. Das Leben eines Rebellen* (Berlin: Fritz Kater, 1924), 52-53.

<sup>135</sup> KGN, 2nd. edition, 523-524. It should be noted, however, that Dühring was overall highly critical of Lassalle.

<sup>136</sup> This fact, as well as Dühring's influence on Bernstein in general, is downplayed by Peter Gay in his biography of Bernstein. Peter Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx* (New York, NY: Collier Books, 1962). Friedländer speaks of an "exploitation of Dühringian thought" by Bernstein and the Social Democrats. Cf. *Die vier Hauptrichtungen der modernen sozialen Bewegung. II. Teil Eugen Dührings sozialitäres System und Henry Georges Neophysiocratie* (Berlin: S. Calvary & Co., 1901), 20.

<sup>137</sup> See Chapter Nine.

PART TWO:

DÜHRING'S WELTANSCHAUUNG AND SCIENTIFIC  
BEARING

THE EUROPEAN AGE of world history has been said to have “ended irrevocably in 1917 with the almost simultaneous epochal events of the Russian Revolution and the American entry into the World War”.<sup>138</sup> Whether one subscribes to this assessment by a prominent historian of modern Germany or not, it is apparent that as the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed a conscious break with the previous tradition of Western thought had taken place. Philosophical trajectories rooted in religion and metaphysics, and in the intellectualization of factors such as identity, power, vigor and primal emotions, would not vanish from the stage at once, but, despite the continued popularity of Nietzsche’s writings, entered into a denouement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as an “age of analysis” set in.<sup>139</sup> No longer was a collective philosophical view of reality sought or wanted. Philosophy was beginning to become relegated to an anti-metaphysical “logico-analytic” discipline located within the confines of an academic community largely preoccupied with language.<sup>140</sup>

Despite the fact that there seems to be a clear logic in the development of modern philosophy in the last 100 years, an end to the European age was not something which was expected or even considered in Dühring’s time, although perhaps it might have been. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a battlefield for competing worldviews and ideologies, whose trajectories lost strength through struggles against one another while vying for influence at giving life meaning and guidance. The immense changes brought forth by industrialization, the advances in science and technology, and the presence of societal conditions not yet understood called for philosophical underpinnings, which philosophers of various kinds tried to create. The gap between a modern progressive society, on the one hand, and antiquated, out of place romantic philosophies, on the other, was seen as a challenge to be overcome. However, among the chaos of interpretations there was destined to be no clear winner. This was not perceived by the European thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including Dühring, who strove to influence society and determine where it was heading.

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<sup>138</sup> Epstein, Klaus, “A New Study of Fascism,” 306.

<sup>139</sup> Arnold Gehlen was one of the thinkers who illustrated the crisis of the mind most clearly. Cf. Gehlen, *Wirklicher und Unwirklicher Geist*, 127 et seq. Henry Aiken has aptly shown that nearly everything of which 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy was most proud, such as its emphasis on methodology, analysis of meaning, language and symbol, does not really distinguish it from the centuries which preceded it. “The Fate of Philosophy in the Twentieth Century,” *The Kenyon Review* 24 (Spring: 1962): 233.

<sup>140</sup> As White points out, 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophers “shy away from the issues of public and personal life, from the problems of culture and practice, as though they are no concern of philosophers”. Morton White, “The Decline and Fall of the Absolute,” in *The Age of Analysis*, ed. idem (New York: George Braziller, 1958), 17. Dühring willingly became a public figure to advance his cause and considered his philosophy to be inseparable from his life. As we will see, he advocated a “personalism” which stressed individualism and biographical factors of philosophy.

Eugen Dühring sought to create an alternative to German Idealism, which seemed to have run its course and could no longer hold its own in the rapidly changing industrial world. Despite the vituperative treatment he gives Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, and later Kant as well, we will see that he did not abandon the tenets of Idealism completely, and in some ways can be said to have even solidified the movement by giving it a foundation in natural science.<sup>141</sup> The positivistic and social-utilitarian quality of his thought, as well as its preoccupation with political economy, give Dühring's philosophy a matter-of-factness, a prosaic quality and a lack of the philosophical refinement the Hegelians possessed. What is in this respect a weakness, particularly from the perspective of today, was then a strength, as the *Zeitgeist* called for an austere rather than aesthetic bearing towards society. However, as Otto Weininger once aptly pointed out, a *Weltanschauung* can never be a synthesis concocted by a diligent man at a desk in a library; it is an intuitive vision of the world, rooted in the self, experienced as a whole and which is clear and intelligible.<sup>142</sup> Without the certain intellectual instinct and the will to make a difference in the same sense of the German idealists, the unparalleled bulk of scholarship, which Dühring produced as a blind man, would not have been possible.

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<sup>141</sup> Helena Druskowitz, *Eugen Dühring. Eine Studie zu seiner Würdigung* (Heidelberg: George Weiß, 1889), 2. Although in many respects critical of Dühring, she considers him one of the first "greats of science" of his day, *ibid.* She sees his system as the first completed system "in which reality is raised to the level of all conceptions". *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>142</sup> Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter. Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* (Vienna and Leipzig: Braumüller, 1929), 209-210. In a similar vein Sombart refers to a *Weltanschauung* as a "childlike naive affirmation of the world, a longing and calling for happiness, pleasure and freedom exuding from the complaints of the existing society". *Sozialismus und soziale Bewegung* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1908), 25.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PHILOSOPHY

#### *1. Paragons: Comte, Schopenhauer, Feuerbach*

The basic tenor of Dühring's philosophy is shaped by two of the most influential thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, who had lived in the same age, but had little to do with one another: Auguste Comte and Arthur Schopenhauer. Exact knowledge inspired by the Comtean method and the pugnacious and pessimistic individualism of Schopenhauer are the driving force behind Dühring's thought. To these most influential thinkers we add Ludwig Feuerbach, whose materialism and critique of religion also influenced Dühring's *Weltanschauung* substantially.<sup>143</sup>

As Dühring began to write about Comte in the middle of the 1860s, the French thinker was little read in Germany and was largely looked down upon by German scholars and leftist intellectuals alike.<sup>144</sup> Since his childhood days, and due to his father's influence, Dühring had a liking for France and particularly the ideas of Rousseau and the values of the French Revolution. What attracted Dühring to Comte most, however, was the Frenchman's new method of objective science, which proceeded from the basis of the material world and excluded metaphysics. Dühring was also convinced of the merits of Comte's philosophy of history. As much as he admired Comte, Dühring also saw him as embodying a ruinous contemporary tendency of neglecting the human emotional disposition in favor of a purely scientific way of looking at things. He published four essays on Comte and devoted an entire chapter of his history of philosophy to him.<sup>145</sup>

Comte, who in his younger years had been fascinated and inspired by the American Benjamin Franklin, advocated a "positivistic" approach involving a strict adherence to natural science

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<sup>143</sup> It will be shown below that Dühring was influenced by Kant, Leibnitz, and Hegel (all thinkers whom he also disparage at times) but it was Comte, Schopenhauer and Feuerbach who he tried to emulate most.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community 1890-1933*, 299 et seq. Marx also thought very little of Comte holding him for a reactionary. "Comte ist den Pariser Arbeitern bekannt als der Prophet des Kaisertums (der persönliche Diktatur) in der Politik, der kapitalistischen Herrschaft in der politischen Ökonomie, der Hierarchie in allen Sphären der menschlichen Tätigkeit, sogar in der Sphäre der Wissenschaft, und als der Autor eines neuen Katechismus mit einem neuen Papst und neuen Keiligen an Stelle der alten." "Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich," in MEW 17, 335-343.

<sup>145</sup> "Auguste Comte's politische Philosophie," *Grenzboten, Zeitschrift für Politik und Literatur* 4 (1864): 259-272. "Der Positivismus in der Philosophie," *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift* 3 (1865): 167 et seq.; "Auguste Comte und seine positive Philosophie," *Unsere Zeit. Deutsche Revue der Gegenwart* 2 (1866): 444 et seq.; "Auguste Comte's 'positive' Philosophie," *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 1 (1866): 257-260; KGP, 479-494.

and a rejection of all metaphysics; only observable phenomena are taken into account.<sup>146</sup> Dühring praises the rejection of metaphysical philosophy and, in one of his early essays on Comte, emphasizes that the intellect needs to raise itself to a new standpoint which ignores unsolvable contradictions.<sup>147</sup> He extols the fact that mathematics and analytical mechanics are the basis of Comte's knowledge. In the "objective method", mathematics, mechanics, physics, chemistry and physiology are the only categories of natural knowledge. The methods of these disciplines are to be applied to the social world. Dühring sees the Comtean principles as a means of ensuring that "metaphysical semblance of knowledge" and "forgery of our catalog of knowledge" are fought at every corner.

Early in his career Comte had negatively characterized the human faculty of abstraction. He wrote: "Humans originally began with the concrete, but soon raised themselves to abstract ideas, and the capability for abstraction which they developed in themselves seemed so beautiful to them, and they bloated their self-love to the extent that they began to despise the material world or at least that they considered it a reality subordinate to the ideal world".<sup>148</sup> Although a rationalist at heart, Dühring shares Comte's uneasiness towards human abstraction and makes the opposite of it, the concrete, the clear, the matter-of-fact the basis of his philosophy.

Despite the strengths of Comte's positivism, Dühring's position towards him is critical. He believes that Comte has neglected the aspect of human feeling in the matters of life. Comte did not understand that philosophy is not only a purely scientific matter, and that its focus is not only the extending of knowledge.<sup>149</sup> Comte's mistake is that he "leaves an area open, where the intellect has no field of activity", and thus "has no adequate means of defense when metaphysical presumptions get involved in this particular realm of the mind". The Frenchman therefore, as Dühring sees it, simply turns his back on superstition instead of fighting it properly.<sup>150</sup> As the mind and reality are directly connected with one another, all of the elements of thinking, including one's character and temperament, must be taken into consideration. The sphere of emotions cannot be fully separated from that of thought. This

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<sup>146</sup> Both Comte and Dühring looked to America for intellectual inspiration, Dühring in Carey, Comte in Franklin. Pickering says that the United States was Comte's first utopia. "It was interesting in development, science, industrial genius, comfort and the rational construction of government". Mary Pickering, *Auguste Comte. An Intellectual Biography*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 42. Comte read all of Franklin's writings and admired the American as a self-made man and as someone who stressed merit instead of birth and had faith in improvements through perseverance and willpower. *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>147</sup> Dühring, "Auguste Comtes politische Philosophie," 267.

<sup>148</sup> Comte, *Ecrits de jeunesse 1816-1828*, eds. Berrêdo Carneiro, Paulo E. (Paris: de Gruyter, 1970), 61.

<sup>149</sup> "Der Positivismus in der Philosophie," 172.

<sup>150</sup> KGP, 491.

“dark side” of Comte’s thinking, as he calls it, which leaves out the light of intuition and emotive issues is not merely a personal mistake of Comte’s, but rather, a tendency that has grown out of history.<sup>151</sup> Despite these reservations, he follows Comte’s general line of positivist thinking, believing that it provides a sound basis for modern thought: anything that claims validity in any form has to rely upon the intellect and science even when strong convictions and emotion are involved. Dühring went on to formulate the positivist motto: “Man deals with nothing but the ground under him, the air above him, and his own kind alongside him”.<sup>152</sup>

Alongside Comte, Dühring was most influenced in his early years by the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer.<sup>153</sup> Whereas Dühring values Comte for his scientific positivism, it is more the noble character and vital individualism which he admires most in Schopenhauer. He praises the clarity and order of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, as well as the philosopher’s special ability to find a large reading audience at a time when the sales of philosophical books were generally decreasing. In an era of dry, abstract scholasticism, Schopenhauer shows blunt honesty, refreshing vigor, and uncompromising directness – all traits which Dühring would try to emulate throughout his long career.<sup>154</sup> There was an undeniable affinity between the two thinkers. Both men are dissatisfied with the world as they see it before them. Dühring defends Schopenhauer’s pessimism, which he was otherwise strongly opposed to, as being a reaction to the corruption of his day.<sup>155</sup> He is also particularly impressed with Schopenhauer’s independence from academic philosophy and greatly appreciates his polemics against the university professors. Schopenhauer’s famous essay “On University Philosophy”, Dühring believes, is not merely an essay on higher education, but also a study with general philosophical significance; when it comes to his bearing towards academe, Dühring carries the torch for Schopenhauer, indeed so much so that he was seen as a “caricature of

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<sup>151</sup> Gustav Theodor Fechner had labelled the phenomenon of a purely mechanically materialist world the “night view“ (*Nachtsansicht*) which he contrasted with the the “day view” (*Tagesansicht*). Cf. Michael Heidelberger, *Die innere Seite der Natur. Gustav Theodor Fechers wissenschaftlich-philosophische Weltauffassung* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1993), 90-93. Dühring wrote a favorable book review on Fechner: “Fechner Psychophysik,” *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 2 (1867): 78-82.

<sup>152</sup> CP, 7. Dühring is careful to distance himself from the religious teachings formulated by Comte at the end of his career. Cf. KGP, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 517-518.

<sup>153</sup> In addition to his in depth portrayal of Schopenhauer in *The Worth of Life* and in his critical history, Dühring published three essays on the author of *The World as Will and Representation*. The three articles are titled: “Arthur Schopenhauer und die Bestrebungen unserer Zeit, I-IV,” *Vossische Zeitung* 79, 85, 90, 95 (1865); ; “Der Pessimismus in der Dichtung und Philosophie (Schopenhauer und Byron),“ *Deutsche Vierteljahrs-Schrift* 3 (1865): 189-215; “Arthur Schopenhauers Philosophie,” *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 1 (1866):193-196; cf. Also WL, *Vorrede* and 94-97.

<sup>154</sup> Like Dühring, Nietzsche drew inspiration from Schopenhauer, publishing a book on him in 1874 titled *Schopenhauer as Educator*.

<sup>155</sup> “Arthur Schopenhauer und die Bestrebungen unserer Zeit,” *Vossische Zeitung* 79 (1865): 1-2.

Schopenhauer".<sup>156</sup> Schopenhauer, according to Dühring, displays the conditions, circumstances, and strivings against which every independent philosophical mind has to fight, and against which Dühring was destined to fight as well.<sup>157</sup> He is molded by Schopenhauer's style, his behavior, and also his approach to developing his own philosophy. He also follows Schopenhauer's method of basing his own philosophy on a great precursor, whom is at first venerated and then subjected to fundamental critique.<sup>158</sup> This method of critique, which draws strength from ideas it rejects, as Albrecht points out, is particularly relevant for Dühring's work in social science: as Schopenhauer bases his entire philosophy on his critique of Kant, Dühring's bases his teachings on political economy on Carey, whom he also both criticizes and draws inspiration from.<sup>159</sup> Despite strongly disagreeing with his negative evaluation of life, Dühring sees Schopenhauer as an "epoch-making" philosopher due to the questions that he poses in which life is placed at the center of philosophical discussion.<sup>160</sup> Dühring's first book of philosophy, *The Worth of Life*, is devoted to the same questions on life which Schopenhauer posed and his confrontation with Schopenhauer's philosophy was a key element to his publishing strategy.<sup>161</sup> Schopenhauer succeeds, according to Dühring, at

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<sup>156</sup> Othmar Spann, *Types of Economic Theory*, in *Early Histories of Economic Thought 1824-1914*, ed. Roger E. Backhouse (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 208. Schopenhauer's influence on Dühring was characterized differently by contemporary philosophers. Conrad Hermann correctly saw the strong influence of Schopenhauer in Dühring's *Critical History of Philosophy*: "Überhaupt aber glauben wir das Dühringische Buch am Passenden durch die Auffassung der Geschichte der Philosophie vom Standpunkt und im Sinne des Schopenhauerschen Pessimismus charakterisieren zu können. [...] so kann doch der Dühringsche historisch philosophische Kritizismus wesentlich nur als ein Correlat und eine Fortsetzung der Schopenhauerschen Welt- und Lebensauffassung angesehen werden." Conrad Hermann, "Kritische Geschichte der Philosophie von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Von Eugen Dühring," *Philosophische Monatshefte* 3 (1869): 482. Hartmann, on the other hand, sees only Dühring's indignant pessimism towards Hegel as being authentically Schopenhauerian: "Man würde kaum auf den Gedanken kommen, Dühring zur Schopenhauer'schen Schule zu rechnen, wenn er nicht mit dieser in der Abneigung und Missachtung gegen die übrigen nachkantischen Philosophen Deutschlands übereinstimmte und Schopenhauer als den einzigen wirklichen Philosophen dieses Jahrhunderts auf den Schild erhöbe". Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophischen Fragen der Gegenwart* (Leipzig, et al.: Wilhelm Friedrich, 1885), 48.

<sup>157</sup> KGP, 447. Dühring publicly scolded a senior "living legend" of German philosophy, Hermann Lotze, for intentionally ignoring Schopenhauer in his *History of Aesthetics in Germany*. Cf. "Lotze, Geschichte der Aesthetik in Deutschland," *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 3 (1968): 387. Two years earlier he had also written a critical review of another book of Lotze's. Cf. "Lotze, Mikrokosmos, Ideen zur Naturgeschichte und Geschichte der Menschheit," *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 1 (1866): 513-516. As was shown above, this may have had repercussions for Dühring's career when Lotze was asked to write a recommendation for Dühring for a professorship in Jena.

<sup>158</sup> Nietzsche applies this method in an even more radical form. The critique of his paragons, e.g. Wagner, Dühring, Hartmann, becomes personal and insulting, almost as if his former teachers should never have been read (or listened to in the case of Wagner) in the first place.

<sup>159</sup> Albrecht, ED, 46.

<sup>160</sup> Dühring writes that he is a follower of Schopenhauer, "sobald es gilt, diesem Philosophen seine einzige Stellung nach Kant zu vindizieren, dass ich aber, was die Ansichten anbetrifft, und zumal in der Frage der Wertschätzung des Lebens wohl von niemand diametraler als gerade von jenem pessimistischen Weisen abgewichen sein möchte." Dühring, WL, VI. Albrecht points out that Dühring's style of writing emulates Schopenhauer's nearly to the point of copying some of his unusual phraseology. Albrecht, ED, 47. Friedell on the other hand contrasts the two, polemically disparaging Dühring's style. Cf. *Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit*, 1299.

<sup>161</sup> Dühring was able to strike a nerve with the German audience of the 1860s with his book, as evidenced by

formulating the attitude of consciousness towards life and the world in a completely new way. By questioning the worth of life, Schopenhauer opens new avenues of philosophical discourse. Despite Schopenhauer's stature as a unique individual, Dühring sees him as an historical force which came about as a reaction to the moral decay of the time. Schopenhauer becomes, as it were, a necessary ointment for the danger that the age posed to the individual.<sup>162</sup> He is also valued for his commitment to advancing knowledge: Dühring honors Schopenhauer's experiential or empirical point of departure, which has its foundation in natural science; he compliments Schopenhauer for emphasizing that natural science is an essential pre-requisite of philosophy.<sup>163</sup> Dühring's emphasis on instinct as a source of cognition, as well as his attempt to use a material principle as the basis for law (justice being equated with revenge) is also of Schopenhauer an origin.<sup>164</sup>

As similar as the two men were, they differed not only in terms of their temperaments, but also with regard to the focus of their research and study. Schopenhauer was not at all well versed in exact natural science, Dühring's area of expertise, and Dühring seems to have had very little knowledge of biology, an area in which Schopenhauer distinguished himself. It should also be emphasized that Dühring is vehemently opposed to important aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy and remains unaffected by some of the philosopher's most important results. Dühring thinks nothing of Schopenhauer's thesis that the human intellect is of secondary importance compared with man's organic nature. Schopenhauer gives a critique of the intellect seeing it as a fragmentary, scattered and forgetful faculty, destined to lose vitality as it gets older. As will be shown below, Dühring's "Philosophy of the Actual" has an unerring faith in the intellect, which it views as a united entity equipped to determine man's fate. Schopenhauer's concern with subconscious factors affecting the mind draws sharp criticism from Dühring. His method of philosophizing from the perspective of the human body rather than from consciousness, which Galen sees as an "epoch making" discovery of Schopenhauer's, is not even considered by Dühring, nor is Schopenhauer's insight into religion, which is also valued by Galen.<sup>165</sup> However, Dühring completely accepts

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Friedrich Nietzsche's quote that he read Dühring's *The Worth of Life* "to find out what he had on Schopenhauer and what he did not". Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 8, ed.azzino Monintari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 129.

<sup>162</sup> Dühring writes: "Das Beste an Schopenhauer hat darin bestanden, daß er die moralischen Häßlichkeiten im Großen und im Kleinen, im Ganzen der Gesellschaft wie in den einzelnen Repräsentanten zu treffen wußte." Dühring, "Gegenwärtige Philosophie," 345.

<sup>163</sup> „John Stuart Mill,“ op. cit., 921.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. KGV, 330. Schopenhauer saw compassion (*Mitleid*) as the basis of morality. Cf. *The Basis of Morality* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1915).

<sup>165</sup> Arnold Gehlen, "Die Resultate Schopenhauers," in *Gedächtnisschrift für Arthur Schopenhauer*, eds. C. A. Emge and O. v. Schweinichen (Berlin: Verlag für Staatswissenschaften und Geschichte, 1938), 102.

Schopenhauer's anti-Cartesian thesis that the body and soul cannot be separated and emphasizes the phenomena of consciousness, often referred to as psyche, as "an action" ephemeral by nature.<sup>166</sup> Despite substantial differences between the two thinkers, Malia von Meysenbug is probably correct in concluding that, "Schopenhauer would have approved of Dühring, just as Dühring approved of Schopenhauer".<sup>167</sup>

The thought of Ludwig Feuerbach is also of substantial importance for Dühring's worldview. Feuerbach found many followers in Germany with his critique of Christianity and went on to influence an entire generation of continental thinkers with the anthropological notion that the concept of God consists of mere projections of the human mind. The Christian principles of love and solidarity, he believed, are not a sign of God's love of man, but actually stem from humans ourselves. Religion is deleterious as it deprives and alienates the believer from autonomy, virtue and community.<sup>168</sup> Feuerbach writes, "For even love, in itself the deepest truest emotion, becomes merely ostensible, illusory by means of religiousness, since religious love gives itself to man only for God's sake, so that it is given only in appearance to man, but in reality to God."<sup>169</sup> Dühring deals with Feuerbach's philosophy in *The Worth of Life* and in 1866 wrote a review of the philosopher's book *Gotttheit, Freiheit und Unsterblichkeit*. He also portrays him positively in *Critical History of Philosophy* from 1869.<sup>170</sup>

Feuerbach, Dühring writes, is a specialist for the area of religion in the field of philosophy. In terms of the "typology of scholars", referenced in General Introduction, he can be considered

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<sup>166</sup> CP, 133. Dühring does not pursue this weighty thought, which Schopenhauer elaborated on in §18 of the *World as Will and Representation*.

<sup>167</sup> *Briefe von und an Malwida von Meysenbug*, ed. Berta Schleicher (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1926), 68.

<sup>168</sup> Feuerbach's influence in the English speaking world, much like Dühring's, was minimal. His works were not translated into English until the 1940s and Friedrich Hayek was of the opinion that there was no need to have translated them at all. Cf. Hayek, Untitled review, in *Economica, New Series* 8 (Nov. 1941): 460. Dühring and Feuerbach did not know each other personally, but we know from a letter written by Dühring to Carl Ubell, the editor of the Austrian *Grazer Zeitung*, that Feuerbach said of Dühring that he was very happy that "there exists someone in the north, who has portrayed me favorably in the history of philosophy." Cf. Dühring's letter to Carl Ubell, *Briefe des Philosophen und Nationalökonomen Eugen Dühring im Nachlaß Carl Ubells*, Brief Nr.32. Later Dühring would write a review of Feuerbach's last book which did not please the latter. Feuerbach believed that Dühring had portrayed him as "worn out Hegelian" and fires back in a letter to the Finnish philosopher Wilhelm Bolin that Dühring is an example of the "German philosophy becoming senile". In German it reads, "Unmittelbar von dem erhebenden Gedanken an die Homerische Poesie führt mich ja die Fortsetzung meines unterbrochenen Briefes zu einem deutschen philosoph(ischen) oder jetzt nationalökonom(ischen) Dozenten und Schriftsteller, einem Rezensenten meiner letzten Schrift. Diese von meinem Buchhändler, nebst zwei anderen, mir zugesandte Rezension ist aber nur ein neuer Beweis, daß die deutsche Philosophie von Alterschwäche kindisch geworden ist. Kleinliches Wortgekläube, vermischt mit Sophismen erbärmlichster Art! Es tut mir leid, dieses Urteil über Herren Dühring aussprechen zu müssen, da vielleicht nur sein körperliches Unglück seine eines, noch dazu abgelebten Hegelianers würde Rezension zu verantworten hat." Ludwig Feuerbach to Wilhelm Bolin 1 July 1867, in *Ludwig Feuerbach. Gesammelte Werke, Briefwechsel V*, ed. Werner Schuffenhauer (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), 307-309.

<sup>169</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, 48.

<sup>170</sup> KGP, 497-503. Here Feuerbach is only dealt with in a part of one chapter. In the later editions he receives an entire chapter to himself.

a “mono-typical scholar”, standing in contrast to the more universally oriented Dühring.<sup>171</sup> Despite Feuerbach’s fixation on one main aspect of thought, Dühring values his efforts at helping to create clarity in the realm of religion. He also praises Feuerbach’s view of history, which he sees as a more natural approach, delving deeper into occurrences by looking to the anthropological roots of historical phenomenology. Whereas thinkers such as Strauss and Bauer had based their critique of Christianity on theology, Feuerbach proceeds in a more fruitful manner. In reference to David Stauss’ attempt to historicize Jesus Christ, Dühring writes:

It is completely different when Strauss researches theology and Feuerbach religion. The former’s task involves scholarship in the framework of the tradition of schooled theology. The latter involves real philosophy, lively immersion in the essence of religion and religions and a conclusive exclusion of the more or less coincidental scholarly elements which religious teachings have accepted depending upon the needs of lower or higher culture.<sup>172</sup>

Feuerbach defined philosophy as being exclusively physiology and anthropology. There are thus two objects of philosophy: nature and man. A third element such as God is to be categorized a mere a figment of the imagination. Theology, he professed, should be a small chapter of the subject of anthropology. Dühring agrees with this assessment and emphasizes that Feuerbach’s positive conclusions for philosophy came only after he gave up the baggage of the Hegelian philosophy; he is convinced that Feuerbach’s views on religion are directly opposed to Hegel’s and regrets that Feuerbach distanced himself from the Hegelian philosophy so late.<sup>173</sup>

Feuerbach issued a harsh criticism of historicism, advocating what he saw as “critical anti-historicism” in the writings of Kant, Fichte, Herder, Lessing, Goethe und Schiller. These men, as he saw it, “strictly differentiated between history and truth.”<sup>174</sup> Similar to Dühring later on, Feuerbach warned in 1839 of shying away in fear from applying healthy impulse to the present.<sup>175</sup> Dühring agrees with Feuerbach’s thoughts on religion and historicism, but he holds

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<sup>171</sup> “Ludwig Feuerbach, Gottfreiheit und Unsterblichkeit,” 1. Here it reads, “Ludwig Feuerbach war innerhalb der Philosophie [...] stets Spezialist; seine Spezialität ist von Anfang bis zu Ende dieselbe geblieben, und er hat gegenwärtig in der Tat die Genugtuung, das religiöse Interesse in Richtungen wachgerufen zu sehen, in denen sich Deutschland längst nicht mehr bewegte.”

<sup>172</sup> “Ludwig Feuerbach, Gottfreiheit und Unsterblichkeit,” 2. About five years later, Nietzsche would issue Strauss a scathing critique in the first of his *Untimely Meditations*.

<sup>173</sup> KGP, 4th edition, 467.

<sup>174</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. VII, 77, cf. also 130 *et seq.*

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Annette Wittkau, *Historismus. Zur Geschichte des Begriffs und des Problems* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994 [1st ed. 1992]), 199. Feuerbach was attacked by Hegelians such as Christlieb Julius Braniß. Braniß first became a Hegelian after the failed revolution of 1848 and gave lectures at Breslau University at the same time that Dühring’s mentor Ernst Otto Lindner was expelled from the university for having an „unchristian

Feuerbach's religious views to be insufficient, arguing against his claim that the belief in the value of religion was exclusively rooted in ideas whose object was man. Expressing the strain of realism characteristic of his thought, Dühring asserts: "Religious affects are not so limited that they are only applied to the human or to human image. Religion is historically a universal affect that is only very artificially forced into the framework of the human".<sup>176</sup> By and large, however, he sees Feuerbach's efforts as an historical step forward in the consideration of religion, which should be used occasionally to guide the way in discourse on religion. Dühring writes:

As the natural path in the development of thought is accompanied by the progression from mere historical criticism of empirical facts to the inner critique of religious affects, the Feuerbachian religious philosophy, regardless of its correctness or incorrectness, involves looking beyond the level of a pure historical view in favor of a lively interest in the direct content of those affects.<sup>177</sup>

Feuerbach took part with Schopenhauer and Comte in the dissolution of the traditional concept of God: the essence of religion is now independent of the idea of God, which Nietzsche alluded to with Zarathustra's proclamation that "God is dead". It might be said that Dühring values Comte, Schopenhauer, and Feuerbach, as thinkers who defied the heavens.

## 2. *Basic Concept of Philosophy*

Dühring defines philosophy as "the evolution of the highest form of consciousness of life and the world". It is the pinnacle of freedom and rules out any authority in the strict sense of the word. It is not a dormant view of the world, but rather a "restless active principle of shaping life in general". Philosophical consciousness is more than mere knowledge; it is "a sensation of instincts, in which desire finds conscious expression". It contains basic elements common to all forms of knowledge and is not limited exclusively to human consciousness.<sup>178</sup> Originally known as the "love of knowledge", philosophy presupposes a "highest knowledge", as well as a best and most productive way of implementing this knowledge.<sup>179</sup> Those who possess the highest philosophical consciousness will always be a very small minority, but for the social reformer Dühring, the development of philosophy is not limited to this elite. As history progresses and science develops, the natural barriers, which had given access of philosophy to only a select few, are broken so that the "highest form of

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way of thinking ("eine unchristliche Gesinnung").

<sup>176</sup> WL, 187.

<sup>177</sup> KGP, 469.

<sup>178</sup> CP, 2-3.

<sup>179</sup> WP, 1.

consciousness”, which is philosophy, morphs, becomes simplified and then something which is more than mere philosophy. Dühring sees philosophy gaining a new intellectual status in modernity through its ability to create new mindsets and intellectual leadership.<sup>180</sup>

He calls his system the “Philosophy of the Actual” (*Wirklichkeitsphilosophie*), which is fittingly – and intentionally - formulated to contrast with the speculative idealism of the generations preceding him.<sup>181</sup> Rejecting every form of irrational mysticism, the Philosophy of the Actual’s subject is the world of senses that we have in front of us, nothing more and nothing less: philosophy deals with *matter*. Dühring’s basic point of departure is a calm and calculated epistemology that soon, rather surprisingly, develops into ontology and metaphysics (although he avoids the latter term completely). Consciousness is a concentrated focal point, which like all elements of the Actual is a “whole”. When thought tries to turn the world into an object, it reaches a level of abstraction that borders on non-thought. Starting with the concept of a primordial or universal being (*das allgemeine Sein*), the Actual is posited on epistemological premises which are developed in Dühring’s dissertation *De tempore, spatio, causalitate atque de analysis infinitesimales logic* (*On Time, Space, Causality and the Analysis of Infinitesimal Logic*) as well as in his first book, *Natural Dialectic*. Like Martin Heidegger over half a century later, Dühring is convinced that metaphysics has gone awry for over two thousand years. He sets out to go back to the roots of philosophy in the ancient world and, as it were, pick up the problem from there. Turning to the early pre-Socratic thought of the Eleatics, and using modern principles of logic, he aims at creating a new modern form of ontology.<sup>182</sup>

An important aspect of philosophy for Dühring involves adopting certain mindsets that have existed in the past. He labels this process, somewhat clumsily, the “rational transmission of

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<sup>180</sup> This view, implied in his earlier work, is articulated most clearly in one of his later works *The Philosophy of the Actual* (*Wirklichkeitsphilosophie*) published in 1895. Cf. WP, 1 et seq. Plechanov emphasizes the role between the personality and the masses in Dühring’s thought in 1878. The Russian wrote, “Dühring, who completely recognizes the influence of the personalities on the course of societal development, adds that the action of the personality has to have wide support in the moods of the masses.” Plechanow, “Das Gesetz der ökonomischen Entwicklung der Gesellschaft und die Aufgaben des Sozialismus in Rußland.” Quoted from: Rjazanov, “50 Jahre Anti-Dühring,” 466-478.

<sup>181</sup> We have intentionally chosen to speak of philosophy of the “Actual” instead of philosophy of “Reality”. Dühring himself emphasizes that in German “Wirklichkeit” and “Realität” have subtly different meanings. The term “Actual” appears to us more fitting as it brings the essence of what is being described “closer in”, so to speak; *Wirklichkeit* is immanent and “the Actual” conveys this well. “Reality”, on the other hand, points more to an abstract status or quality. When Dühring speaks of “being” there is usually a sense of nearness or something impending which in our opinion makes “the actual” the better choice than “reality” in our opinion. In calling Dühring’s system the “Philosophy of the Actual” we follow the lead of the American George Holmes Howison (1834-1916), the founder of the department of philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley and the Philosophical Union, who wrote extensively on Dühring in his article “Some Aspects of Recent German Philosophy,” op. cit..

<sup>182</sup> Cf. SLF, 108-109.

disposition” (*die rationale Mitteilung der Gesinnungen*). The “disposition” of which he speaks is something that exists above all historical conjunctures, enabling the individual to go back in time and to become united with other thinkers of a kindred instinctual spirit. This aspect of Dühring’s concept of philosophy, to be dealt with in detail in Chapter Five below, suffers somewhat from a vagueness of expression, but is a key element of his understanding of “the Actual”.<sup>183</sup> “*Gesinnung*” is not simply *any* attitude or inclination of thought, but rather a certain enlightened conviction, based on intellectual insight and rugged individualism. The certain disposition that he describes is embodied by the “defiant outsider”, whose existence is part of the phenomenology of the Actual, exerting itself throughout history. The heroic manner of thinking which Dühring has in mind involves thought, willpower, knowledge, and especially noble behavior; it is on the one hand an active impulse and on the other a passive reflection. The active component involves a sense of justice and a healthy dose of indignant pessimism; the passive consists of compliant reflection and of letting oneself become influenced by the great enlightened outsiders from the past.<sup>184</sup>

A salient feature of Dühring’s thinking, which we will be referring to time and again, is what the Danish philosopher Harold Höffding has labeled Dühring’s inclination for emphasizing “fertilizing fundamental notions” (“*Anfangsdenken*”) of cognitive phenomena.<sup>185</sup> In the Dühringian metaphysics there was never an “ancient creation of life” (*eine Urzeugung des Lebens*) from something out of nothing. There is in all development an “original type” from which subsequent forms of life develop; this type is a nucleus of sorts, which, in many ways, still prevails and is even more true to life than what follows it historically. Otherwise a representative of leftist-liberalism, through this idea of fundamental notions Dühring’s philosophy is given a noticeably conservative element in this respect. He is often more concerned with the fixed basic elements of social phenomena as opposed to how they are set in motion or progress. A system of experience, as Dühring portrays it, consists of basic principles of the world and of life that are the simplest prerequisites from which thinking has to precede. These principles are the last components on which every form of proof lies when making deductions. Dühring delineates the different branches of the Philosophy of the Actual as follows: at the top of the individual disciplines is logic and metaphysics (or, as he writes,

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<sup>183</sup> Wilhelm Dilthey, born in the same year as Dühring and his colleague at the Berlin University, correctly speaks of Dühring’s “vagueness of expression” and that facts and concepts are “not as sharply delineated as you would like to see them be”. “Karl Eugen Dühring, Kritische Geschichte der Nationalökonomie und des Sozialismus”, in *Wilhelm Dilthey Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 17, ed. Karlfried Gründer (Leipzig et al.: Teubner, 1971), 360-361.

<sup>184</sup> KGP, 1-3; CP, 3-4.

<sup>185</sup> Harold Höffding, *A History of Modern Philosophy*, vol. 2, 551.

“dialectics in general”), to which psychology also belongs. The second part consists of natural science and the third is the “realm of man” (morals, natural science, the philosophy of history, critique of religion as well as esthetics). Philosophy functions as an intermediary between the individual disciplines and is not only a unification of the principle content of the positive sciences, but also consists of all principles and has the practical calling to reform life.<sup>186</sup>

In the foundation of these principles, Dühring rejects the traditions of metaphysical dualism in what amounts to a radically immanent approach. The Actual entails an interplay between the “persistent” and the “changing”. Both factors together make up a *whole* that is the vital nerve of the *Actual*. There is no dichotomy, separating a realm of human thought and sensation from the rest of nature.<sup>187</sup> However, philosophy should not try to take all of the preconditions of knowledge under its authority, but rather should recognize its relationship to “logical truths”. The Actual is a *totality* that has a systematic outline and a logical consequence. He writes, “Nature and history have a constitution and development whose essence largely corresponds to the general logical relationships of all concepts”.<sup>188</sup> Altogether, the field of philosophy is given enormous importance for the development of elevated consciousness; it is assigned the task of unifying thought, inspiring action, and forming life. The power of the human intellect can be trusted to rationally shape the world in which we live. Our thought is objective and real. Never just an abstraction, our thought is always a new setting of the Actual. Thought is reality, and, it seems, reality is thought. Dühring writes, “The nature of the world is a mind – this should not be forgotten – an embodied and largely at the same time *right* mind”.<sup>189</sup>

### 3. *Epistemology and Metaphysics*

Following the work of Kant and Schopenhauer, Dühring initiates his philosophy with a theory of knowledge which aims at keeping the intellect in check by defining the boundaries of

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<sup>186</sup> CP, 10. Dühring later creates a pyramid of knowledge at the top of which is “knowledge in general” followed by “metaphysics” (Seinsschematik, d.h. Struktuiierung von Sein durch universelles Denken), then “logic”, below that “mathematics”, then “physics and the higher natural sciences”, “natural history”, the “social world of man”, and finally “political economy”. SLF, 307.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 33-34. We will see below how this view with its roots in the science of the Enlightenment contrasts with the ideas of the representatives of German historicism. Droysen, the founder of the “Borussian school of history and the most significant German theoretician of history” (Hardtwig), spoke even of a “duality of human nature”. Cf. *Historik: Vorlesung über Enzyklopädie und Methodologie der Geschichte*, ed. Rudolf Hübner (München: Oldenbourg), 9. See also *Über das Studium der Geschichte*, ed. Wolfgang Hardtwig (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1990), 83-85.

<sup>188</sup> CP, 11.

<sup>189</sup> In German this reads: “Die Weltnatur ist Geist, daran halten wir fest – verkörperter und im großen und ganzen zugleich *r e c h t e r* Geist.” *Personalist und Emancipator* (March 1912): 2370. He sees the Kantian tendency to denigrate the intellect as a favorite pastime of sophistic scholars and writes: “So wird beispielsweise die Kantische Manier, den Verstand von seiner Souveränität gut kritisch abdanken zu lassen, heute wirklich eine Nahrung für Gelehrtenblasiertheit”. LW, 501.

“how” we know and “what” we can know. As just indicated, his critical approach leads him to a higher estimation of the intellect than either of his two predecessors. The basis of his epistemology, as mentioned, is established in his dissertation, written under Trendelenburg and Kummer, entitled *On Time, Space, Causality and the Analysis of Infinitesimal Logic*. This work, written one year after Schopenhauer’s death and launching Dühring’s career in academe in 1861, critically examines the concept of eternity. Four years later, his ideas were presented in the book *Natural Dialectic*, which established his reputation in the broader public.<sup>190</sup> Dühring attempts to refute any general doubt about the objective power of the intellect while at the same time showing a certain skepticism towards reason and the inherent dangers of intellectual abstraction. Similar to Leibnitz, who believed that mathematics transcribed the whole of philosophy, Dühring begins his epistemology with the concept of the number, which he sees as having deep significance for the thought of man. Every number is independent and finite. There is no such thing as an infinite accumulation backwards in time; there is no such thing as infinite causality and there is no infinite space. Instead of accepting infinity, he defines what he terms the “Law of the Determinate Number”, which postulates that all thinkable numbers are complete and fixed.<sup>191</sup> Only the unfinished in the collection of numbers can entail infinity, because only that which is not yet ended, i.e. is not yet complete, takes on something else. A counted infinity is therefore preposterous and the notion of an infinite number is a false and logically contradictory figment of the imagination. Every number that exists must be divisible into a finite number of parts; correspondingly, the natural world must be limited and must have had an absolute beginning (although as we have seen a “creation from nothing” is vehemently rejected). The division of matter must also have a limit. These notions stem from Dühring’s study of pre-Socratic philosophy and make a point held by the Eleatics, in which a singleness of the cosmic principle existing in or behind the change of things is postulated. Parmenides concluded that only one abstract unchanging Being exists. The method of only accepting what is fixed, and in itself united, paves the way for Dühring’s understanding of knowledge.

In the *Natural Dialectic* Dühring concludes that Kant is incorrect in believing that our knowledge of the world is not objective. Cognition and objective truth are indeed possible. Kant, he writes, forgot to ask the question as to the nature of our basic logical insight, i.e.

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<sup>190</sup> Höffding calls *Natural Dialectic* “one of the most admirable epistemological works of the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century”. *A History of Modern Philosophy*, op. cit., 551. Hans Vaihinger wrote, “ein höchst anregendes und ungemein scharfsinniges Werk, das den Ruf Dührings mit Recht begründet”. *Hartmann, Dühring, und Lange*, 217.

<sup>191</sup> On Dühring’s concept of time see Small, “Dühring, Nietzsche and Time,” *The Journal of the History of Philosophy* 28 (April: 1990): 229-250.

“what it is and what are its consequences”.<sup>192</sup> A critical philosophy that denies the objectivity of categories is not in accord with our thought the way it really is and degrades the intellect.<sup>193</sup> Space, time, and causation are objective and finite categories of the Actual. Human consciousness is objectivity; it is not a copy of things, as the theory of dualism would have it. We can presume that “being” and “thought” are homogenous and that there is a formal logic which has absolute significance for the Actual. In his high appraisal of the intellect, Dühring separates himself not only from Kant and Schopenhauer, but also from Comte’s positivism, which makes no claims to final and complete knowledge of how things are.<sup>194</sup>

Dühring defines “natural dialectic” as a higher form of logic that has the task of keeping the intellect on the straight and narrow, avoiding the difficulties that confuse human thought.<sup>195</sup> Although the Philosophy of the Actual forbids the duality between mind and body, Dühring’s train of thought is dualistic as far as it, on the one hand, follows the intellect and, on the other, adheres to sensual perception. When in doubt, the intellect always takes precedence, serving as the higher tribunal that filters impure perception. When the intellect goes beyond its boundaries and founders, as for example in creating the concept of infinity, the “natural dialectic” or “logic”, as one would have it, are there to lead the way out of the difficulties. Even certain crutches of our thought, such as the principle of sufficient reason, should not be readily accepted as it can become a dogma, which can lead the intellect astray. The question “why” is, according to Dühring, not always applicable.<sup>196</sup>

For Dühring, the Actual is always a united and undividable *totality* and thus it is logical that the role of abstraction is kept to a minimum in his epistemology, if not ruled out completely. Dühring is wary of what is merely “man made” as separated from “nature”. With this inclination, he belongs to a modern trajectory going back to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: thinkers such as Malebranche and Berkeley had attempted to eliminate abstraction completely

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<sup>192</sup> ND, 16.

<sup>193</sup> CP, 38.

<sup>194</sup> CP, 42. Dühring also rebukes Spinoza, who had great respect for the intellect’s objective value, for not recognizing the power of imagination in his system. Cf. Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> His distinction between “logic” and “dialectic” suffers from vagueness or imprecision. Logic, as a method providing clarity in a pure abstract isolated form, differs from dialectic, which provides clarity in the process of becoming. Perhaps the term “natural logic” would have been more fitting as a title than “natural dialectic”; the second edition, in which he opts to insert “logic” in the title, on the other hand, might have been better with “dialectic” in the title as he also deals with practical processes of scientific theory, e.g. his including a critique of the universities and the development of the ideal type of the martyr in science, etc.

<sup>196</sup> ND, 14; CP, 36. Nietzsche was of the same opinion: “Man soll sich der “Ursache”, der “Wirkung” eben nur als reiner Begriffe bedienen, das heißt als Konventioneller Fiktionen zum Zwecke der Bezeichnung, der Verständigung, nicht der Erklärung”. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, 30.

and Schopenhauer had supported their critical perspective.<sup>197</sup> Such pursuits tended to minimize Reason (*Vernunft*), as the faculty of abstraction, in favor to “Understanding” (*Verstand*), involving direct perception and as the measure of causality. John Locke, who had made the Understanding the topic of his ground-breaking work *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (II, 11, §10-11) concluded that Reason is something specific to humans, and, in the general activity of thinking, deserves a special place and priority.

Dürring is extremely wary of mere abstraction, and does not believe that Reason and Understanding should be distinguished from one another:

To see in Reason an ability to analyze, draw conclusions, and make final summaries of the elements of thought is a very idle task; for why should the one and only activity of the intellect, which is constantly repeated, be traced back to a qualitatively different power of thought? Or why should complete and conclusive insight, which runs through the chain of elements, be different in its creative function than one of its parts? It is harmful scholasticism to make differentiations that cannot be proven for the functions of the mind, nor have any sense for material and provably perceptible theoretical considerations.<sup>198</sup>

The Philosophy of the Actual thus gives no special priority to the concept of Reason, i.e. the agent of abstraction. It conflates Reason with Understanding, in most cases choosing to use the term *Verstand*, which can be translated simply as the Intellect.<sup>199</sup> The Intellect, according to Dürring, cannot be identified directly, but is rather to be ascertained by what it produces in the realm of science. The elaborate epistemological attempts of Kant remain for Dürring scholasticism as long as “the tool of the Intellect, i.e. the corresponding parts of the brain, cannot be judged according to their performance like other perceptive tools”.<sup>200</sup> Schopenhauer had emphasized the difference between Reason, as the creator of concepts, and the

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<sup>197</sup> Cf. Joachim Kopper, “Schopenhauer über Philosophie und Abstraction,” in *Zeit der Ernte Studien zum Stand der Schopenhauer-Forschung. Festschrift für Arthur Hübscher zum 85. Geburtstag. Im Namen des Vorstandes der Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft*, ed. Wolfgang Schirmacher (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1982), 330.

<sup>198</sup> CP, 178. After his statement, Dürring surprisingly goes on to write that the term reason could actually be used. He writes: “Wohl aber können wir in den Antrieben aller Art die Wurzeln eines praktischen Verständnisses und Verstandesgebrauchs antreffen, dem wir mit Fug und Recht den besonderen Namen Vernunft beilegen mögen. Die Vernunft könnte hiernach sogar als die durch den Verstand erzeugte Einheit der Triebe und Leidenschaften angesehen werden, so dass sie die Einigung des mannigfaltigen Strebens zu einem nach bewussten Gründen bestimmten Willen wäre”. Ibid., 178 et seq. Hans Blüher is convinced that “Reason” and “Understanding” are different faculties of the mind and believes that the medical findings on the phenomenon of agnosia have proved it. Cf. *Achse der Natur. System der Philosophie als Lehre von den reinen Ereignissen der Natur* (Hamburg-Bergedorf: Stromverlag, 1949), 358-359.

<sup>199</sup> Hans Driesch, a popular academic philosopher of the 1920s who follows Dürring using the term “Wirklichkeitsphilosophie”, also does not distinguish between Reason and Understanding. Cf. *Ordnungslehre. Ein System des nichtmetaphysischen Teiles der Philosophien* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs), 4.

<sup>200</sup> LW, 75.

Understanding, which is limited to determining causality.<sup>201</sup> The lack of distinction between the two terms in Dühring's Philosophy of the Actual is symptomatic for its skepticism towards abstraction, which we will be encountering throughout this paper. The concrete perceptive elements of the *here and now* are real and objective, and thus gain an importance that mere rational or abstract elements of thought do not have.<sup>202</sup> The essence of the Intellect for Dühring consists of "recognizing of the grounds, in other words, the perception of context".<sup>203</sup> This perspective, geared towards intellectual discernment of "what is" signifies, we hold, a reflection of his general proclivity towards realism and pragmatism.

In *Cursus of Philosophy*, published a decade after the foundation of his philosophy in the mid 1860s, Dühring broadens the scope of the Actual to include the important and, for a positivist unusual, factor of "Rational Imagination".<sup>204</sup> Although extremely skeptical of "half products" of isolated abstraction, as he calls them, he emphasizes Rational Imagination as a constructive force in the process of perception itself; it offers the realm of *possibility*. This "inventive power" cannot create from nothing, and thus remains chained to the facts of experience; yet it embodies human freedom at its best. It has the ability to "compose" from what is given by experience. Dühring is convinced that the inner workings of Rational Imagination are to a certain degree on par with how nature functions itself. If this were not the case, he reasons, then there would never be the chance of gaining ideal insight into existence. Without Rational Imagination, we would be forced into a slavish reproduction of facts alone.<sup>205</sup> Thus abstraction does creep into the Philosophy of the Actual, not as an agent of idle analysis, but as an inventive tool or a catalyst. Dühring recognizes imagination's value in art – poetry in particular has a role to play – but, in his opinion, its value for science has gone little noticed. The concrete Intellect remains fixed on an immediate or future reality and in this sense can perform scientific anticipation. It is a productive impulse and a key to the riddles of the

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<sup>201</sup> On the history of the distinction between the concepts of reason and understanding, cf. Franco Volpi, "Vernunft/Verstand, B. VII. 19. und 20. J", in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 11 (Basel: Schwabe & Co., 2001), 833-838. The distinction between the two concepts is a key doctrine of Schopenhauer's philosophy, which repeats itself in nearly all of his works. For a summary, see "Vernunft" and "Verstand" in *Schopenhauer-Lexikon*, vol. 2, ed. Julius Frauenstädt (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1871), 436-438;441-443. See also Volpi, "Schopenhauers Unterscheidung von Vernunft und Verstand und ihre begriffliche Relevanz," 279-297.

<sup>202</sup> It must be emphasized, however, that although the intuitive powers within the intellect take precedence over the abstract ones, Dühring's emphasis on the importance of the intellect in general causes his thought to be predominantly rational in its nature.

<sup>203</sup> CP, 180.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 180-182.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 46.

history of science. Rational Imagination is not only a part of the Actual; it is in a sense also higher and superior to its other components.<sup>206</sup>

Consciousness itself, according to Dühring, is based on something that does not exist in thought. That which enables us to think is what enables nature to work. While admitting that consciousness is fragmentary, we should not, in Dühring's opinion, follow the example of Schopenhauer (later it would be Hartmann, Nietzsche, and Freud) and see the unconscious factors as being higher than and superior to the conscious ones. True free will is not to be found in irrational "mysterious freedom" (*Zauberfreiheit*), but rather in objective elements of the mind and its creations, of which consciousness is a part. Ultimate freedom involves "acting according to principles, and thereby letting the given essence of one's own being come into play. All instinct and urges, all lower and higher interests, all passion and energy and finally all insights and purposes are given their due".<sup>207</sup> Freedom thus involves principles as well as *behavior* and is highly individual and instinctual. It is also a product of objective principles (institutions and facts) created by man which determine the prevailing urges and intellectual forces within us.<sup>208</sup>

Dühring's philosophy also contains metaphysical elements in the form of an "illustration of the world" (*Weltschematik*), which represents the intellect applied to the highest principles of the Actual. The original illustration, which is also the most elementary, is a *totality*. The Actual, as universal being, is singular and accordingly the world was something in which everything was once unified and unmoving. As we have mentioned, there was never an "ancient creation" (*Urzeugung*) from the non-living to the living: at some point and for some unknown reason, the primordial being began to develop and, according to Dühring, this development cannot regress. The world exists between two points and is heading to an unknown final conclusion.<sup>209</sup> The Actual creates from within, without changing its *totality*. There are no recurring patterns, but rather "persistent elements", which function amid change.

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<sup>206</sup> Although Dühring first applies the concept of Rational Imagination in *Cursus of Philosophy* (1875), interestingly, an early article of Dühring's from 1866 mentions the importance of imagination, citing – of all people – Goethe, whom he would later mock and defame, as someone who successfully applied imagination in the area of natural science. Cf. "William Whewell," op. cit., 847.

<sup>207</sup> CNS, 67. There is an element of Schopenhauer's understanding of freedom here, but ultimately Dühring defines the term in a completely different manner. Schopenhauer emphasized the scholastic phrase "operari sequitur esse" (doing follows being). Cf. *Prize Essay on the Freedom of the Will*, ed. Günter Zöllner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 51. For Dühring, "collective and organized activity" plays a role in freedom and thus societal or manmade entities in the concept of freedom. CNS, 66.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

<sup>209</sup> CP, 28. This is a secularized Christian perspective, which is an important element of Dühring's understanding of progress. As Reinhard has shown, the ancients did not have this linear perspective of history. Wolfgang Reinhard, "Die lateinische Variante von Religion und ihre Bedeutung," *Saeculum* 43 (1992): 233.

The philosopher is challenged to view changing phenomena in its context and to dismantle the elements of Being into its different unchanging components. Although the Actual has many parts it is characterized by oneness:

All-encompassing being is alone. With its self-efficiency it has nothing above or alongside of it. To affiliate a second being with it would mean to make it what it is not, namely a part or a component of a comprehensive whole. If we carefully consider our own mind and its unity, nothing that must enter into this unified mind can retain a duality for itself. Nothing can be stripped away, as it were, from the unity of the mind. For where should an element be placed which is supposed to be an object of thought in general? That which cannot be an object of thought would cease to belong to our conception of the Actual and the world, and thus become a complete nothingness to us.<sup>210</sup>

There is constant interplay within the human mind between “being” and “thought”, between “permanence”, and “change”. Dühring emphasizes that consciousness is qualitatively different from inanimate processes due to the continuousness or interconnectedness of its nature; whereas in nature every real result is limited and signifies a certain definite quantity, thought advances uninhibited, while at the same time being the outcome of mechanical forces. Thus humans have, according to Dühring, a natural tendency to err. Error is, however, an “asset of all levels of existence” and a component of the subjective as well as the objective side of nature. It belongs to every epoch of history and, according to Dühring, is based on “antagonism”, which is a crucial element of the Actual.<sup>211</sup> There are certain natural barriers that stand in the way of all movement and progress, and thus mistakes become “necessary disturbances” which serve to support life.

There is, Dühring writes, a “Law of Difference”, or inherent antagonism, which brings forth change. The essence of all sensation consists of difference or the “antagonism of forceful structures of the elements and the individuals”. The permanent and the variable are concepts that belong together, making up two sides of the same coin of the Actual. Something that remains the same would result in coagulation and would mean nothing for life; a change without conservation is impossible.<sup>212</sup> Becoming different does not mean completely

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<sup>210</sup> CP, 16.

<sup>211</sup> “Antagonism” comes from the word *antagonista* or *adversarius*, an opponent, a counter-part. The history of the term shows that the ancient world did not use the word. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Kant applied the term to people. He spoke of man’s “unsocial sociality” and the “tendency to socialize”, as well as an “inclination to isolate” through which nature develops ultimately making society a “moral whole”. Dühring’s role model Schopenhauer described the word as “the relationship of the will and vivid knowledge to the outer world”. Cf. Goerdts, “Antagonismus,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 1, eds. Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer (Basel, et al.: Schwabe, 2007), 358 et seq.

<sup>212</sup> Howison sees a strong correlation between Dühring’s concept of change and permanence and Hegel’s notion

beginning again, but rather partially continuing what was there, in that something is lost and something is gained. Between two different successive conditions, one of which has morphed and transformed, there has to be something in common, and that which they have in common is what perseveres and carries change. Absolute changeability is therefore an incomprehensible concept because becoming different would contain no antagonism from which it could withdraw and show its essential nature.<sup>213</sup>

Changes in consciousness, Dühring writes, resemble a mechanical jolt. With each sensation there is a new static added and a higher energy is created. The feeling created accompanies the transition from one condition to the next. Dühring draws the conclusion that the change that *is felt* is most significant. The “difference” is the most basic law of enhancing consciousness of any kind. A sort of opposing tension seems to be necessary for the emergence of every impulse.<sup>214</sup> Without difference, life would be hollow. Repetition of what has already been tried has no excitement left. Obstacles, which stand in the way of men, bring change into life and raise the worth of life. Thus a certain level of disturbance, he believes, is beneficial and necessary. Every change, every transition from one phase to the next until death brings forth a certain degree of pleasure. Every stimulus is based on a change in circumstances in the lives of individuals, as well as in those of nations. The system of the Actual creates positive impulse for life through obstruction and disturbance.<sup>215</sup> The reality of death, from which pessimism has gained so much strength, is a reason for optimism in Dühring’s opinion, as death is not merely continuous destruction, but rather a self-emancipation from existence when it has had enough.

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of identity and difference being “the elementary “moments” of the absolute Idea.” Cf Howison, “Some Aspects of Recent German Philosophy,” 12.

<sup>213</sup> CP, 22.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>215</sup> When reading Dühring’s chapter on death in *The Worth of Life* one cannot help but be reminded of Nietzsche’s *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, particularly the parting advice Zarathustra gives to the dying rope dancer of not worrying about going to hell, “On mine honour, my friend, there is nothing of all that whereof though speakest: there is no devil and no hell. Thy soul will be dead even sooner than thy body; fear therefore nothing any more!” *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, eds. Adrian del Caro and Robert Pippin (Cambridge, et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 11. Nietzsche, it should be remembered, studied *Der Werth des Lebens* meticulously, writing a 53-page summary and critique of Dühring’s book. Cf. *Nietzsche Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Vierte Abteilung. Erster Band. Nachgelassene Fragmente*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), 208-261.

#### 4. *Estimation of Life*

*The Worth of Life* was written by Dühring to “fit the times if nothing else”.<sup>216</sup> There had been a rising tide of pessimism in Germany following the unsuccessful 1848 revolution as people were becoming uncomfortable with the political conditions amid the rapidly developing industrial development and the concomitant changes that were affecting their country. It was no coincidence that Schopenhauer’s gloomy metaphysics started gaining immense popularity at this time. Dühring believes that phases of history shape the mindsets and the views that people have and comes to the conclusion that it will never be possible to decide the issue of whether optimism or pessimism is more justified; any purely theoretical attempt to evaluate life favorably or unfavorably is destined to fail. Negative and positive perspectives on life are changeable and “come into play under the influence of individual fate determined by favorable or unfavorable times”. We do not judge life merely according to what it “is”, but also according to how we think it “ought to be”. The spirit of any given age will never have the last word. The empirical world which Dühring has before him is apparently an authority that he does not feel the need to accept:

We reject the mere facts. We do not want them. We curse unfortunate circumstances and cruel coincidence. What does this entail? Evidently nothing less than, that we are prepared to condemn contemptible conjunctures of history with their arbitrary twists of fate.<sup>217</sup>

The notions behind events, i.e. the subjective sensations of the individuals, are a phenomenon of the Actual just as are the real events that transpire. We, as humans, experience strong urges or sensations, which Schopenhauer would have labeled as belonging to “the will”, but which Dühring calls “Cosmic Impulse” (*universaler Affekt*).<sup>218</sup> Cosmic Impulse creates inspiring and sometimes depressing sensations within us. We develop an optimistic or a pessimistic view of things according to the manner and degree in which these sensations affects us. Somewhat banally, Dühring concludes that such affects are the result of many different factors, one of which is the circumstance under which we live.

Although a self-professing advocate of optimism, in Dühring’s opinion, the real existence of evil gives justification for pessimism. Confronted with the ills of Germany under Bismarck

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<sup>216</sup> WL, III. Oswald Spengler put *The Worth of Life* on his list of the “real landmarks” of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, describing the book as “a work which is rarely heard of, but which exercised the greatest influence upon the succeeding generation”. Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, vol. 1, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1939), 373. Hans Vaihinger called the book “one of Dühring’s best works”. *Hartmann, Dühring, und Lange*, 151.

<sup>217</sup> “Wir empören uns gegen die Tatsache, wir verwünschen sie; wir fluchen der Ungunst der Umstände und dem grausamen Zufall. Was heißt das? Offenbar nichts anderes als wir die uns verhassten Conjunktoren dieser oder jener Daseinsverwicklung verurteilen”. *Ibid.*, VII.

<sup>218</sup> See CP, 174-177, 358 et seq.

and beyond, he comes to advocate a furious, outraged pessimism, which he later terms reagent pessimism (“*Entrüstungspessimismus*”, “*Reagenzpessimismus*”). This hostile and indignant negativity, he writes, is not to be confused with the complacent otherworldly pessimism (“*Jenseitspessimismus*”) of Schopenhauer and his school, which turned its back on the world and took solace in nothingness or nirvana. The pessimist, Dühring argues, knows no unified thought and can therefore disparage reality. He can fervently reject the fact that everyday life has an absolute value and loses himself in dreams where fantasies are put in the place of reality. Whereas the optimist takes what “ought to be” for granted, generally having a positive view of the status quo, the pessimist turns away from the world and acts as if there were a superhuman position from which to master the world. Dühring makes a careful differentiation between the subjective system from which a measurement of the conditions should be given and an objective totality from which the means to satisfy the subjective strivings can be taken.<sup>219</sup>

An estimation of the worth of life, Dühring insists, comes from one’s own temperament and can therefore not be purely theoretical or abstract. A theoretical judgment must be based on a theoretical concept as well as a practical assessment of the approval of certain efforts. A purely theoretical value judgment cannot be based on desire. In Dühring’s opinion, a practical judgment can never follow the orders of theoretical concepts, which from the beginning intend to say how life should or should not be. Consistent with his aversion to abstraction, as illustrated above, he rejects every attempt to judge life from outside of life, as well as to make metaphysical statements about the preconditions of life. A person’s own temperament and the practical concerns which stem from one’s character take precedence. In an approach relevant for his thought on political economy, Dühring writes that strict checks need to be made as to whether seemingly theoretical judgments actually come about from practical occurrences.<sup>220</sup> Passions, which are specific, i.e. never abstract or theoretical, belong to life and should never be seen as detrimental (unless they are taken to extremes). Life would be barren without love and hate; he goes as far as to say that ascetics who condemn the pleasures of life “commit an intellectual crime against humanity”. If asceticism were ever to become a universal axiom, he believes, life would lose its joy and turn into death.<sup>221</sup> Although not of “theoretical” value,

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<sup>219</sup> WL, 8.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 8. We will see below that Dühring, following Henry Carey, thought that the British School of economics was pursuing practical concerns with its theoretical postulates.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 19. Nietzsche objects vehemently to this perspective of Dühring’s, pointing out - in our opinion correctly - that great thinkers need isolation and asceticism: “Er meint also in allem Ernste, daß ein Leben in der Einsamkeit nie ein Leben für die Menschen sein könne, und daß Abwendung vom Leben Abwendung von den Menschen sei. Nun ist es thatsächliche umgekehr; ich möchte wissen, welche Art von höheren Bändern überhaupt

instinct and passion serve as instructors for humanity and should not be suppressed. We will see below that Dühring bases his concept of law on the instinct of revenge.

Another reason that Dühring puts forth to justify optimism is the existence of an absolute inevitability of what happens in the world. This idea assumes Natural Law, which he feels gives the human mind a comforting repose. Just as the individual antagonism of life, i.e. the natural tension between need and satisfaction, is seen as the main source of energy and enjoyment, the subjugation to Universal Law is, according to Dühring, not something painful burdensome, but rather an act that carries with it a wealth of higher gratification. The differentiation brought about by the laws of nature adds spice to life, so to speak, and allows goodness to grow and higher consciousness to evolve. Contrast, he writes, is the source of pleasure; resistance to overcome brings happiness.

The argument that Dühring seems to emphasize the most to justify optimism as an ethical principle is his belief in the future of humanity, i.e. that man will be happy in the future. This fact should comfort everyone as they can look beyond their own personal situation and any sorrows they might have and see a bright future. We all possess the essence and the logical system of nature within us; the inner workings of our conscious resemble how the process of the world is re-enacted.<sup>222</sup> We also have congenial instincts which link us to the *whole* of humanity. We possess a “solidarity of fate” as a species and can be confident of the idea that a new “scientific era” of mankind has begun in which the minds of men will be elevated and the social conditions of human society ultimately improved. Here again, we touch on the main thrust of Dühring’s ethics, namely science seen as an ethical entity involving morality, justice, and the ideal of a noble form of humanity.

### 5. *Critical Summary*

Growing up in the aftermath of the collapse of classical German philosophy, Dühring offers an antidote to what he views as the mystical abstraction and bold speculation of the German university philosophy since Kant. There is no deep-seeded mystical background to the world,

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Mensch an Mensch knüpfen würde, wenn man die Arbeit der einsamen Asketen jeder Art wegnehmen wollte! Und nun gar geistiger Selbstmord! Man denke an Empedokles und Schopenhauer, Leopardi, die hier als “Verbrecher am Intellekt”. erscheinen, an Luther und an wie viele andre. Es scheint nicht, daß gerade der “Geist” bei dieser Art, das Leben zu betrachten, verkümmert! ” *Nietzsche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 1, eds. Giorgi Colli andazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), 215-216.

<sup>222</sup> Dühring calls the individual “almost a kind of monad, a completely separated whole that fosters the reason and measure of his fate in himself”. WL, 184. Howison sees this postulate of Dühring’s as being reminiscent of Leibnitz. “Some Aspects of Recent German Philosophy,” 14. Dühring thought very little of Leibnitz, believing that the philosopher had incompetently copied the Italian monk Giordano Bruno’s concept of the monad. KGP, 226-227.

according to Dühring. Philosophy deals strictly with the Actual, i.e. the concrete, the real, or simply what we have before us. Dühring takes on the ambitious task of synthesizing two of the dominant currents of thought of his day, scientism and individualism, as represented by his two most important historical paragons: Comte and Schopenhauer, respectively. With a penchant for architectonics, he constructs a balanced philosophy that exhibits substantial analytical insight while utilizing his personal talents for mathematics and abstract mechanics, as well as his training in the field of law. Despite his philosophy's symmetric form, having a balanced configuration to his thought is not an end in itself, and is to an extent even misleading. As Vaihinger emphasizes, Dühring is a destructive thinker. His main objectives are, as he states himself, on the one hand, to fight against the absence of clarity and on the other, to battle against injustice.<sup>223</sup> Unlike Marxism, whose philosophical ambiguities had to be made more comprehensible long after Marx's main works had been written (in Engel's "Anti-Dühring"), the Philosophy of the Actual is built on epistemological foundations. His theory of knowledge is at once a veneration of the rational faculties of the mind and, to an extent, a reduction of the faculty of Reason (*Vernunft*) - which we understand as the ability of human abstraction – in favor of instinctive intuition. If we were to see a man's philosophy as a kind of "unconscious biography", as Nietzsche called it, Dühring's strivings for concrete visual clarity of thought (*Anschaulichkeit*) might be interpreted as a compensation for his blindness.<sup>224</sup>

As "concrete" as his philosophy strives to be, the power of abstract thinking and the ability to apply logical principles to metaphysical quandaries is one of Dühring's greatest strengths. Whereas philosophical thinkers in the Anglo-American tradition have been influenced by an anti-metaphysical and anti-theoretical discourse, Dühring belongs to a continental European tradition where the primal ontological quandaries of life are approached with vigor. The will for clarity in the realm of the abstract can be seen in his rejection of the concept of infinity, which is present from the very beginning of his philosophical endeavors onwards and serves

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<sup>223</sup> Dühring to Ernst Jünemann, 7 June 1894, Dühring Papers, Box 7, HA/SBB. Dühring writes: "Der Urtrieb in meinem Streben haben Sie richtig getroffen: Gerechtigkeit und Haß gegen aller Unklarheit."

<sup>224</sup> Nietzsche on philosophy as unconscious biography, cf. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse und andere Schriften* (Cologne: Könnemann, 1994), 13-15. Houston Stewart Chamberlain exaggerates when he writes that due his blindness Dühring has "gar keine Anschauung" (no visual intuitiveness). There is, however, some validity to the author of the Foundations of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century's emphasis on the abstractness of Dühring's thought in the sense that Dühring is a man of mathematics and physics as opposed to biology. Chamberlain wrote: "Will er die grossen Namen der Wissenschaft anrufen, so nennt er Kepler, Galiei, Huygens, Lagrange – niemals Boerhaave, Harvey, Jussieu, Cuvier, Lyell; denn ihm gelten die beschreibenden und biologischen Wissenschaften als untergeordnete, und verächtlich spricht er von den ‚Niederungen, in denen das Leben wimmelt‘." Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Friedrich Polske, *Heinrich von Stein und seine Weltanschauung* (Munich und Leipzig: George Müller, 1905), 24-25.

as a pillar of his thought. For Dühring, the Actual contains unity and has clear borders; just as there are only exact numbers, there is only one all-encompassing primordial Being. The essence of the Actual, and of Dühring's philosophy, is revealed in the interplay between the fixed or permanent entities of reality as opposed to its changing elements. Dühring's writings on the configuration of Being represent a noble attempt to take the human mind to its absolute limit by reaching out beyond what exists and what can exist to view an absolute whole.

Another strength of his philosophy is its emphasis and understanding of forms and configurations, one of which is the individual itself. Dühring postulates the ideal type of the defiant enlightened hero who preserves freedom throughout history. The emphasis on the persistent elements of the Actual adds a sense of conservatism to Dühring's thought. He is intensely concerned with values and entities that exist above and beyond time or the "historical conjunctures", as he terms it. His philosophy, like Schopenhauer's, is strongly anti-Hegelian. Dühring - in our opinion correctly - sees elements of Hegelian thought as an affront to natural science. Whereas Hegel's dialectic explains, interprets, and predicts historical movement through contrasting elements fused together to create progress (thesis, antithesis, synthesis), Dühring's "Law of Difference" is orientated towards the creation of a static equilibrium. This gives him, in our opinion, the advantage over Hegel of having a perspective perhaps less exhilarating, but holding more water, so to speak, to scientifically deal with concrete social phenomena. Dühring's preoccupation with the "constant" might be seen as a philosophical expression of the natural scientific revolution caused through the discovery of the law of energy equivalence.<sup>225</sup>

Dühring's philosophy has serious weaknesses. His ontology makes no attempt to decipher or interpret the ultimate complexities of the Actual itself. Dühring tells us, that "primordial being", i.e. a state in which distinctions and change did not exist, began to change, thus beginning a causal series that exists into the present. For this most crucial of all happenings, he gives only vague hints as an explanation. With regard to the universal, he denounces metaphysics at every turn, and yet his concept of the "illustration of the world" seems nearly as idealistic and speculative as many of the philosophical predecessors whom he disparages. His idea – similar to Leibniz's concept of the monad – that every individual possesses in his own thought a natural universal logic which at any given moment functions in the same or similar manner as the ultimate Being borders on the mystical.

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<sup>225</sup> As is so often the case with scientific discovery, this law was discovered by Robert Mayer and Hermann Helmholtz independently of one another. Dühring charged Helmholtz with plagiarizing Mayer, which, as seen above, was one of the reasons he was dismissed from his lecturing position at the Berlin University.

Through its strong rational propensity Dühring's philosophy has a tendency of being somewhat indeterminate at times. He sometimes vacillates between two, sometimes extremely different positions, ending up with a perspective that might be seen as ambiguous. We find it difficult, for example, to characterize his philosophy optimistic or pessimistic. He places himself clearly on the side of optimism and yet winds up advocating a furious form of pessimism as a reaction to corruption. His view of the significance of the individual is both relative and absolute. He rightfully criticizes the "hero worship" of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, where a genius operates in a kind of historical vacuum independent of circumstance (Carlyle). And yet he takes for granted in the realm of science "it is more about those who shape their age, than those who are shaped by their age."<sup>226</sup> Other examples will be demonstrated below when we analyze his social theory. There is a certain relativism to his philosophy, and one can see what Ludwig Marcuse meant when he spoke of the "lack of a will to a goal" in Dühring's thought.<sup>227</sup> It is perhaps this ambivalence that also led the Finnish philosopher Wilhelm Bolin (although otherwise full of praise for Dühring) to write that Dühring's books leave the reader unsatisfied.<sup>228</sup> Arnold Gehlen has shown, however, that the category of indeterminateness has in many ways been a "signature of the times" in modernity, signifying a period of transition. Dühring's philosophy, which originated in a time of transition, displays such ambivalence.<sup>229</sup>

Modern – in a negative sense – is, in our opinion, also Dühring's aversion to abstraction as exemplified conceptually by his conflation of "Reason" (*Vernunft*) and "Understanding" (*Verstand*). This aspect of his philosophy, which signifies a weakening of the faculties of detachment and sober discourse, lessens his objectivity and gives his thought, as we see it, a tendency towards caprice and later even childishness, which has negative repercussions for both his thought and his biography. Due to Dühring's enormously high estimation of the human mind and its trust in the rational faculties of consciousness, his philosophy takes on a

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<sup>226</sup> KGN, 5.

<sup>227</sup> Marcuse, "Der Pionier Dühring," *Das Tagebuch* 14 (14 January 1933): 62, 63. Among other things, Marcuse reproaches Dühring for giving up pure humanist goals for in-fighting (*Bruderkampf*) among the different races. Writing in 1933 on the hundredth anniversary of Dühring's birth, Marcuse is, however, careful to distinguish Dühring from the "German Socialist barbarism" of his day. Although a pionier of this movement, in Marcuse's opinion, Dühring held the faculty of reason too high in esteem for him to have supported national vanity and the myth of blood. *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> In a letter to Ludwig Feuerbach, he wrote pointedly (and we would say exaggeratedly) that when reading Dühring "one is no further at the end than one was at the beginning". Wilhelm Bolin to Ludwig Feuerbach, 11 July 1867, in *Ludwig Feuerbach. Gesammelte Werke, Briefwechsel V*, ed. Werner Schuffenhauer (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), 310-313.

<sup>229</sup> A chapter of Gehlen's book *Die Seele im technischen Zeitalter* was titled "Unbestimmtheit als Zeitsignatur". Cf. Hans Freyer, *Schwelle der Zeiten. Beiträge zur Soziologie der Kultur* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1965), 224.

distinct directness and imponderability, which makes him vulnerable to ill thought out “clean sweep” solutions to societal problems in the name of the “good of the whole”.

It should be emphasized that Dühring is not a philosopher in the strict sense of the word, nor does he want to be.<sup>230</sup> Despite his praiseworthy efforts in the field of ontology, he aims less at intricate analytical discourse or reflection about *what* the phenomenology of the world entails, than he does at the *whence* and *for which purpose*, i.e. matters of science, practical issues of causality, and especially possible fields of action. His understanding of philosophy as “the evolution of highest consciousness of the world and life” involves the field of action in intellectual pursuits. Philosophy does not only involve analytical reflection on the quandaries of the world, but is rather, for Dühring, a force for advancing intelligence and improving the condition of humankind. This, we believe, can no longer be called “philosophy” in the strict sense, and it is perhaps for this reason that Dühring often makes use of the term *Geistesführung*, mind leadership, in connection with his own philosophy. The development of “the highest consciousness of world and life”, as Dühring understands philosophy to be, extends the boundaries of the field and ultimately raises the issue of politics and how to shape the individual and society.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Academic philosophers of his day were quick to point out that Dühring was not a true philosopher. For example, Adolf Lasson (1832-1917), a Hegelian philosopher who began to teach at the Berlin University just as Dühring was dismissed and, like Dühring, taught at Victoria Lyceum, certainly exaggerates when he writes that “it is hard to find a philosophical question which is handled by him (Dühring) thoroughly and independently” and that “no trace of the influence of this writer (Dühring) on philosophical discussions can be proven”. Dühring’s influence on Alois Riehl, as shown by Köhnke, proves Lasson’s statement to be false. Cf. Köhnke, *op. cit.*, 373-376.

<sup>231</sup> Schopenhauer also defined philosophy in terms of consciousness, but rather as the “doctrine” (*Lehre*) of its contents, as opposed to its “development” (*Entwicklung*), as we see it with Dühring. Cf. Schopenhauer, *The World As Will and Representation*, 128.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### POLITICAL ECONOMY

#### *1. Foundations: American School, List, Carey*

In the early years of his development as a political economist, Dühring was a loyal disciple of two thinkers: Friedrich List and Henry C. Carey. Both men were non-academic writers who devoted their lives to creating an alternative to the *laissez faire* capitalist theories of the British school that succeeded Adam Smith. Their thoughts on economics are closely associated with what is called the “American System” of political economy. The term American System, coined by Henry Clay in his tariff speech of 1824, signifies an approach to economics that advocated mercantilist-like measures to benefit manufacturers and facilitate industrial growth. Although Dühring at times showed outspoken anti-American sentiment, he clearly had an affinity for America. The rugged individualism and independence, the disregard for the burden of the past, the optimistic view to the future, as well as the standardizing and rationalizing of the machinations of economic life are all aspects of American life that Dühring viewed favorably.<sup>232</sup> In general, the American mentality of defying the nations of the Old World and of marching confidently into the future found favor with Dühring. The leftist spirit of emancipation which he would embody was, in fact, akin to the ethos of the United States of America, which Ernst Nolte has aptly labeled the “first leftist government”.<sup>233</sup>

If there was a founding father of the American System, it was the first American Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, one of the signers of the United States’ Declaration of Independence. Hamilton, who was born in the British West Indies in 1755, rejected Adam Smith’s maxim of *laissez-faire*, believing that the federal government should offer selective stimulation, support, and encouragement to establish American manufacturing industries. His three works on political economy *Report on Public Debt* (1790), the *Report on a National Bank* (1790) and the *Report on Manufacturers* (1791) had substantial influence in his day and

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<sup>232</sup> The philosopher and political publicist Theodor Lessing, who had written a popular essay on Dühring, went as far as to label Dühring an “up and coming American”, writing that Dühring is to America what Schopenhauer is to Asia. Theodor Lessing, *Europa und Asien* (Leipzig: Meiner, 1930), 258. Dühring had great respect for the protectionist Republicans, who he labeled as “the freest and most radical party of North America”, but looked down with scorn upon the free-trading Southern States, which he saw as being ruled by Junkers advocating a system that was a variation of English *laissez-faire* economics. Cf. “Die Volkswirtschaftslehre im Jahre 1865,” *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 1 (1865): 689. Dühring, “Carey als Arbeiterökonom,” *Vossische Zeitung* 8 (1864): 1 et seq.

<sup>233</sup> Ernst Nolte, *Deutschland und der kalte Krieg* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1985 [1st ed. 1974]), 47 et seq. In analyzing the background to the Cold War, Nolte shows that the United States government came about through the efforts of radicals who disregarded tradition and sought to create a “new Zion” as a haven for the suppressed. Men such as Thomas Paine invoked Natural Law, calling for “freedom for all men” and “emancipation from the interests of money”, etc. *Ibid.*, 50.

beyond. Wary of the strong pressure that British merchants could exert, backed up by the British Navy, Hamilton advocated protection which would enable American industry to grow. He emphasized the preamble of the American constitution which required the government to “promote the general welfare of the people”, believing that congress has the power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imports, excises, payment of debts, and provide for common defense and general welfare. Hamilton was convinced that a nation’s prosperity should not be measured by the amount of precious metals it contains, but rather by the quantity of its production (a thought that List would elaborate on later). The legitimate tasks of government included borrowing money, regulating foreign and domestic commerce, as well as establishing rules of bankruptcy and naturalization, coining and regulating the value of money and declaring war. Thus “the state of agriculture and manufacturers, the quantity and quality of its labor and industry must influence and determine the increase or decrease of its gold and silver” and not the other way around. He was in favor of creating a national bank to increase national wealth and support “productive powers”, and thought that protective tariffs should be implemented against competing industries.<sup>234</sup>

Hamilton possessed insight as a theoretician, and seems to have been motivated by the political consideration of gaining support among the wealthy class for the newly founded republic.<sup>235</sup> His ideals remained, however, decidedly individualistic in the sense that he believed a “higher individualism” could be created through a strengthening of the manufacturing sector. Government should promote self-improvement, self-fulfillment, and self-reliance. From Dühring’s perspective there are two currents of economic thought in America: one stemming from scholasticism, inherited from Europe, the other a natural (*naturwüchsig*) phenomenon, the result of observation and thought-orientated to the practical concerns of the young country. For him, Alexander Hamilton was a representative of the latter trajectory, exemplifying a “national type” among the different perspectives (*nationale Typus von Anschauungen*).<sup>236</sup> Hamilton was to die early, like Ferdinand Lassalle, in a duel, but his ideas would live on “as an arsenal of argument and inspiration for later generations of Hamiltonians”.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Michael Liebig, “Friedrich List and the ‘American System’ of Political Economy,” in *Friedrich List: Outlines of American Political Economy*, ed. Michael Liebig (Wiesbaden: Böttiger, 1996), 189-191.

<sup>235</sup> Cf. Frank A. Fetter, “The Early History of Political Economy in the United States,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 87 (July 14:1943): 53.

<sup>236</sup> KGN, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 376.

<sup>237</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (New York: Book Find Club, 1945), 11.

The German state scientist Georg Friedrich List, born in 1789 in Swabia, moved to America after being convicted of disloyalty by the government of Baden. He lived in America from 1825 until 1832, during which time he became an American citizen before going on to work back in Germany as an ambassador under the presidency of Andrew Jackson. List believed that the best book on political economy was “the book of life”, and through his practical experience in the U.S. he developed notions on economics that were directly opposed to the British school of his day. Like Hamilton, he advocated a “national system” involving protective tariffs for “infant industries” which were unable to compete with more advanced economies. Dühring became one of the most fervent supporters of List in the 1860s at a time when List’s social theory was largely ignored by German liberals and the historical school.<sup>238</sup> He saw List, the father of the *German Customs Union* and pioneer of the German railway, not only as a practical businessman and successful agitator (as he was viewed then and still today), but also as a first rate economic theorist. Dühring wrote an extensive article on List and gave him a prominent place in his *Critical History of Political Economy and Socialism*.<sup>239</sup> As Dühring’s political economy is to a large degree shaped by Carey, his work also becomes a continuation and interpretation of List’s thought (albeit to a far lesser degree). The most important point in List’s system for Dühring was the *economic principle of nationality*. He sees List’s great achievement as “having discovered the false concept of cosmopolitanism with its instability and having made national points of view an issue for political economy”.<sup>240</sup> Like List, he believes that progress in economics is tied to the concept of the nation. He writes that just as the general ideas of law had been enriched by the efforts of Savigny and the historical school with its discovery of national structures, the general concepts of political economy is specialized and made valid through List’s practical applications.<sup>241</sup>

List’s influence is apparent in Dühring’s book *Critical Foundation of Political Economy* (to be dealt with in detail below). In this book, published in 1866, he examines the development of political economy as it moved from placing emphasis on the individual towards giving more emphasis towards an economic perspective, which incorporated the strength of societal

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<sup>238</sup> Cf. Edgar Salin, *Politische Ökonomie. Geschichte der wirtschaftspolitischen Ideen von Platon bis zur Gegenwart* (Tübingen: J.C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1967), 124. Cf. Also Friedrich Lenz, *Friedrich List, die „Vulgäroökonomie“ und Karl Marx. Nebst einer unbekanntenen Denkschrift Lists zur Zollreform* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1930), 4.

<sup>239</sup> Dühring, “Die wissenschaftliche Bedeutung Friedrich Lists”, in *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift* 30 (1867): 246-284. Cf. also KGNS, 335-376. Mombert emphasizes Dühring’s role in recognizing not only List’s significance in practical affairs, but also the importance of his theoretical work. *Geschichte der Volkswirtschaft*, op. cit., 462.

<sup>240</sup> CA, 52. This although List was himself a cosmopolitan: his motto was “Et la patrie et l’humanité!”.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. Moffat emphasizes that the concept of the nation was present in mercantilism, which had influence on cameralist tradition, from which List originally came. James E. Moffat, “Nationalism and Economic Theory,” *Journal of Political Economy* 34 (Aug. 1928): 423.

groups as they influence the flow of business. Dühring sees a progression from Adam Smith's theory where self-interest of the individual alone can lead to socially beneficial results, to List's postulate that the nations have a similar role to play in creating wealth. Dühring writes,

The individual and the world are connected by the nation [...]. The fate of individual prosperity, when not determined by mere coincidence, is connected to the prosperity of the nation. Economic teachings can therefore not be a construction that does not consider the vicissitudes of nations. Nations must hold on to their economic integrity at least as much as individuals must. They are not allowed to tolerate economic slavery if they want to avoid slavery in every other way as well.<sup>242</sup>

Dühring's emphasis on the nation, which, as Voelske had shown, would later be re-directed towards the factor of ethnicity, shows the Philosophy of the Actual's concern with persistent elements as separate, self-contained entities in history. Dühring's penchant for individualism and rebellious defiance are also hinted at in his concept of the nation. He supports the measures that List suggests to strengthen the nation, such as protective tariffs for developing industry and improvements of domestic transportation and travel – without ever becoming what could be called a “nationalist”.<sup>243</sup>

Dühring's own political economy, to be dealt with in detail in Part Three below, entails an original interpretation of List's theoretical concept by applying the principle of the nation to domestic affairs. Dühring believes that the best way to help German workers is by strengthening their country and, along the lines of the metaphysical postulates of his philosophy, he conceives the nation as a societal *whole* made up of clearly distinct components. There is a disharmony of interests between differing groups in a nation, just as there is also, on another level, between the different nations throughout the world. Groups within a nation are not merely bands of individuals, but rather represent powerful *organic entities*, termed social classes. The efforts of the different classes lead to class struggle, which, according to Dühring, can only be understood by those who comprehend the nature of the disharmony of interests; whereas List mainly concentrated on the nation as a factor of economic development, Dühring sees the groups within the nations as dynamos of economical development, so to speak. As Albrecht has shown, Dühring applies the principles of List's

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<sup>242</sup> KGP, 24. Dühring holds that considerations of the nation, state and race are intermediaries of the rights of individuals that cannot be ignored. Cf. KG, 443-444.

<sup>243</sup> Dühring has been falsely considered a “nationalist” or “national socialist”. He criticized Ferdinand Lassalle's position as a “type of national socialism which is in the long term untenable for all socialism”. Philosophically, nationalism is inherently flawed for him; it is “not a modern passion and remains superficial”. GMLII, 344.

protective tariffs to societal groups.<sup>244</sup> List believed that nations do not compete against each other *per se*, but rather exist at different stages of development. Advanced nations, such as England at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, lean toward free trade, whereas developing nations or “enfant economies” need protective tariffs. Nations are to hold other nations at arm’s length and strengthen their own position in order to develop. Dühring interprets List by advocating the same position for the working class. Just as infant nations need protection to develop to maturity, the workers need protection against larger and more powerful groups of society.

Another concept of List’s adopted by Dühring is the idea of “productive forces”, which are to be put in the place of what is commonly meant by “value” in the classical theory of economics.<sup>245</sup> The focus of political economic considerations had been, up to that point in history, placed on the production of goods and not the current value of wealth. Political economic theories which placed value at the center of attention had taken only the last quantitatively discernible cause, namely the finished products, into consideration and had overlook the “first cause”, namely the ability to increase prosperity; thus “productive forces” that do not exist in the world of goods, but rather in the realm of organizational and developing forces, were left largely unconsidered. The emphasis on the productive forces of a given economy is connected with the idea of the implementation of protective tariffs needed to protect endangered human entities or assets of a nation. List felt that tariffs were necessary at an early stage in a nation’s development and could be afterwards discontinued. Dühring’s ideas regarding this issue were more similar to the teachings of Carey, whose political economy Othmar Spann has labeled “North America’s main contribution to economics.”<sup>246</sup>

Henry Charles Carey of Philadelphia, four years List’s junior, had a similar thought trajectory as List’s, but his influence on Dühring was far greater. Due to the important role that Carey played in shaping Dühring’s views on political economy, it will be necessary to spend more time on him and his thoughts than on any other paragon of Dühring’s. As improbable as the partnership between a wealthy Philadelphia publisher turned writer and a blind Berlin lecturer

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<sup>244</sup> Albrecht, “Die Ausgestaltung des Listischen Nationalitätprinzip durch Eugen Dühring”, *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaften* 83 (1927): 7-9. We will be dealing with this aspect of Dühring’s philosophy in detail below. Albrecht is of the opinion that Dühring surpasses List theoretically in establishing that the principle of nationality has absolute validity and that it is completely incompatible with a theory which rules the state out.

<sup>245</sup> List, *Das nationale System der politischen Ökonomie, Band I., Der internationale Handel, die Handelspolitik und der deutsche Zollverein* (Stuttgart und Tübingen: J.G. Cotta’scher Verlag, 1841), 220 et seq. Mombert credits Dühring with showing the theoretical value of List’s concept of “productive forces”. *Geschichte der Volkswirtschaftslehre*, 463.

<sup>246</sup> Spann, *Types of Economic Theory*, 203. It remains unclear to what degree, if at all, List was influenced by Carey. Albrecht is of the opinion that List developed theories independent of Carey. Albrecht, ED, 85-86.

forty years his junior would seem, it was no mere coincidence that the two men became intellectual allies.<sup>247</sup> As Dühring's autobiography indicates, there were both practical and theoretical reasons for him to develop an affinity for the optimistic iconoclastic teachings of Carey. By the time the first volume of Carey's main work *The Principles of Social Science* (1858-1859) was translated into German in 1863, as seen in Chapter Two, Dühring had developed an animosity towards academia as he had come to know it in Berlin. He was disappointed with the education he received at the University of Berlin due to its, as he saw it, authoritarian over-emphasis on history and philology.<sup>248</sup> Carey's optimistic social teachings were a breath of fresh air to him: here was a man who was an independent scholar across the ocean writing in a manner free from the restricting conventions and pressures of academia.<sup>249</sup> Perhaps the trauma of becoming blind had made Dühring more receptive to the optimistic social outlook expressed by Carey; but it was probably a sense of freedom and emancipation from British doctrines exuded by the American that pleased Dühring most.<sup>250</sup>

At this juncture in German history, Dühring was not alone in longing for an optimistic perspective for the future. As we have seen, there had been a general malaise in Berlin following what Paul Ernst termed the breakdown of the classical German Idealism ("*Der Zusammenbruch des deutschen Idealismus*"). The intellectual climate in Germany was characterized by stagnation and a certain sense of angst prevailed. Great strides in natural science and technology involving new scientific methods, theories and principles had rendered the ideas of Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling speculative at best. New discoveries in physics, chemistry, biology, and geology tended to lessen the credibility of philosophy in general. Science was becoming more specialized and professionalized and the role of the academic was changing through newly-implemented structures such as the "habilitation" process. The ever-increasing amounts of accumulated knowledge made it difficult for the individual to have an overview of the different branches of science and the existence of the

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<sup>247</sup> It is not certain when Carey and Dühring first came into contact with one another, but the Dühring Papers, of the *Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz zu Berlin*, contain an extensive correspondence which begins in 1865 and ends in 1878 one year before Carey's death in 1879.

<sup>248</sup> SLF, 70.

<sup>249</sup> H.L. Mencken eloquently elaborated on the pressures put on university professors of political economy in America and questions whether these men were free. Cf. "The Dismal Science" in H. L. Mencken, *Prejudices: First, Second, and Third Series* (New York: The Library of America, 2010), 463.

<sup>250</sup> Dühring often makes reference to the free spirit of America when referring to Carey. Despite his scientific realism, Dühring had a relatively strong sense of romanticism; for example, in his auto-biography he embellishes a story of his ancestor Dühring "crossing the Baltic Sea to Prussia from Sweden". Cf. SLF, 1.

universal scholar seemed to be in danger. Carey's ideas were attractive not least because they went against this pattern.<sup>251</sup>

The American scholar also fit the mould of the "philosophical scholar" towards which Dühring tended to gravitate. Carey's more general or philosophical point of departure, which followed in the footsteps of David Hume and Adam Smith and aimed to unite philosophy and economics, influenced the worldview of the ambitious blind lecturer substantially. Dühring writes: "One has to be a positive specialist and a universal thinker at the same time in order to view the laws of political economy without error".<sup>252</sup> Dühring was far more inclined towards the "philosophical scholar" or even the "poly-typical scholar" than the "mono-typical" one. With the drive towards specialization and practical concerns in academia, dealt with above, the academic with a general outlook tends to gravitate towards the type of the "controversial scholar" which Dühring also represented. As a private scholar with no professional connections to a university, Carey was immune to any such "academic controversy", although most university academicians in America rejected or belittled his work; had he acted within the realm of academe, he would most probably have fit the mold of controversial scholar. Dühring's craving for an optimistic, universal, and practical approach led him to become a champion of Carey. In the years that followed, he would go on to publish two books and four articles on Carey and his ideas.<sup>253</sup>

In matters of social science, Carey remained an outsider and a challenger to the dominant British School of political economy. His father, Mathew Carey, was an Irish immigrant to

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<sup>251</sup> There was also opposition to Carey's ideas as shown by a review in Julius Faucher's quarterly free trade journal of political economy and cultural history. Cf. "Carey's System," *Vierteljahrschrift für Volkswirtschaft und Kulturgeschichte* 28, ed. Julius Faucher (1867): 113-152. On Carey's influence in Germany from a Marxist government point of view, cf. Ehrenfried Gallander, *Die Entwicklung der Marxschen politischen Ökonomie in der Auseinandersetzung mit der Theorie des amerikanischen Vulgärökonomen Henry Charles Carey*. Der Philosophischen Fakultät des Wissenschaftlichen Rates der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle – Wittenberg, no date, 30 et seq. See also idem, "Ein Briefwechsel und seine Hintergründe – Carey and Dühring," *Arbeitsblätter zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 11(Halle-Wittenberg: Arbeitskreis Wissenschaftsgeschichte, 1982 - largely a compilation of passages from the previous paper.

<sup>252</sup> Albrecht, ED, 12.

<sup>253</sup> Dühring wrote two books and several articles on Carey: *Careys Umwälzung der Volkswirtschaftslehre und Sozialwissenschaft*, and *Die Verkleinerer Careys und die Krisis der Nationalökonomie*; "Careys Bedeutung für die Sozialpolitik"; "Der amerikanische Sozialphilosoph Carey"; "Carey als Arbeiter-Ökonom"; "Carey und seine Sozialökonomie". He also wrote a series of articles in the *Deutsche Industrie Zeitung. Organ der Handels- und Gewerbekammern zu Chemnitz et al.* (henceforth DIZ) entitled "Der Amerikanische Nationalökonom Carey und die Deutschen": "I. Eine transatlantische Lehre", 26 (30 Juni 1865): 251-252. "II. Handel und Verkehr" DIZ 27 (7 July 1865): 261-262. "III. Der Zollverein," 27 (14 July 1865), 271-272. "IV. Der Bodenertrag," 30 (28 July 1865): 291-192. "VI. Gewinnvertheilung zwischen Capital und Arbeit", 34 (24 August 1865): 331-332. "VII: Ein merkwürdiger Satz über die Bewegung der Capitalien" 35 (31 August 1865): 341-342. "VIII. Wirtschaftlicher Decentralisation" (7 September 1865): 36. The Dühring Papers shows that Dühring sent Carey these articles and that Carey approved of Dühring's portrayal. Cf. Carey to Dühring, 29 October 1865, HA/SBB, Box 6, where it reads: "The Summary of my doctrines that you have given in the Zeitung is excellent. And most glad am I to see that they are being there popularized".

America who fervently opposed British imperialism. He founded a successful publishing house, which his son Henry ran for most of his life before retiring to devote himself to his theoretical pursuits in the field of social science.<sup>254</sup> Carey's method signified a break with the classical approach to economics. Whereas the classical school had placed much emphasis on describing the laws of nature, Carey, a fervent American patriot, saw political economy as a normative science. He believed that the social scientist had the responsibility of improving the human condition by promoting happiness and prosperity. While this echoes of Jeremy Bentham's phrase of "the greatest happiness to the greatest number", Carey went beyond the classical utilitarian concept of individual maximization of consumer satisfaction. The true wealth of a nation was for him its productive forces, as List had put it. Carey believed that society not only needed material improvement, but also moral advancement. In *Principles of Political Economy* he wrote: "In opposition to those who define political economy to be the science of wealth, or of exchange we have defined it as that which treats of those phenomena of society which arise out of desire of mankind to maintain and improve their condition".<sup>255</sup> Material factors were crucial, but, according to Carey, so were man's general happiness, prosperity, and power. For him, a system of political economy should concentrate on moral and social growth. He believed in human beings' ability to attain mastery of their environment. In contrast to the classical model where nature had a mastery over man, Carey professed a more optimistic position where man was able to shape nature to his own advantage.

Carey is generally not mentioned in discussions of political economic theory today, but was highly influential in Europe in his day. He also founded a tradition in America to which scholars such as Robert Ellis Thompson, E. Peshine Smith, Stephen Colwell, and William Elder belonged.<sup>256</sup> His system developed slowly over a period of decades and his many books, pamphlets, and articles had a synthetic character that let actions emerge while, at the same time, allowing them to be put in what he saw as their natural progression. The method he applied was strongly influenced by the English statesman and philosopher Francis Bacon

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<sup>254</sup> In a letter of Carey's to Dühring, Carey describes his personal background: "You ask some account of myself, but, unfortunately, there is really nothing to say, my life except so far as I have been before the world as an economist, having been a very private and uneventful one. For many years I was at the head of the largest publishing house in the country, and when I left that pursuit I gave my time and mind to the study of the great science of which you are now a teacher. I have never filled any public office whatsoever, nor have I ever been a candidate for any public employment. You will see therefore, that there is little to be said about me whatever you may think proper to say about my books." Dühring Papers, Box 6, HA/SBB.

<sup>255</sup> Quoted from Rodney J. Morrison, *Henry C. Carey and the American Economic Development* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1986), 8.

<sup>256</sup> Bernard, L.L., *Origins of American Sociology: The Social Science Movement in the United States* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), 389-343.

and was primarily inductive, attempting to avoid *apriori* constructs. Yet Carey also held that every independent system of thought needed to be based on a principle sentence or a basic idea around which the entire spectrum of its ideas revolved. The two cornerstones of his system were a new theory of value and a reversal of Ricardo's theory of agricultural cultivation. Regarding the former, he distinguished "value" from "wealth"; the true wealth of a nation was seen in terms of its utility. Thus wealth does not come from barter, but is rather a symbol of man's power over nature. Value, the other hand, is measured by nature's power over man; it is the amount of effort needed to overcome the obstacles that have to be surpassed to obtain something required; it is thus defined as being related to the costs of reproduction. With regard to cultivation, Carey was of the opinion that due to the development of technology and more refined tools, it would become possible to cultivate better land that had been inaccessible in the past. Thus Malthus and Ricardo's views on the diminishing returns of land, whereby the progression of cultivation moved from the best soil to the poorest, was incorrect. It is really the other way around, said Carey: man first cultivates the worst land and through technology and innovation is finally able to cultivate the best land, a claim which would be confirmed through technology, e.g. the advances in chemistry creating crop fertilizer. As Carl-Erich Vollgraf has pointed out, Carey believed that avoiding the depletion of land and the prevention of exploitation of natural resources should become an integral component of political economy: technology, he wrote, would enable land to be reused without creating the excessive diminishing returns which classical theory entailed.<sup>257</sup> Carey espoused an optimistic theory of society where man's different interests exist in harmony with one another. Stemming from these two pillars were other ideas such as the teaching of the harmony of interests, especially the harmony of distribution, as well as the differentiation of "trade" and "commerce" and his concept of business decentralization.

Carey's method exhibited a tendency towards favoring "visually perceptive" common sense knowledge, as opposed to abstract theoretical discourse and this fit hand in glove with Dühring's philosophy, as described above. He is, we would claim, a man of the "organic will" of the community as opposed to "abstract will" of society, to use the terminology of Ferdinand Tönnies. Carey contrasts the growth patterns of "centralization" with that of "concentration" or the development of local centers of economic activity. Although there has to be a balance or harmony between the two tendencies, Carey saw the greater danger in the

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<sup>257</sup> Carl-Erich Vollgraf, "Marx' erstmals veröffentlichte Manuskripte zum 2. Und 3. Buch des Kapitals von 1867/68 im MEGA-Band II/4.3 Zu neuralgischen Punkten in der Ausarbeitung des Kapitals," in *Der Zweite Entwurf des „Kapitals“*, eds. Wolfgang Jahn, Manfred Müller (Berlin: Teitz, 1983), 106.

former. Centralization tends to spread manufacturing and agriculture apart from one another; concentration keeps them spatially together, creating a healthy interdependence. When one large center gains predominance at the expense of the smaller locales, political and economic interdependence is lost, he espoused. The state here, according to Carey, tends to become all-powerful and national attention is turned "outward" as it were rather than "inward". In concentration, on the other hand, the local unit is lent more autonomy, increasing the general well-being of the local inhabitants. Carey was of the opinion that local centers advantageously create more specialization and diversification: more interdependence is created within and without the local unit. Thus as an area becomes more specialized, it is in its best interest to associate with its neighbors. The result of this was for Carey an impetus towards economic development. This cooperative tendency between locales he labels "the principle of association", which is seen by him as one of the key factors in catalyzing business activity.<sup>258</sup> Carey writes, "the establishment of a local attraction tends to neutralize the attraction of the capitol, or great commercial city; and where such local centers exist, one will invariably find the greatest tendency towards the development of individuality and the combination of action – and the most rapid progress in knowledge, wealth and power".<sup>259</sup> Consumer and producer will come closer together creating a developed region that Carey sees as a cell-like structure made up of numerous self-governing localities, which, as time goes by, grow from being settlements to cities and, ultimately, independent nations. Once this process takes form, states come into being to give birth to a "federal system". Carey writes, "As employment becomes more diversified in the town, it is enabled to combine its efforts with its neighbor towns, to effect in the transport to and from the more distant city; and as the cities grow, they in like manner, are enabled to unite in facilitating intercourse with nations".<sup>260</sup>

The opposing alternative to this is "centralization", where monopolies dominate from large centers. Careful to emphasize that a certain degree of centralization is advantageous and even necessary, Carey believes that a state with too much centralized power endangers local and voluntary association, putting "forced association of dependents" in its place. With arguments similar to those of current detractors of the European Union, he emphasizes the negative consequences of over-centralization. He writes, "Every neighborhood that required to have a road or a bridge, to establish a bank, or to obtain a redress of grievances, would be required to

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<sup>258</sup> In professing the anthropological importance of association, Carey emphasizes the key role of language without which "there can be no ideas – no power of thought". See Carey, *The Unity of Law* (Philadelphia: Baird, 1873), 77.

<sup>259</sup> Henry C. Carey, *The Principles of Social Science, vol. 1* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, et al., 1858), 190.

<sup>260</sup> Morrison, *Henry C. Carey and American Economic Development*, 16. Carey's ideas on the ills of centralization are contradicted by Wackernagel. Cf. "Carey's System," op. cit., 123-124.

make its application therefore at the great city, distant many hundreds of miles, and to pay innumerable officers before it could obtain the desired permission [...].<sup>261</sup> Perhaps with the complaints of the American Founding Fathers against Great Britain in mind, he states, "Every community that found itself suffering from heavy taxes or from other oppressions from which it desired to be relieved, would be found seeking to make itself heard, but its voice would be drowned by those of the men who profited by such abuses [...]". He points to the disadvantages of a large-scale bureaucracy where local citizens were forced to pay sums to intermediaries to negotiate their business on the centralized level. Beyond that, he argues that when too many resources and factors for production are concentrated in one place, primary producers get left behind. It is essential, in Carey's opinion, that the less-developed entities of an economy be allowed to evolve. If this were allowed to happen, localities could develop their own political and economic power to balance that of the center. He writes, "The more perfect the power of association and the greater the notion of society, the greater must be the tendency towards the development of individuality, the more rapid the increase of production, the greater the facility of accumulations and the smaller the proportion of the products of labor that could be claimed in return for their use".<sup>262</sup> For Carey the concentration of power on the local level not only benefits the economy, but also offers moral improvement. He writes, "Concentration, by means of which the consumer and producer are brought together, has the same effect in nations as in families; and if we desire to see improvement in moral feeling, in habits of kindness and in the disposition to make exertions for the common good, we shall find it as we look more and more inward".

To illustrate what he saw as the benefits of "local association" and the dangers of over-centralization, Carey turns to history. Local association had flourished as never before in the Grecian Islands, Laconia and Attica, Boetia and Argos, Arcadia and Elis, Megara and Corinth. The forces of general association brought these peoples, as well as those of Italy and Asia, together in the Isthmian and Nemean and Olympic games; however, a "sufficient cohesive order" could not be established, and the different centers came into conflict with one another. According to Carey, the highly centralized government in Athens ultimately gained increasing authority, causing the Greek people to lose the power of association and ultimately their rights. Carey sees a similar development in Italy: in the early days, a high level of local and voluntary association existed in Etruria and the Campagna, Magna Graecia and the Samnite Hills. Over time, this disappeared as the power of Rome increased. Ultimately, local

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<sup>261</sup> Henry C. Carey, *The Unity of Law*, 82.

<sup>262</sup> Morrison, *Henry C. Carey and American Economic Development*, 62.

autonomy began to diminish as people became more and more dependent on Rome and its state treasury. The long duration of the Republic and the Empire Carey attributes to lingering powers of self-government.<sup>263</sup>

Writing in 1873, Carey praises Germany for being the "home of decentralization – of jealousy of central power – and the maintenance of local rights".<sup>264</sup> Pointing to the commercial union of his day, he cites a strong "tendency towards association" among her people. Having had, up to that point, no main center of power, Carey believes that Germany was a victim of the powers surrounding it, which pitted one community against the other. In his opinion, Germany had exerted no tendency to threaten its neighbors; Germany's object in the Franco-Prussian War was to establish independence. He saw parallels between the development of northern Germany and the United States. "Long before the recent wars the peaceful effects of decentralization had here fully exhibited themselves in the fact, under the lead of Prussia, Northern Germany had been brought under a great federal system, by help of which internal commerce had been placed on a footing almost precisely corresponding with that of the United States. The Northern States in America exemplified an unequalled balance between centralization and decentralization which fostered positive local action".<sup>265</sup> England, on the other hand, was an example of the negative effects of too much centralization. Although, according to Carey, local centers had originally played a great role in the British islands, they had long since diminished. He wrote:

Edinburgh, once the metropolis of a kingdom, has become a mere provincial city; and Dublin once the seat of an independent Parliament, has so greatly declined that were it not for the fact that it is the place at which a representative of majesty holds his occasional *lées*, it would be scarcely at all heard of. Throughout the United Kingdom there is exhibited a constantly growing tendency towards centralization, accompanied by diminution in the strength of local

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<sup>263</sup> Carey, *The Unity of Law*, 87.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 90. This view of Carey's was nearly the exact opposite of Thorstein Veblen's perspective, which, written in another era of course, emphasized the aggressive and militaristic tendencies of German history. Reinforcing widespread clichés about Germany, which existed around the time of the First World War, Veblen effusively condemned Prussia's "ruthless exploitation, terror, disturbances, reprisals, servitude and gradual habituation to settled allegiance, irresponsible personal rule, and peaceable repression". Douglas F. Dowd, *Thorstein Veblen* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), 91. As was the case with many issues, Dühring was ambiguous about Prussia; he saw Carey as being guilty of an uncritical "Tacitus-like" veneration of the Germans, but would presumably not have subscribed to the "bashing" of Germany undertaken by Veblen.

<sup>265</sup> *The Unity of Law*, 87.

attraction, increase of absentee proprietorship keeping steady pace with the growth of emigration from its shores.<sup>266</sup>

He also made a connection between the tendency towards centralization and militarism, writing: "With every step in that direction we see a steady increase in the necessity for involuntary association, manifested by the growth of fleets and armies, and of the contributions required for their support".<sup>267</sup> Whereas concentration promotes freedom and happiness, centralization of power, according to Carey, results in poverty and war.

Dühring was convinced that Carey's theories possessed groundbreaking significance for the science of political economy, and that they made up the first new system of political economy since Adam Smith. Smith had shown that the true source of wealth was work, thereby making man himself the decisive source for the wealth of nations. Carey's new theory of value and his thesis on progression of cultivation (where generally the worst land was cultivated first) adds to Smith's achievements, giving his own teachings the character of a true system.<sup>268</sup> Dühring sees Carey's system as a synthesis or a "rational unification", as he calls it, of mercantilism (based predominantly on practice) and the ideas of the physiocrats (based on theory). The economist from Philadelphia, in his opinion, took the first substantial step towards clearly defining economic freedom in terms of nations and individuals.<sup>269</sup>

## 2. *The Method of "Pure" and "Political" Economics*

Dühring's first writings on Carey are largely a reproduction of the American's thoughts, written with the intent of exposing the German audience to the American's new ideas. With the *Critical Foundation of Political Economy*, however, Dühring sets out to modify and advance Carey's system, integrating it within the nascent ideas of his *Philosophy of the Actual*.<sup>270</sup> Whereas *Capital and Labor* had dealt with societal alliances, in *Critical Foundation* he attempts to view social tendencies independently as products of societal functions.<sup>271</sup> The basic principles of his political economy follow those of his philosophy:

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 92-93.

<sup>268</sup> Although Dühring values Carey for his systematic approach, many intellectuals in Germany at the time were wary of systems in general and criticized Carey for this very aspect of his work. One reviewer of Carey wrote, "Es hat in Deutschland des geistigen Ringens einer ganzen Generation bedurft, um die Naturwissenschaften von der Herrschaft der naturphilosophischen Systemen zu erlösen und statt ihrer die sogenannte naturwissenschaftliche Methode als die allein berechnete Form der Forschung zur Anerkennung zu bringen". Wilhelm Wackernagel, "Carey's System," 114.

<sup>269</sup> Cf. Dühring, "Der Amerikanische Nationalökonom Carey und die Deutschen. VIII (Letzter Artikel) Wirtschaftliche Decentralisation", *Deutsche Industrie Zeitung* 36 (7 September 1865): 352.

<sup>270</sup> According to Dühring, Carey saw the book as in some ways a sharp contradiction to his theories and spoke of Dühring "emancipating" himself from Carey. SLF, 111.

<sup>271</sup> KGN, 456. Dühring's praise of war as an expression of economic power is very surprising, and not to be

theory and practice, which according to Dühring had drifted apart in recent history, are seen as being inevitably interwoven, and are not to be treated as completely separate areas of study as they had been in German scholarship at that time.<sup>272</sup> His system, like Carey's, is therefore normative and stresses the importance of social justice: iron laws hindering man must be defied! He speaks of not "what is", but of "what ought to be". Economic life, according to Dühring, is a part of the totality of man's social existence. A theory of society has to present the framework within which the center of economic life can be analyzed, and should not be seen as a mere accessory to political economy. He retains Carey's optimistic conviction that man can control his own destiny: for human beings to fulfill their needs, we must be able to appropriate nature in a productive manner. Dühring remains as equally opposed to the theories of Ricardo and Malthus as was Carey and he condemns the two English theoreticians, along with the physiocrats, for not taking volition and politics sufficiently into consideration.

Whereas Carey had gone to great lengths to emphasize the "unity of law", in the *Critical Foundation* Dühring places emphasis on the qualitative dissimilarities between laws in the different areas of the field (although not denying the existence of the general laws). According to Dühring, there is some concordance between the laws of the different realms, but to him these similarities are too general to bring forth valuable knowledge.<sup>273</sup> He is of the opinion that all problems of political economy have to be examined from the double aspect of theory (or natural and isolated consideration) and practice (which is social and to an extent historical). The laws relating to production (correlating to theory) and distribution (correlating to politics) are portrayed separately by Dühring, but are not seen as being mutually exclusive. Whereas pure laws of production, which up to that time were the basis of classical economics, can be conceived as being isolated from arbitrariness, the question of distribution inevitably involves the "political" and affects production. Distribution is, for Dühring, a "disposition

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found anywhere else in his entire body of work. Ibid., 454. Voelske asserts that this position may have been due to Dühring's acquaintanceship with Lothar Bucher, an assistant of Bismarck's, in an attempt to win favor with the Prussian government. Voelske, *Die Entwicklung des "rassischen Antisemitismus" zum Mittelpunkt der Weltanschauung Eugen Dührings*, 26-27.

<sup>272</sup> This approach of Dühring's follows in the footsteps of List, who in the 1830s was mercilessly criticized by scholars of the classical as well as the historical school. Cf. Albrecht, ED, 157-158.

<sup>273</sup> KGP, 177. In *Cursus of National and Political Economy* (1873) Dühring speaks of Laws of Development which represent of difference in the way that necessity is conveyed. CNS, 66. We will be dealing with this in Chapter Seven below. In a lexical entry that he wrote for Meyer's encyclopedia on political economic theory („Volkswirtschaftslehre“), Dühring briefly makes reference to the differences between his own ideas and Carey's. Somewhat vaguely, he writes that his system "weicht auch in den letzten Prinzipien von dem carey'schen System entschieden ab, indem sie alle Einrichtungen, Zustände, Verhältnisse und Bewegungen aus seiner Kräftegravitation erklärt, ohne die Idee zuzulassen, daß die Willkür des Menschen die naturgemäßen Verhältnisse der ganzen Völker habe verderben können." „Volkswirtschaftslehre,“ *Neues Konversations-Lexikon. Ein Wörterbuch des allgemeinen Wissens*, vol. 15 (Hildburghausen: Druck und Verlag vom Bibliographischen Institut, 1867), 537-543.

above direct consumption" involving subjugation of political groupings. Although it influences production, he emphasizes that it is a separate realm to be handled on its own.<sup>274</sup> The idea that modern capitalism is socially determined becomes the cornerstone of what he at different times labels his "societarian" or "organic" system. In his textbooks on political economy (*Cursus der National- und Sozialökonomie* 1<sup>st</sup> ed.1873, 2<sup>nd</sup>.ed. 1876 and 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1892) the distinction between the "pure" and the "political" aspect of economics is further substantiated and developed.<sup>275</sup>

In emphasizing distribution and the factor of politics in the scheme of political economy, Dühring creates an opening for "power" or "force" as a factor of scientific investigation.<sup>276</sup> Political and economic facts from history can only be understood, in his opinion, by analyzing the way the given results are determined. This occurs through political forms of conquest and forced groupings. Institutions such as slavery and indentured labor, Dühring believes, are social-economic forms of a political nature.<sup>277</sup> Carey had warned as well of what he called "forced association of dependents", created when a centralized government gained too much power over its citizens, but Dühring goes beyond his mentor by making this factor the cornerstone of his system.

One of the most important aspects belonging to the "political" realm of economics is the role of government. Although Dühring originally sees a positive, albeit limited, role of the state in political economy, as we will see in detail in Chapter Eight below, the challenge of overcoming government based on violence becomes a core concept of his vision for social reform. His view of government changes in time, but his basic position is that the state is

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<sup>274</sup> Although it tended to be ignored or downplayed in the theories of classical economics, the issue of how wealth should be distributed was to gain importance for political economy as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed. Schübler had addressed the problem in his writing "Der jetzige Stand der Volkswirtschaftslehre in Deutschland," *Deutsche Vierteljahres Schrift* 1(1843): 216-236. Schüz also emphasized the importance of "politics" in political economy, (politics being understood as emanating from the state). Cf. "Das politische Moment in der Volkswirtschaft," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaften* 1 (1844). Dühring's emphasis on the connection between political power and distribution may have inspired the Russian economist Tugan-Baranowsky's book *Soziale Theorie der Verteilung* (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1913).

<sup>275</sup> As mentioned in the General Introduction, Franz Oppenheimer took a similar position believing that all scientific facts and behavior could be traced to two causes: one being "purely economic" the other being of a "political" nature. He credits Dühring with founding "liberal socialism". Cf. Franz Oppenheimer, *Theorie der reinen und politischen Ökonomie* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1923), XVI.

<sup>276</sup> In his later years, as his outlook became more individualistic, he puts this political aspect more into the forefront of his theory (cf. Chapter 11, Section Two below). He then changes the title of his book *Capital and Labor* to *Weapons, Capital, and Labor* for the book's second edition. Here, "weapons" are meant not only literally, but also figuratively for undue political influence or the menacing power that centralized governments can exhibit.

<sup>277</sup> KNS, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 5. Albrecht was of the opinion that Dühring's specification of political or historical factors in his system did not connect him to the later prominent German historical school, but rather to the Austrian School's emphasis on psychological facts. See Gerhard Albrecht, *Eugen Dührings Wertlehre. Nebst einem Exkurs zur Marxschen Wertlehre* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1914), 9.

always a means and never a purpose in itself.<sup>278</sup> He explores the possibility that the state can be done away with for good, i.e. that it might be a “provisionary element of history”, but does not press the point as is done in anarchism. If the state is not necessary for man, how and why was it possible for it to come into existence? He concludes that in its original condition, society was made up of different groups that associated with one another in different ways. Hostility was predominant because it was in man's nature for the weak to be ruled by the strong. The state, therefore, owes its origin to a certain power structure, or “relationship of subordination” (“*Gewaltverhältnis*”), that had been sustained by force and political power up until the present.<sup>279</sup> According to Dühring, history is shaped by one-sided use of power, which develops into a scheme where certain people are helplessly tied to the wills of others in some form or another.<sup>280</sup> A centralized government upheld by force (*Gewaltstaat*) is the opposite of a legitimate government based on the principles of freedom and justice.<sup>281</sup>

### 3. Practical Proposals

A salient attribute of the Philosophy of the Actual is its realism and concern for suggesting precise measures to unseat wrongful authority existing in the present. Political economy becomes an important entity of his system for achieving moral purposes.<sup>282</sup> As we will be dealing with Dühring's plans for societal reform in Part Four below, it will suffice now to give an outline of the views contained in his system as it helps to elucidate his general world view and scientific bearing. Following the ideals of Rousseau, he advocates a type of social contract that respects the rights of the individual while preserving a balance of power between the individual groups of society.<sup>283</sup> In a free society, individuals stand on an equal basis and there is no room for domination and subordination. Believing – as did Carey – in the

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<sup>278</sup> See CP, 320.

<sup>279</sup> Binder points out that Dühring's ideas on the use of force in history were taken from St. Simon. Hanni Binder, *Das sozialitäre System Eugen Dührings* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1933), 72. Dühring was also influenced by the ideas of Proudhon, *Ibid.*, 78, also, Frédéric Krier, *Sozialismus für Kleinbürger. Pierre Joseph Proudhon – Wegbereiter des Dritten Reiches* (Cologne, et al.: Böhlau Verlag, 2009), 355 et seq.

<sup>280</sup> CP, 269-270.

<sup>281</sup> The American Albert Jay Nock, influenced by Franz Oppenheimer, held a similar view. Cf. Albert J. Nock, *Our Enemy the State* (Tampa, Florida: Hallberg Publishing Corporation, 1996).

<sup>282</sup> Dühring emphasizes the importance of political economy alongside philosophy in his *Weltanschauung*. CP, 533. However, with echoes of Thomas Carlyle's barb that political economy is the “dismal science”, he places the discipline at the lower echelon of knowledge. SLF, 276. Here he writes: “Die höchste Stufe der Wissenschaftlichkeit liegt nicht in der Volkswirtschaftslehre. Auch wenn letztere vollkommen ist, stellt sie nur ein niederes Gebiet vor, welches weder an sich über eine Lehre von der Futterbeschaffung der Menschheit hinausreicht, noch etwa je solche Verstandeskkräfte in Anspruch nehmen kann, wie die höheren und edeleren Wissenschaften”.

<sup>283</sup> Although he never wrote a monographic portrayal of Rousseau, there is hardly a thinker for whom Dühring had more reverence than he. In a letter to his follower Ernst Jünemann, he emphasizes that he knows Rousseau “better than anyone on earth” and could have written volumes on him if he had wanted to. Dühring to Jünemann, 15 January 1895, Dühring Papers, Box 7, HA/SBB.

possibility of a harmony of interest, Dühring writes that the highest principle of communal life is the exclusion of domination and servitude.<sup>284</sup> Government is not needed as an arbitrator; the parties involved can solve their differences themselves. "Natural justice" is served by an absolute minimum of government intervention and by letting the given powers in the society balance themselves.<sup>285</sup>

Dühring designs plans for a system of independent communities in which tyrannical power is eliminated, which he terms "Free Society" (*freie Gesellschaft*). No member of these democratic communities is to exploit another, and governmental influence over the citizens is to be held to an absolute minimum. There is to be little, if any, centralization. His concept is strongly individualistic and rational in its nature. Dühring believes that once all coercion – be it human to human or group to group – is eradicated that society can be structured in a way that allows free economic competition to be attained in the sense that Adam Smith had envisioned it; competence, disposition, and energy vary among individuals and each person should have the ability to develop his or her talents.

The individual human being is seen as the starting point and purpose of all societal life. For Dühring, the sovereign individual will is the final instance of all societal development. The basic form of all socialization is the association of two people through interests or through likeable feelings. This unification is only possible through an understanding of working together, i.e. through free volition. Dühring's vision of a truly liberal society entails an elaborate scheme to restructure living conditions through pedagogical reform as the control of education of the youth was inevitably control of the future. Poetry becomes an instrument of education (as it was in Plato's state).<sup>286</sup> Private property, the basic element of society, is respected and is not to be based on work – as in Marxism – but on the *right of use* in the positive sense and the *right of exclusion* of others in the negative. When an "unequal distribution of wealth" comes about, there are two ways of changing the disproportion: one is to make the right property general and the same for everyone, including those without property in an egalitarian sense, or secondly, one pools those lacking property together to strengthen their position by increasing their earnings. Dühring chooses the latter alternative. The ideal of property corresponds to that of freedom of trade, which allows humans to

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<sup>284</sup> CP, 265.

<sup>285</sup> In the last part of the first edition to *The Worth of Life* Dühring claims that reactive feeling or resentment was the only recognizable principle of justice or injustice. Cf. WL, 219. This emotive element exists not only in individuals, but also in societal groups. Cf. CP, 224. Cf. the next section of this chapter.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 423.

compete against each other. The role of government should be held to a minimum and has the primarily negative function of stepping in and settling grave violations.

As will be described in more detail below, the “Free Society” is to come into existence through the development of social associations or coalitions, consisting of members of socially underprivileged groups with the common goal of advancing their own vital interests in order to free themselves from the yoke of domination. Applying classical liberalism’s principle of individualism to group efforts (as List had done with the concept of the nation), Dühring believes that the power structure can be changed to favor the *good of the whole*. In this way, the ideal state of a “societarian” economy can be formed. Through groupings of labor (*Arbeitercoalitionen*), the workers have the ability to help themselves. The main task of the organizations is to gain higher wages for the workers; this area is where the exploitation can most flagrantly be observed. The coalitions embody freedom and what Dühring terms “equal mutuality”. As they gain power they will be able to close the gap, he believes, between capital and labor.<sup>287</sup>

#### 4. Natural Law and the “Principle of Balance”

We have purposefully placed emphasis on Dühring’s inclination towards rationalism as well as his strong concern for the issue of legitimacy and final causes. The rationalistic perspective, which his work embodies, allies him with the tradition of Natural Law (or Natural Right, German *Naturrecht*) as it has existed in western European and American more than in Germany, where an *historical* consideration of law had precedence.<sup>288</sup> The German Historical School, whose greatest representative was Savigny, saw law developing linearly and as always relative to a certain context in the past. In the dominant tradition of Western Europe and America dating back to the Stoics, on the other hand, law was seen as existing beyond history, as an abstract transcendental element.<sup>289</sup> In an attempt to lend material justification to transcendental law, and influenced by Schopenhauer’s concept of morality as being based on empathy, Dühring postulates the urge of retribution (resentment and revenge) as the basis of the concept of law. This theory, formulated in the appendix of *The Worth of Life*

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<sup>287</sup> The coalitions, which we will deal with in Chapter Eight, are a recurring theme in Dühring’s writings on political economy, beginning with his book *Capital and Labor* in 1865 and later with *Critical Foundation and then Cursus of Political and Social Economy*.

<sup>288</sup> Cf. Ernst Troeltsch’s essay, “The Ideas of Natural Law and Humanity in World Politics,” in *Natural Law and the Theory of Society 1500-1800*, ed. Otto von Gierke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934). 202. Hanni Binder emphasizes the foundation of Dühring’s *Weltanschauung* in Natural Law. Cf., SSED, 42-46.

<sup>289</sup> The first traces of Natural Law go back to ancient Rome where the Stoics rejected the positive law of the day, citing a higher morality. Cf. Arnold Gehlen, *Moral und Hypermoral. Eine pluralistische Ethik*, 32.

and developed in his other writings, plays an important role in his system of social economics, the subject of Part Three.<sup>290</sup>

Natural Law, Dühring writes, is a factor in history and exerts itself in economics through the question of distribution, which, as we have just seen, is connected with the element of politics and the use of force. Natural Law – not to be confused with “laws of nature” – in the field of political economy, for Dühring, does not involve a leveling postulate of equality, but rather is connected with social justice. It is a sign of his rational-historical approach, as well as his background as a trained lawyer, when he draws attention to its current application rather than simply postulating Natural Law. He credits the socialists and communists for making this an issue and sees their efforts in economics as analogous to those of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century natural right theoreticians in the field of law.<sup>291</sup> However, Dühring’s understanding of Natural Law is not based in history per se and even less so in mere expediency. It rests on instinct and stems from a feeling of revenge that exerts itself when a wrong has been committed. The basis of right is a “reactive sensation”, or an impulse that comes into being after an injury takes place. Another word for this reactive sensation is “resentment”, which downplays the condition of mutuality and equality in its point of departure. It should be emphasized that a *reaction* is taking place and that an injury is *responded to* and thereby a damage balanced. When an originally balanced relationship is destroyed through a deed on one side, then the reactive sensation demands a restoration of balance. The “economics of instinct” aims at a balance.

The principle of balance is not strictly one of power or force where the stronger party gets its way. According to Dühring, it is really the weaker societal elements from which the preservation of justice stems. He writes, “An injustice suffered is the master of law. The injured party is and remains the natural advocate of law”.<sup>292</sup> When the equilibrium between two parties is destroyed, a natural force is set in motion through the suppressed party. This force does not have to be powerful enough to destroy its opponent, but serves its purpose if it can defend itself from being destroyed. Even in a position of subjugation, the party can find enough strength to prevent that an injustice does not occur. When a certain surplus of external

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<sup>290</sup> Cf. WL, 219-234. Dühring speaks of his “natural theory of law” one year earlier in an article. Cf. “Die neuesten Lehren über den Arbeitslohn,” *Der Arbeiterfreund. Zeitschrift des Centralvereins in Preußen für das Wohl der arbeitenden Klassen* 2 (1864): 279. For a helpful, in-depth portrayal of Dühring’s concept of balance and its influence on Nietzsche, cf. Volker Gerhardt, “Das ‘Princip des Gleichgewichts’ Zum Verhältnis von Recht und Macht bei Nietzsche,” *Nietzsche Studien* 12 (1983): 111-133. See also Edmond Laskine’s analysis of the development of juristic socialism, which deals with Dühring’s thoughts alongside those of August Schrodter, and Anton Menger. “Die Entwicklung des juristischen Sozialismus,” *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus* 3 (1913): 28-39.

<sup>291</sup> KG, 301.

<sup>292</sup> KG, 327.

repercussions is reached, the injustice is reconciled. This, however, has nothing to do with the “eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth” mentality of the Old Testament, which Dühring calls “stubborn”. He is emphatic that a type of “ideal terrorism” cannot serve as a deterrent, as is the case with Orthodox Judaism. Anything can be used to deter, even something that has nothing to do with justice at all. He believes that nature has its own deterrent, which is the fear of personal revenge; this institution always remains in the sphere of the conditions of justice.<sup>293</sup> In his concept of law, the individualistic and intuitive vision of the world, which Dühring’s philosophy represents, becomes apparent. Although he appeals to sentiments, which are in essence a general phenomenon, he is careful to point out that it is not the instinct itself, but rather the “intellectual form” of revenge which is decisive for law. Thus his theory has its basis in the intellect of the individual, which he sees as the only point of departure and destination of all law. Every association is only valid in as far as the will of the individual is active in it. The concept remains ambiguous, however, as it amounts to what one might term a critical interpretation of basic instinct.<sup>294</sup>

Dühring also makes a connection between law and economics. Speaking out against the hegemony of Roman law as well as mere historical consideration of jurisprudence, he speaks of “independent legal reason” (*selbstständige Rechtsvernunft*), which has “general human consequences, but with national specialization”.<sup>295</sup> Law is to have a special application to economic conditions assuring not only the usual legal protection, but also providing a guarantee of economic justice. Again the principle of balance is applied when he writes in one of his late works that jurisprudence can work towards creating an “authentic equalization and harmonization”.<sup>296</sup> The concept of justice can be applied directly to the basic ideas of economics, and thus Dühring advocates bringing the two separate areas together to create a coherent theory.<sup>297</sup>

### 5. Critical Summary

As we will be critically dealing with Dühring’s political economy in chapters 7 and 8 below, we will concentrate now only on general aspects of his philosophy of economics. Before developing his own theories, Dühring chooses role models, being first an enthusiastic

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<sup>293</sup> CP, 227.

<sup>294</sup> Dühring writes that a concept of law based on instinct can lead to “wild injustice”, while at the same time preserving justice. He speaks of an inherent “duality” in the principle of law which exemplifies man’s proclivity for error, dealt with in Chapter Three above. See the explanation of his theory in his last book *Social Rescue*. SR, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 189-191.

<sup>295</sup> SLF, 336.

<sup>296</sup> SR, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 143.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

“disciple” and “seeker” before becoming the “preacher” for his own doctrines. Carey’s theories are most significant for him. The American’s theory of value and his optimistic normative approach become the pillars of Dühring’s own political economy. Dühring holds that protective tariffs should be implemented to bolster industry, as not only Carey but also Hamilton and List had advocated. Where Carey had gone to great lengths to emphasize the “unity of law”, in *The Critical Foundation of Political Economy* Dühring places emphasis on the qualitative dissimilarities between laws in the different areas of the field (although not denying the existence of the general laws). According to Dühring, there was some concordance between the laws of the different areas, but to him they were too general to bring forth valuable knowledge.<sup>298</sup> In further distinguishing himself from Carey, he incorporates elements of his own philosophy into the analysis of political economic phenomenology.

For Dühring, political economy entails social justice and is ultimately connected to modern socialism, which he labels “societarianism”. Dühring plunges into the social issues of the day, believing that the evils of society can be fought by confronting them wherever they surface. With regard to the working classes, social science, for him, involves educating the workers because he is convinced that suppressed classes can expect emancipation only through their own initiative. Not a revolutionary like Karl Marx, he seeks reform through the idea of creating a balance of power among social groups. Dühring’s preoccupation with oppressive force as a negative factor in the history of economic development reflect the pessimistic attributes of the Philosophy of the Actual, which, as we have seen above, were influenced by Schopenhauer.

Dühring’s theory of justice also follows Schopenhauer in that it postulates an empirical or observable foundation to law (through the feeling of revenge), as Schopenhauer had for morality (through the feeling of empathy). Dühring’s perspective is, we believe, open to criticism for failing to clearly define the nature of injustice. The root of justice is said to be found in the “reactive sensation of revenge” and, with this postulate, he believes to have given Natural Law a material substantiation that it has lacked historically. Justice is based on material force, he reasons, and its preservation depends on a balance of forces. This balance itself has no material reality and is only a metaphor whose true significance is in organization, which contains submission and domination, but which allows the subjugated part “independence and elasticity”. Dühring emphasizes that positive moral action is not to be

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<sup>298</sup> As we will see in Part Three below, despite being rooted in the abstract-rational method of classical economics, Dühring comes to postulate Laws of Development which apply to manmade institutions, states, and conditions.

found in a position of weakness, but through a position of strength. This claim contradicts, we believe, the basis of his own moral postulate: the feeling of revenge stems from a position of weakness itself as it is a *reactive* impulse against a stronger, or at least in some way superior, force. If revenge is a positive impulse towards the overcoming of injustice then it presupposes weakness or vulnerability before it takes effect, and therefore cannot be a basis. Going to the roots of the phenomenon one could just as easily claim that weakness is the basis of morality. Moreover, Dühring, in our opinion, overlooks that the reactive instinct, whose most salient form is the feeling of revenge, is inescapably directed towards the past, i.e. some specific event through which the urge of revenge was triggered. An urge of retribution, which has no actual purpose for the future, cannot be a basis of law whose purpose should be to prevent injustice occurring to others. The retributive urge, which Dühring postulates, may be an element of the phenomenology of morality, but due to its *reactive* nature, in our opinion, cannot be seen as the last reason (*letzter Grund*) for the concept of law.

Dühring's talent for the explanation and application of abstract thought is perhaps best utilized in the field of political economy. In the history of political economy there are very few examples of prominent philosophers making substantial contributions to the field (David Hume being a notable exception). As Kruse has pointed out, a main reason for the fact that Dühring's writings on economics remain widely unknown is to be found in his pugnacious personality and in the excesses of polemic which we alluded to in the General Introduction and will be dealing with in Part Four.<sup>299</sup> Another factor is that the school of thought which influenced Dühring and whose tenets he was trying to advance, the "American School" of Henry C. Carey and Friedrich List, fell into ill repute during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>299</sup> Kruse, "Eugen Dühring's wissenschaftliche Isolierung," 210.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### HISTORY

#### *1. Paragons: Comte and Buckle*

Friedrich Engels disparaged Dühring for being a proponent of “eternal truths” and values that stand above the flow of time.<sup>300</sup> Indeed, Dühring is interested in configurations that have universal value, and he often shows scorn for the *mere historical*, or a portrayal of facts heaped together in an arbitrary manner. Like Jacob Burkhardt, he is vehemently opposed to fabulous philosophies of history (*Geschichtsphilosophien*) creeping into special areas of historiography behind the mask of positive research.<sup>301</sup> The role of history for Dühring’s *Weltanschauung* and bearing towards science is no less important, however, for he is in many ways a child of an age, which, unlike today, took great pride in historical cultivation.<sup>302</sup> Dühring possesses the historical *Bildung* of his times and, despite his attacks on the overemphasis of history, which he believes leads to mental complacency and limits action, he is strongly shaped by a “historical sense”, which, as Schumpeter correctly pointed out, is a prerequisite for understanding the economic phenomena of any epoch including the present.<sup>303</sup>

Based on the premises of the Philosophy of the Actual, Dühring develops a view of history that combines historical phenomena into the categories of “nature” and “freedom”. The former is an abstract domain, which can be isolated as a constant factor in scientific discourse; the latter involves human intercourse, volition, and action directed towards changing the present for the purpose of fulfilling some goal. While rejecting an absolute separation of natural and human phenomena, as we have emphasized above, he believes that there are clear qualitative differences between the two realms. His concept of history thus involves a natural-scientific and an individualistic-rationalistic approach. Fixed laws determine not only the

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<sup>300</sup> Engels, *Herr Dühring’s Revolution in Science* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1934), 97-108.

<sup>301</sup> Dühring, “Geschichte der Civilisation,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrs-Schrift* 29, no. 3 (1866): 51. Jacob Burkhardt called “philosophy of history” a centaur and a *contradictio in adjecto*. *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, ed. Jacob Oeri (Berlin and Stuttgart, 1910), 2.

<sup>302</sup> Cf. Binder’s assessment of the role of history in Dühring’s method, *Das sozialitäre System Eugen Dührings* [henceforth abbreviated as SSED], 51-52. Before his critique of history begins, Nietzsche emphasizes how proud his age is of its historical consciousness Cf. *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*, ed. Michael Landmann (Zürich: Diogenes, 1984), 6. The sources on non-historical and anti-historical consciousness of the present age are numerous. For a good (but polemical) summary of present discussions of history with regard to scientific theory, see Keith Windshuttle, *The Killing of History. How Literary Critics and Social Theorists are Murdering out Past* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 1996).

<sup>303</sup> Quoted from David Wightman, “Why Economic History?” in *Paths to International Political Economy*, ed. Susan Strange, 23.

course of nature, but also human life and volition.<sup>304</sup> The great individuals of the history of science are significant for Dühring, to a large degree, because they are a part of already existing historic tendencies. Despite the individuality and originality that these figures possess, their influence can never be seen as being without precedence.<sup>305</sup> Nature can intervene in the affairs of man, but a reverse intervention of human will in the realm of objective nature is impossible. He looks down on most of the historians of his day, but there are two thinkers whose philosophy of history he rates highly: Auguste Comte and Henry Thomas Buckle.

Dühring sees Comte as a progressive thinker who understands the universal-historical implications of the recently-begun scientific age. The first sentence of Dühring's essay on Comte's political philosophy is: "Widespread teachings are only a mirror of dominant facts".<sup>306</sup> He considers Comte and his philosophy of positivism to be a phenomenon brought forth by the age of modernity to aid in the effort discarding of errant thought that had existed for thousands of years. Comte, who studied at the Parisian poly-technical school, is for Dühring a product of the great French Revolution and a representative of new science.

Comte taught that there are three developmental phases of humanity: the theological, the metaphysical, and finally the positivistic phase. The development of the phases is not unified and progresses differently among the different peoples of the world, which means that all three phases exist in the present alongside one another. The Comtean law of development, as the French thinker taught it, was also valid for individuals assuming that they are in surroundings conducive to the rise of the higher levels of intellectuality. On a societal level, the stages corresponded to political forms. The theological phase was the early or childhood epoch of humanity. In this era man explained his environment through the power of a personal supernatural being and is represented politically by a theological and patriarchic regime. The authorities in this period had a type of prescience and were put in their positions by the Gods. The condition of the theological phase has, according to Comte, continued to exist in civilization, but was ultimately replaced by the metaphysical phase, where the intellect took on a more critical role. In this phase the intellect went only halfway, so to speak. As knowledge progressed and as true science took form, the original fantastic ideas began to

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<sup>304</sup> This thought is often emphasized. For example: "The realm of thought and sensation is therefore no less determined by law than that which is in the rest of nature". CP, 33.

<sup>305</sup> He positions himself here in opposition to thinkers such as Thomas Carlyle, who preached the importance of great heroes in history, and also to Schopenhauer, for whom the genius existed in a vacuum containing a cosmos of his own. CP, 310-311.

<sup>306</sup> "Herrschende Lehren sind oft nur ein Spiegel vorherrschender Tatsachen". Dühring, "Auguste Comtes politische Philosophie," 259.

disappear. There was still an area of contradiction, however, between science and imagination in the second phase of development. Metaphysical concepts were, for Comte, intermediate constructions, based on transactions that are indefensible in the long term. There were antagonistic principles inherent in this type of thinking: the direct naïve imaginative perspective battled against the growing critique supported by discipline and increasing knowledge. The intellect, strengthened by science, disputes the traditions handed down by the childhood phase. The “science” that developed was, according to Comte, metaphysics. For Comte, the metaphysical phase corresponded to social-political constitutionalism, which he considered a “bastard of feudalism” and the industrial regime. The mind had to free itself from the contradictions and come to a new standpoint, which for him was the positivist philosophy. In the positive phase the theological pre-phases were recognized for what they were, and the attempt to resolve the contradictions was given up completely. Every component of human thought which developed from imaginary ideas is to be done away with in the final scientific phase. Positive science is to be victorious in the end. Positivism is relevant from now on and stands in contrast to the first two phases. Philosophy is now, Comte thought, the epitome of positive knowledge.<sup>307</sup>

Dühring sees this philosophy of history as Comte’s most original achievement and adopts its basic premises, albeit in simplified form.<sup>308</sup> His praise is, however, once again ambiguous: we saw in Chapter Three that he is critical of Comte’s philosophy because he believes that it neglects to sufficiently consider the emotional side of man. This critique is also applied to Comte’s theory of history. Dühring, in our opinion correctly, rejects a fundamental anti-metaphysical perspective as he believes that the fundamental impetus that led to religion was something unchangeable, something which would exist in the future and be of use in the future; this force was a human urge which should not and could not be eradicated as Comte’s philosophy of history sought to. Dühring writes, “That which was the raw basis of all intellectual and cultural development, must also play a role far into future, albeit a different role”.<sup>309</sup> In another essay he writes, “The theological circle of ideas, whose imagination and later intellectual interweaving we justifiably attack, contains an element that exists in all

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<sup>307</sup> Comte’s theory of developmental phases of history was to influence Dühring’s concept of “Laws of Development” of political economy. Although laws of nature do exist, there are, according to Dühring (and also the representatives of the Historical School), laws that govern the development of humanity in certain phases which influence economic activity.

<sup>308</sup> Instead of three phases, Dühring distinguishes only between two large halves separated by the French Revolution. Many socialists held this view of history containing two epochs in common with Dühring. Although Nietzsche did not favor this interpretation himself, he attempted to interpret his book *Thus Spake Zarathustra* as the beginning of a “thousand year perspective” for humankind. Cf. Nolte, *Nietzsche und der Nietzscheanismus* (Frankfurt am Main/Berlin: Herbig, 2000), 67.

<sup>309</sup> “Der Positivismus in der Philosophie,” 179.

transformation; this is not touched by science”.<sup>310</sup> It becomes apparent how focused Dühring is on the unchanging forces, particularly the anthropological factor of history, as opposed to mere facts and figures. He also disagrees with Comte that legal constitutions are transitional entities. According to Dühring, Comte was too caught up in the political circumstances of his day and too prejudiced by his negative position towards the government of the restoration and the July Monarchy to have a fair judgment of constitutions. Dühring is of the opinion that all political-social development contains to some degree transitional entities, and he is convinced that constitutions were a practical necessity.<sup>311</sup>

Comte’s greatest achievement is, according to Dühring, his general philosophy of history. He does not agree with its exact structure, but is of the opinion that Comte is the first to scientifically develop the true idea that there is a correspondence between a way of thinking and the political events which develop. Comte, he believes, convincingly demonstrated the parallel between how a nation perceives things and the method according to which it is ruled.<sup>312</sup> Through Comte it can be seen how public conditions and the ruling ideas of a given historical epoch are connected.

The most commendable historian for Dühring is Henry Thomas Buckle, whose writings he sees as attempting to focus on the “true principles” of historical progress rather than princes and battles.<sup>313</sup> Dühring describes Buckle as a reformer of historical science and a strong opponent of German pseudo-historicism. In his book *History of Civilisation in Europe*, Buckle applied natural science to history to determine the laws of cultural progress and their role in the development of civilization. Although he died at an early age and his work remained just a fragment, he achieved great popularity throughout Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The German translation of the two volume work by Arnold Ruge, the editor of Karl Marx’s “*Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*”, appeared 1860/1862 and went through seven editions until 1901. Although Buckle is recognized as the most important historian of positivism, he has generally been appraised negatively. Much like Dühring, he has been accorded only minimal significance in the history of science, although he was one of the more well-known scientific writers of his day. *History of Civilisation in England* applies Auguste Comte’s

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<sup>310</sup> “Auguste Comte’s politische Philosophie,” 272.

<sup>311</sup> He would change this position later in his life. Albrecht was of the opinion that Dühring’s disagreement with Comte on this issue was due to the Prussian constitutional conflict going on at the time. Cf. Albrecht, ED, 44.

<sup>312</sup> KGP, 488-489.

<sup>313</sup> Dühring wrote two essays on Buckle, “Die Geschichtsschreibung der Civilisation,” 50-79, and “Buckle. Geschichte der Civilisation in England”. There is one critical monography on Buckle: Eckhardt Fuchs, *Henry Thomas Buckle, Geschichtsschreibung und Positivismus in England und Deutschland* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1994).

methods to history, and for Dühring, Buckle is a “shining example of the application of the objective method, as it was conceived by Comte, but insufficiently practiced by him”.<sup>314</sup> He believes that Buckle corrected the mistakes of “pseudo-historicism”, a brand of scholarship which remains chained to facts and neglects the larger scales of development, particularly as they related to geography, natural factors, and the role of technology.

Buckle took up the critique that John Stewart Mill had made of the historians of the day. In 1845, Mill had charged historians with having a lack of interest for philosophical questions and of not understanding the role of laws of nature in the course of history. In the introduction to *History of Civilisation in Europe*, Buckle writes:

The unfortunate peculiarity of the history of man is, that although its separate parts have been examined with considerable ability, hardly anyone has attempted to combine them into a whole, and ascertain the way in which they are connected with each other. In all the other great fields of inquiry, generalization is universally admitted, and noble efforts are being made to rise from particular facts in order to discover the laws by which those facts are governed. So far, however, is this from being the usual course of historians, that among them a strange idea prevails, that their business is merely to relate events, which they may occasionally enliven by such moral and political reflections as seem likely to be useful.<sup>315</sup>

Buckle, in Dühring’s opinion, created new principles for writing history and made a break with traditional historical writing. Fuchs sees the controversy which Buckle’s work brought about foreshadowing the famous “*Lamprecht-Bülow Streit*” in Germany in the 1890s.<sup>316</sup> The main emphasis of history should be on less noticeable factors of man’s development such as climate, nutrition, and soil. A historian should, according to Buckle, explain things of value, describe the progress of knowledge and how it was spread, and not focus on insignificant details or the personal anecdotes of kings and courts with endless news on what a minister said and another thought. He encouraged historians to begin an entirely new way of collecting facts. Buckle turns away from describing the policies of governments as they came about only due to practical concerns. History should not be a chain of facts, but rather one which is determined by knowledge of nature determined by law. The goal of historical writing is to discover the reasons of progress, which have little to do with governments. This anti-statist tone of his work, as Mombert shows, found favor with fiscal conservatives in Germany.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> “Auguste Comte und seine positive Philosophie,” 461. It is debated as to how much influence Comte had on Buckle. Fuchs, *Buckle*, 234.

<sup>315</sup> Henry Thomas Buckle, *History of Civilization in England* (London: Watts, 1930), 1.

<sup>316</sup> Fuchs, op. cit., 361.

<sup>317</sup> Mombert, *Geschichte der Volkswirtschaftslehre*, 361.

Buckle believed, as did Holbach, that man was a part of nature and that the natural barriers of civilization should be emphasized. Displaying a euro-centric point of view, he maintained that higher culture could only develop on European soil because, in the warmer zones of the earth, the overwhelming force of nature limited the human intellect, keeping it from carrying out organized action. Where nature is more powerful than man, there are relatively few chances to be pursued. For Buckle, higher European civilization is characterized by the development of the intellect, which involves maximizing human volition. In Asia and other parts of the world where nature is a powerful, more threatening force, people became molded by angst and fear, and humanity there remained in a raw condition. Thus, great achievements of the intellect took place to a lesser degree than in Europe.

Like Dühring, Buckle also sought popularity. In *Natural Dialectic*, Dühring had spoken of “winning the active participation of the crowd” and of finding a broader circle of readers beyond academia.<sup>318</sup> Buckle wrote: “I want my book to get among the mechanist’s institutes and the people, and to tell you the truth, I would rather be praised in popular and, and as you rightly call them, vulgar papers than in scholarly publications”.<sup>319</sup> Buckle did not believe the popular publications could judge his work, “but they are admirable judges of its social consequences among their own class of readers. And these are they whom I am now beginning to touch, and whom I wish to move”. Buckle wanted to shape public opinion and was critical of German historians who did not attempt to do this. Dühring takes up this critique and applies it himself.

In 1866, Dühring wrote an extensive review of Buckle’s works which, despite its general positive tone, contained critique of the English scholar. In his review we receive a glimpse at Dühring’s preference for the universal or “poly-typical scholar”- Buckle is too much the specialist. He is in agreement with Buckle’s general principles, especially his point of departure and main principle of investigation, which he believes shows an imminent philosophical perspective. Buckle’s strong point, the natural-scientific perspective, is, according to Dühring, also his weakness: his exceptional scientific erudition and his eye for natural and technological development cause him to ignore every other principle. He remains too fixated on one principle and neglects other areas, such as non-scientific literature.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> ND, VIII.

<sup>319</sup> Fuchs, *Buckle*, 226.

<sup>320</sup> Dühring, “Buckle, Geschichte der Zivilisation in England,” 272 et seq.

Another aspect in Buckle's work which Dühring applauds is his opposition to the church of his day. Buckle saw religion as a general condition and maintains that its significance for the general development of culture as minimal. Buckle was of the opinion that morality has meaning only for the individual and has no influence on the shaping of progress in society; he went along with the English natural scientists who believed that the main task of the state is maintaining security for the individual and for property. Many of Buckle's historical observations were aimed at supporting the non-intervention of governments in the matters of society. For him, governments should do no more than keep the peace and be a sort of health police. Anything else that a government gets involved in has damaging effects on the development of civilization's progress. The best legislation is that which repeals all laws. Buckle views the history of states in modernity in an attempt to prove that governments work against progress.

Although Buckle did not even complete the introduction to his work, Dühring sees a clear plan. The main moments of the English and French revolutions are portrayed, and the instructions on writing history and the principles of civilization given in the introductory examination provide enough material to give a general sketch of what would have been to come. The main principle is the expansion of reliable knowledge, which is the only guarantee of progress. Dühring writes: "The strength of Buckle's portrayal lies in the enthusiastic devotion to an authentically modern perspective". He praises Buckle for making natural-scientific insight and the technical progress, the pride of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, his basic point of departure. He prophesizes that Buckle's style of history will ultimately prevail over the traditional forms of historical science, while at the same time emphasizing that his principle of ever-increasing knowledge will, in the long run, be replaced once a mechanical and naturally-based historical perspective becomes prevalent.<sup>321</sup> Buckle's main achievement is having shown the expansion of knowledge to be the catalyst of progress.

In summarizing, it can be said that Comte and Buckle's influence on Dühring's understanding of history pertains to the rational side of his worldview; their approach to history represents knowledge and strict natural science. Dühring uses them as role models for his view of history because they attempted to show how laws of nature determined historical events. They also

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid., 274. Buckle's brand of natural history has found favor with popular writers on history such as Alfred W. Crosby and Jared Diamond . Cf. Crosby, *Germs, Seeds, and Animals: Studies in Ecological History* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc. , 1994) and Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

fought to liberate history from the control of the vested interests of government historians, whose authority Dühring sought to discredit.

## 2. *History as the Progressive Work of Nature*

Dühring's own view of history involves an application of his philosophy's postulate of the constant interplay between permanence and change to history. Amidst all change in the world, there is, he believes, a general law through which all human history is determined. Laws create change, which is the impetus of history. Nature brings forth differences and transformations from which new forms originate. Difference "satisfies progressive being, be it man or an intellectually advanced being from another planet, through new experiments and enrichments of its nature".<sup>322</sup> History does not, however, repeat itself as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche believed, but rather proceeds linearly. Reality represents a *whole* and history is also single, but it is characterized by a series of "points of now" which progress, but remain connected. The possibilities of transformation and development increase from phase to phase, and the periods of time in which creative change is visible get shorter and shorter. Man has an intellectual ability to create, which changes his fate faster than his own nature. Dühring writes, "The education of man with regard to nature and to himself, along with the corresponding development of technical power, determines the level of cultural progress".<sup>323</sup>

He compares the transformation of history with movement according to the laws of mechanics. An example of a purely mechanical way of looking at history is the observance that the discovery of the bayonet through the French minister of war Vauban triggered the populist movement, which ultimately led to the French Revolution; this invention enabled the preponderance of the infantry over the knights to be completed, and in so doing put the main focus of power with the parts of the army which were recruited from the lower classes.<sup>324</sup> Within all of the diversity and variations of historical transformation there are also stable, unchanging components which are independent of events and happenings. These entities do not have their validity through adjustments to the historical conditions, but rather determine history themselves. These fixed elements are the objective measures of judging history. He writes, "The basic scaffolding of human conditions is put up predominantly the same everywhere and the curriculum of humanity shows a unified type in all of its phases and

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<sup>322</sup> CP, 299.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Dühring, "Lecky, Geschichte der Aufklärung in Europa II," *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 3 (1868): 654.

transformations”.<sup>325</sup> They do not need to be checked or analyzed by each new generation, as they are valid for every generation.<sup>326</sup> Thus there is a “fund of knowledge” for all of the foreseeable future.<sup>327</sup> In his autobiography, he writes, “Even when something completely new gains validity, like the Copernican system, for example, the substantial basics, such as the facts of measuring movements, remain”.<sup>328</sup>

His view of history thus has anthropological dimensions. According to Dühring, the divisions of history that had thus far been determined by professional historians are either insufficient or second-rate divisions.<sup>329</sup> If we could look back further into history on a scale of tens of thousands of years instead of just thousands, he believes, we would see how young our institutions are. The medieval relics would be cast aside and modernity would take on the role of basic opposition to traditional structures of authority, setting the more noble mindsets free. The historical laws of transformation mould states, societies, and peoples. All political constructions are finite and are replaced by others. Under favorable conditions, material is conserved; in unfavorable, it is destroyed. Material for Dühring includes individual human beings who are shaped by nature and culture. The individual nations and races are affected by dissolving forces as are institutions. In Dühring’s opinion, the deeper foundations of society are not influenced as much as people think. Perhaps wanting to contradict the pessimistic Count Arthur Gobineau, for whom miscegenation was the cause of the decline and fall of culture, Dühring emphasizes that the racial mixing of the different peoples is not responsible for the fall of nations and states.<sup>330</sup> There are deeper forces, based on laws of nature, at work here. A conquering power may change the physiognomy of a nation, but Dühring believes that the latent characteristics of the nation remain; basic components “are pushed from the stage, but do not disappear from existence”.<sup>331</sup>

His concepts of “antagonism of forces” and the Law of Difference, dealt with above, assume that fixed structures of history are always endangered. Death always belongs to life, just as destruction belongs to creation. Dühring believes it is a fact that the nations of history are mortal, and governments even more so. With regard to the rise and fall of entities in history,

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<sup>325</sup> CP, 298.

<sup>326</sup> This thought is used by Dühring in his political economic teachings. In his *Critical Foundation of National Economy* he writes, “Ein wahrhaftes Prinzip greift über alle Geschichte über und erhält sich in derselben, wenn auch in verschiedenen Metamorphosen”. KGV, 41.

<sup>327</sup> KGP, 470.

<sup>328</sup> SLF, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 311.

<sup>329</sup> CP, 301 et seq.. A short summary of the problem of the division of history is given by Dühring in his article “Eine Culturgeschichte des neuzehnten Jahrhunderts,” 122 et seq.

<sup>330</sup> CP, 304.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

he makes reference to the Greeks' attempt to show natural laws of development and circulation. He also analyses Machiavelli's idea of an organic circulation of history.<sup>332</sup> Machiavelli developed what he called a "law of constitutional metamorphosis", which in some ways anteceded the later theories of cultural morphology put forth by Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee. The Italian political philosopher tried to show how the ruling components of a political body influence the forms of government; he saw political pessimism as a basic scheme of social development. Once a government changes its form, in Machiavelli's opinion, the process is irreversible. The creative principles that call various historical forms to life are called up to initiate regeneration, but ultimately become so weak that there is little effectiveness. Thus decline and fall are inevitable. Dühring does not believe that the recognition of this fact, illustrated by Machiavelli, can change the course of history:

Every aristocracy carries with it corruption and then becomes concentrated into the most shameless oligarchy, whose naked exploitation reverts to centralized actions of violence and a with a dictator who flirts with the masses. With this last Caesar like centralization the fate of the empire is fulfilled in the general decay of the ruling elements and classes. Greece went down Alexandrian style, and Rome Caesarian style.<sup>333</sup>

He is of the opinion that his contemporaries could take little comfort from history with regard to the centralizing tendencies in Imperial Germany. Any type of historicism that believes that lessons can be learned from the past will be proven insufficient. Thus he is convinced that no advantageous set of morals for society can be derived from history. This non-historical perspective is made relative when he claims that there is no reason to be discouraged by fact that history cannot show man the way. The obstacles that impede progress must be removed.

One such obstacle is the phenomenon of "pseudo-historicism", which looks to historical facts for explanation of, and guidance for, the present. As we have mentioned, Dühring was opposed to an overemphasis of history in the form of a mere presentation of facts. He would definitely have agreed with Henry Adams' well-known statement, "Nothing in education is so astonishing as the amount of ignorance it accumulates in the form of inert facts". True historicism should concentrate on the forces behind the facts and has no room for romanticism. He fights against what he sees as the attempt to retain the remote past and denounces what he calls "Medieval brand of historical romanticism", which came into being

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<sup>332</sup> Dühring, "Machiavelli und der politische Pessimismus," in *Sendbogen für Dühringsche Geisteshaltung und Lebensgestaltung* 1, ed. Hans Reinhardt (January 1933[1867]): 16.

<sup>333</sup> CP, 306.

after the French Revolution and put its stamp on the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With Heinrich von Sybel and the Prussian historiography in mind, he writes:

This historical romanticism expanded in the decade 1865-1875, taking a new turn directed towards the German Middle Ages. They (historians) mixed the consequences of the present reality with an excessively decorative romanticism by believing the traditions of the medieval German Empire, which were not only torn down but extinct, could be brought back to life and a new empire installed in an old style. Really they only succeeded in making the government a copy of new Caesarism, in some of its features along the lines of the French example.<sup>334</sup>

Dühring's contempt for the national culture of the German Empire becomes apparent; this perspective clearly separates him from conservative thinkers of the age, whom he has been listed alongside of in discussions of the nationalism and anti-Semitism of the day.<sup>335</sup>

### 3. *History as Isolated Individual Striving*

Dühring is of the opinion that the aspect of the individual should not be eliminated from science and history. In contrast to many representatives of pure science, who downplayed the role of the individual, he believes that along with objective knowledge, human willpower must be taken into consideration. As written in *My Cause, My Life, My Enemies*, he was always interested in the great figures of science, especially the outsiders. "Such enthusiasm grew and became energetic when the achievements and merits had to be brought to light, or to even be protected from diminishment, suffocation, plagiarism or similar thievery, be it directly in the present or in the distant past".<sup>336</sup> The tenable role of personality in history lies for Dühring somewhere between Buckle's perspective, which strongly downplayed the individual, and Thomas Carlyle's, who saw the "hero" as the mover and shaker of history. Dühring sees the individual actors of history as being only the tip of the iceberg of history. Although admitting that in his day the individualistic or heroic view of history was still present and influential, he labels it a "childish national point of view" and advocates a separation of biography and history.<sup>337</sup> He rejects what he called Carlyle's "cult of the hero", seeing the Scottish thinker as a type of romanticist, who, despite his passion and liveliness,

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<sup>334</sup> CP, 313.

<sup>335</sup> Cf. Karl Schwedhelm, *Propheten des Nationalismus* (Munich: List, 1969). As we have already mentioned, Dühring was opposed to nationalism, seeing it as a form of "egotism" and superficial phenomenon, which was not a true modern movement. GMLII, 344. He is highly critical of Imperial Germany and his attitude towards the German nation, like Nietzsche's, was negative. (In the 1860s Dühring had a different view towards German culture, however. He spoke proudly of the German philosophical tradition and even called Goethe, whom he would later mock, as "our great thinker". Cf. "William Whewell," *op. cit.*, 848.)

<sup>336</sup> SLF, 106-107.

<sup>337</sup> "Die Geschichtsschreibung der Civilisation," *Deutsche Vierteljahres-Schrift* (1866): 52.

was primarily devoted to elements of the past which could never be brought back to life.<sup>338</sup> Beyond this, the heroic version that considers only the political pinnacle of life corresponds to the kind of “philosophical catastrophism, which sees the peak of life as a raw collision of abnormally elevated forces, and perhaps even professes that tragedy is the pinnacle of the experience of life”.<sup>339</sup> In Dühring’s opinion, the great figures of history are not to be celebrated, or even deified for the good of themselves, but rather should be seen as *tendencies* of their time.

The history of knowledge, like the history of philosophy, has the task of discovering the greatest *heroic dispositions* of enlightened thinkers of the past (cf. Chapter Three).<sup>340</sup> The enlightened disposition appears as an isolated, unchanging factor, as it were, in the ether, allowing a person to strengthen his own worldview by connecting it to the past; in Dühring’s case, his doctrine of emancipation is connected with other philosophical outsiders such as Socrates, Roger Bacon, Giordano Bruno, Rousseau, Robert Mayer, List, and Carey. He describes this disposition or particular way of looking at things as “the most quintessential expression of action and thinking, desiring, and knowing”. The enlightened outsider is located above the various conjectures of time, being exemplified by great thinkers throughout the course of history, and thus can be seen as non-historical. It is an active impulse and, at the same time, a passive reflection. The active element is characterized by a strong sense of justice and a *Promethean* will to challenge authority; it contains elements of indignation and pessimism. The passive side involves the acceptance of knowledge; one lets himself be shaped by a greater authority and take on his insight. The disposition of the heroic outsider (*Gesinnung*) concerns the “collective enlightenment and direction of the human will”.<sup>341</sup> In a lecture from 1871 he says, “Philosophy is the science of disposition. It does not come down to

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<sup>338</sup> Cf. CP, 310 et seq. He writes: “In die romantisch reactionäre Gesamthaltung mischt er Berufungen auf eine unbestimmte Zukunft, die für den Unerfahrenen den Schein moderner Elemente annehmen können. In Wahrheit ist diese verschwommene Prophetie nicht als der Ausdruck der eigenen Unklarheit und des Wunsches, die Musterbilder des Ruckläufigen auch in der Zukunft mitspielend zu wollen”. Ibid., 311.

<sup>339</sup> “Die Geschichtsschreibung der Civilisation,” 52-53. The idea of “catastrophism”, as opposed to “uniformitarianism”, was introduced into the natural sciences by William Whewell in his 1837 book *History of the Inductive Sciences*.

<sup>340</sup> The term “Gesinnung” has a generally negative connotation in common German usage, particularly as relating to scientific discourse or law. The word had already become suspicious at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his essay on Dühring from 1906, Pflaum writes: “Die Gesinnung als Voraussetzung der Denkarbeit ist heute schon genügend anrüchig, als dass ich nötig hätte, auf das Bedenkliche an der Neuerung Dühring ausführlich einzugehen”. Christoph David Pflaum, “Eugen Dühring,” in *Moderner Essays zur Kunst, Literatur, Wissenschaft*, ed. Hans Landsberg (Berlin: Pan Verlag, 1906), 7. For a critique of the term as it was used by Dühring cf. Meinong, “Zur Charakteristik der ‘Gesinnungsphilosophie’ der Gegenwart,” *Philosophische Monatshefte* 11 (1875):452-463. One anonymous British reviewer of KGP, who translates “Gesinnung” with “disposition” writes that the term “refers rather to a moral than an intellectual quality”. *The Saturday Review* (October 12: 1872).

<sup>341</sup> CP, 4.

theoretical truth as much as tradition and the propagation of it. The instinct of passion has to move man to reach the high goal of human instruction in philosophy. Without this ethos there are philosophizers, but no philosophers”.<sup>342</sup>

Phrases like “communication of the enlightened spirit”, “power of the mindset”, and “propagation of knowledge and will” are used to explain how conviction and “heroic desire” can be brought to life from the past. This intuitive way of looking at the world is for Dühring a universal desire immanent in history, which must be discovered by the historian. He writes, “There is a propagation of knowledge [...] There is, however, also a propagation of desire, or in other words, a historical communication of disposition and this is what has played an underestimated role in philosophical tradition and in the context of world-historical action of philosophy, which is the main task of authentic historical writing”.<sup>343</sup>

For Dühring, the enlightened individual is not solely interested in building a better humanity. Knowledge without a subject cannot be true knowledge at all because it is not capable of raising the content of life; it is incomplete or inconsistent when the impetus from within is not considered. In one of his most subtle and poignant thoughts, he describes the human ability to think as a sort of asylum, i.e. a place of protection from outward influence. The capability of thought, as is the case with the other urges, has not been given to man by nature to fulfill outer purposes in a Darwinian sense; there is a certain “pleasure” in knowledge in and of itself; this sort of enjoyment sets cognition in motion. The *Gesinnung* is a pleasurable instinct which is fixated on overcoming barriers. The weakness of knowledge is that, as soon as it is acquired by the individual, it is cast aside; the recreation of such “disregarded knowledge”, he writes, involves a strong impulse in the brain that is necessary to overcome the disturbance of lost knowledge. A “communication of disposition” is a recreation of lost conditions of the mind, and ultimately involves an act of introspection from which conclusions are drawn about history. Being a true historian requires “a spirit which is worthy of the most significant action”. There is a bridge which connects the past to the present which does not exist for those lacking the heroic *Gesinnung* themselves.<sup>344</sup>

Schopenhauer believed that the history of philosophy was of little use as it fails to transmit true ideas. Dühring was of the opinion that a true history of philosophy was extremely rare

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<sup>342</sup> “*Geschichte der Philosophie*,” Lecture notes, in UB/HUB (cf. Appendices I below).

<sup>343</sup> KGP, 3.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid. The polemics and outbursts which characterized the later phase of his career apparently bore a resemblance to Rousseau’s behavior. Cf. Egon Friedell, *Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit. Die Krisis der Europäischen Seele von der schwarzen Pest bis zum ersten Weltkrieg* (München: C.H. Beck, 1927), 727-730.

because “only a higher developed human can perceive the gap between a higher need and the nature of the conditions at the time”.<sup>345</sup> A historian who wishes to make the motives and attitudes of the past come to life, according to Dühring, has to be an expert of the area which he is writing about. Only so is it possible to reach the true spirit of his subject.<sup>346</sup> Critical history involves the transmission of perception, feeling, and drive, and thus the historian needs empathy and also expertise of the area he is researching. Dühring assumes that the historian of science must act just as boldly as the pioneering scientists themselves once acted. For the pessimistic realist Dühring, it is self-evident that the most important thinkers of scientific history had to fight to bring about scientific progress, battling paralyzing superstition as well as against the corrupt forces of their times which mercilessly pressed home their own selfish interests. Thus a form of hostile pessimism plays a key role in “propagating past dispositions”. Just as he sees himself as having to fight against the established scholar guild of his day, Dühring envisions the great men of intellectual history having to suffer the same fate from the intellectual powers that be. He writes in his autobiography that his enemies are the enemies of humanity; and also the heroes of the past and the future were, and will be, pugnacious individuals who deploy themselves or are deployed for making a better mankind.<sup>347</sup>

The view of history cultivated by Dühring is modern and, in a sense, post-modern. As Geldsetzer has said, the figure of the fighting outsider gives Dühring’s history an existential touch.<sup>348</sup> Dühring admires men who put justice above their own interests, and it seems at times that he intentionally turns history on its head as it were degrading or taking pleasure at belittling recognized greats in the history of philosophy. Men such as Leibnitz, Hegel, Kant, and Helmholtz are attacked; lesser-known or overlooked figures such as Giordano Bruno, Roger Bacon, and Robert Mayer are venerated. In a similar vein, Dühring sees error as a virtue, an unusual statement for an idealist. Schopenhauer, for example, wrote, “All error has poison at its heart”; Weininger similarly writes, “All error is felt as a form of guilt. This results in that humans don’t need to err”.<sup>349</sup> Dühring, on the contrary, believes a scientific result of philosophy that is discovered to be erroneous can open the way for progress.

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<sup>345</sup> CP, 300.

<sup>346</sup> Cf. “William Whewell,” op. cit., 844.

<sup>347</sup> Cf. Chapter 11 of SLF entitled “Actions and Achievements,” 261 et seq. Also Heinrich von Stein’s review of Dühring’s autobiography: “Eugen Dühring und sein neuestes Buch: Sache, Leben und Feinde,” *Schmeizer’s Internationale Monatsschrift* 1 (1882): 262-267.

<sup>348</sup> Cf. Lutz Geldsetzer, *Die Philosophie der Geschichtsschreibung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hain), 161.

<sup>349</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Turner, no date), 46. Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Wien und Leipzig: Braumüller, 1920 [1903]), 198.

Geldsetzer sees Dühring's views on this as a new formulation of Ovid's classic phrase: "Ut desint vires, tamen est laudanda voluntas".<sup>350</sup> Dühring writes in his philosophical main work on error:

Man is not the only thing that errs; he is merely one who errs with clear consciousness and with this consciousness at a higher level and in a special way. If our instinct tends to go astray in a stronger and more artificial way than is the case in the tendencies of unconscious nature, we have to see this quality as a special endowment of our perfectibility and not as a hated privilege.<sup>351</sup>

The individual is thus fallible, but fallibility should apparently be seen as an essential virtue. Error and truth, success and failure are apparently different sides of the same coin. They find expression through the deeds of the individuals who catalyze history. The individual does not, however, make history himself, as Carlyle preached, but he is, according to Dühring, always a reflection of his times. Dühring's approach to history is a balancing act between the role of the *Zeitgeist* and the given actualities and structures, on the one hand, and the force of the individual on the other. There is always a balanced interplay between the two, and the former, according to Dühring, usually has the upper hand over the latter. This, however, makes the individual no less important. A given dispositional stance, directed at the present and corresponding to a higher need, may find support and be recognized – or it may not. Exceptional men are often not recognized by their times and sometimes even persecuted. New ages bring forth new perspectives and historical figures of the past are judged again. Dühring writes, "The intellectual hero carries out (...) his deeds as history permits; he waits until the times offer him a stage of appropriate dimensions. Then he arrives with his old power in a new role and even the audience in the cheap seats notices them".<sup>352</sup>

The famous Italian political thinker Machiavelli - in some respects similar to Nietzsche in advocating a ruthless morality of political power and expediency - interests Dühring as an historical tendency. He sees Machiavelli's hostile pessimism as a symptom of the times in which the Italian political philosopher lived. Both the natural and the individual considerations of Dühring's approach are applied in this case. The former involves a historical tendency, and the latter, the willpower and emotional impetus of an individual. The

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<sup>350</sup> "Although the power lacking, the will commendable." Geldsetzer, *Die Philosophie der Geschichtsschreibung*, 161.

<sup>351</sup> CP, 161-162. The issue of error as an important element of scientific theory was made prominent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the theory of falsification of Karl Popper. Like Popper, who was strongly influenced by the writings of William Whewell, Dühring advocates the inductive method in the science of history. In one of his best essays, written upon Whewell's death in 1866, Dühring gives an in-depth portrayal of the English scientist's career, ideas and influence in the magazine *Unsere Zeit*. "William Whewell," op. cit.

<sup>352</sup> "Machiavelli und der politische Pessimismus," op. cit., 3.

Machiavellian philosophy, Dühring believes, is not of universal significance, but rather an indication of the corrupt times within which the Florentine thinker lived. He places special emphasis on the Italian thinker's pugnacious disposition, which serves a practical function of fighting what is bad within an historical context. His advocacy of ruthlessness and immoral actions to attain wanted ends has often caused his character to be questioned. Dühring is of the opinion that in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with its tendency towards national unification, that Machiavelli must be reconsidered. Leopold von Ranke is correct, according to Dühring, in his thesis that Machiavelli was so distressed by the political conditions of Italy that he decided to prescribe it the "poison it needed", but incorrect in failing to recognize that it was not merely a rational decision of Machiavelli's, but rather the Italian's disposition which caused him to act; Ranke, in Dühring's opinion, does not search deep enough to find Machiavelli's true motives. Thomas Babington Macaulay's interpretation, in which Machiavelli is condemned by portraying him as a child of his corrupt times, is seen as one sided and questionable. Dühring writes:

Great individuals exemplify something of the soil from which they grow. They show a tinge of their times and its circumstances. However, what should never and ever be forgotten by historians is that they are only a small part an explainable product of their time. Far more, they carry the source of their idiosyncrasies in their own individual nature and the productivity of a genius begins beyond the point where it stops to be a product of his time.<sup>353</sup>

Machiavelli did not only see his nation in decline, he also observed the moral decay of the private citizens. He was a man who read a lot about the ancient world and possessed high ideals for how citizens should behave. Dühring sees him as an object of study helpful to understand the principles of corruption and the mechanics of moral affects and motives. His work was not scientific, but we can observe "the logic of badness in its deepest chasms" from this "great and cold artist of categorizing political motivation".<sup>354</sup>

Another example of Dühring's concept of history as "isolated individual striving" can be seen in his treatment of Friedrich List. As we have seen in the last chapter, Dühring was one of the first intellectuals in Germany to recognize List's achievements, and it was his efforts which paved the way for a general recognition of List's work.<sup>355</sup> The intellectual founder of the German Customs Union was an outsider, who, like Dühring, had to deal with professional

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<sup>353</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., 14. Dühring goes on to note that Machiavelli's work was not scientific as he did not know how to apply laws that make up thought and passion. LW, 336.

<sup>355</sup> Albrecht, ED, 80. Also Albrecht, "Die Ausgestaltung des listischen Nationalitätsprinzip durch Eugen Dühring," 1-32.

setbacks in his career. Dühring describes List as a man who could have achieved much more in his life had the circumstances been different; he may have become another Colbert if he had not been the victim of corrupt forces. List is also praised by Dühring for being an opponent of “Pseudo-historicism”. In his 1867 book *Carey’s Belittlers*, he commends List’s sense of history as “historicity in grand style which also led to judgments and brought fruit for the present; it political and stately in an imminent sense”. As we have seen in the last chapter, Dühring sees one of List’s greatest achievements being in the recognition of the nation as an element in history.<sup>356</sup> List saw the nation as a basic component of history without which the single individuals would have no potency. Dühring makes a comparison between List’s emphasis on the nation and the efforts of the historical school of law, which, according to Dühring, corrected some of the cosmopolitan one-sidedness and general human rights of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>357</sup>

Christ’s words, “A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country...” was true for List, whose honor in his own land was only to be found in the future. Dühring is disappointed by this and sees it as an ironic fact that List, who seemed to have discovered the importance of the nation, would be rejected by his own nation. The role of the creative intellectual innovator is an essential part of any nation; especially in the branches of science in which performance and effectiveness are related to the people and the state, like political economy. Individual scientists are benefited or hurt by their connection to their country. Dühring writes, “You can justifiably say that a significant achievement can reach neither its fame nor its full calling in a small circle and that it has to have influenced its fatherland and the world before it can have canonical influence”.<sup>358</sup> Without practical influence, a country will never have theoretical influence. As the strong nation is a prerequisite for finding an echo in science, Dühring believes that Germany has not been able to institute its “voice of theory” amid the great powers and has remained in the role of the pupil. List came too early: On the one hand, his system was directed to a people who had not yet learned to think nationally and politically; on the other, he could find no resonance abroad as the English, who reigned supreme in the theory of political economy, ignored List completely. Dühring shows that the French were the first to recognize List; the Americans followed suit but were only interested in List because of

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<sup>356</sup> The significance of the nation was overlooked by nearly all of the great intellectuals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Cf. Isaiah Berlin, “Nationalism – Past Neglect and Present Power”, in *Against the Current*, ed. Henry Hardy (London: Clarendon Press, 1991), 40 et seq.

<sup>357</sup> This school saw the law in the context of its German heritage. Law was seen, on the one hand, as being a natural product of the past, like language, on the other hand as a specific creation of positive national spirit. Dühring, the effusive proponent of 18<sup>th</sup> century thought, apparently did not see the Historical School as being opposed to the Enlightenment.

<sup>358</sup> “Die wissenschaftliche Bedeutung Friedrich Lists,” 247.

their antipathy towards England. As the French and the Americans supported List, there was no chance that he would find any support in England. Dühring entertains hopes that a revision of political economic theory will take place as the power structure of world economics began to favor Germany and America more.

He was of the opinion that List's achievements would be saved from being forgotten and wrote optimistically: "In truth nothing is really missed or misguided, but rather found at the right time and the necessary detachment reached through which the true dimensions of an earlier phenomenon and its proportions become assessable to those close at hand". Dühring played a key role as an historian in preserving the legacy of List.<sup>359</sup>

Alexander von Humboldt did not need to have Dühring or anyone else save his name for posterity. He was famous in his day and has remained so to the present. His great journeys and scientific discoveries, as well as his involvement in the popularization of natural science, have won him fame throughout the world. Dühring admires the fellow Berliner von Humboldt and writes in depth about him, although he was far from being one of his great heroes. Humboldt generally had a good reputation, but he was not always viewed favorably; biographers reproached him for not developing intellectually as far as he could have. It has also been reported that he mocked his colleagues behind their backs. Dühring clarifies this with a sentence that may perhaps also explain Dühring's often unpleasant demeanor: "This was in his nature. He was, after all, a Berliner".<sup>360</sup> As a Berliner himself, Dühring writes, "Humboldt always remained a Berliner to a certain extent. He had the style and humor that you find here, influenced by the French, and yet always retaining that tendency which is an outcome of a natural born sense for which there is no mask".<sup>361</sup>

Dühring believes that it was a legitimate goal, if not a duty, of scholars to capture and invigorate an audience. He was, however, skeptical of "mass success" in academic literature: all too many professors, in his opinion, try to bolster their otherwise weak reputations by publishing books in order to gain cheap success. Although popular scientific writing had become commonplace in Dühring's day, in the 1840, when Humboldt was writing, it was

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<sup>359</sup> This has been generally recognized by historians of political economy. Cf. Friedrich Lenz, *Friedrich List, die "Vulgärökonomie" und Karl Marx. Nebst einer unbekanntenen Denkschrift Lists zur Zollreform* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1930), 4; Edgar Salin, *Politische Ökonomie*, 124.

<sup>360</sup> Dühring wrote an essay on Humboldt titled "Die Gelehrtenbiographie und das neue Werk über Alexander von Humboldt". Hans Reinhardt compiled another essay from notes of Dühring's from a lecture in 1873. Cf. "Alexander von Humboldt," *Sendbogen* 14, 15 (October, December 1922).

<sup>361</sup> "Die Gelehrten Biographie und das neue Werk über Alexander von Humboldt," op. cit.

much more difficult. Humboldt was willing to “dare to be popular” and thus paved the way for a generation of writers after him.

There were two extremely different opinions on Humboldt. One said he did not achieve that much and was mainly a collector. The other described him as a colossal figure of natural science and that his book *Kosmos* was the beginning of the “Humboldt era”. Ambivalent as he often was, Dühring sees the truth as being somewhere in between: the exaggerated criticism as being beneficial, as it helps to curb the effusive praise. Dühring also finds an element of the “enlightened outsider” in Humboldt: he interprets Humboldt’s natural scientific perspective as being opposed to the two leading philosophers of the day, Hegel and Schelling. Upon returning from one of his long journeys, Humboldt took notice of Schelling’s work and sent the philosopher a complimentary letter, but this was, according to Dühring, merely a matter of politeness, as Humboldt did not want to create any more jealousy than he already had through his lectures on the cosmos. Dühring emphasizes that Humboldt’s correspondence indicates a disliking of both Schelling and Hegel, and he quotes a letter to Varnhagen from April 1841 which was published after Humboldt’s death. There Humboldt writes of the idiocy of the two famous philosophers, “gay saturnals, a masked ball of the most demented natural philosophies”. Humboldt then proceeds to quote Schelling: “A diamond is a pebble which has gained consciousness; granite is ether; east is oxygen, west is hydrogen; it rains when the east clouds and west clouds mix”. Humboldt finally concludes that the German philosophy of his day, “was a miserable era in which Germany sank far below England and France”.<sup>362</sup>

#### 4. “Critical History”: *Concept and Works*

Dühring called his historical works, of which three were written (in philosophy, political economy, and mechanics) “critical histories”. These books form a concept which is based on his understanding of society as we have seen it above. The pessimistic emphasis on the role of unjust power, evident in his *Weltanschauung* and general scientific bearing, provides the tenor for his own historical writings. “Critical history”, as Dühring defines it, is strongly led by what he sees as the unique current concerns of modernity; the past is not highlighted for the past’s sake, but rather for the specific purpose of shedding light on the present.<sup>363</sup> The term critical history has not been particularly well defined, but its usage goes back as far as the

<sup>362</sup> “Alexander von Humboldt,” 2 et seq.

<sup>363</sup> This view is also held by Ernst Troeltsch in his famous lecture “The Significance of Protestantism for the Genesis of the Modern World”. He correctly emphasizes that history is always connected to “a thinking mind” and is directed towards current experience. He writes, “So ist das Verständnis der Gegenwart immer das letzte Hauptziel aller Historie.” Troeltsch, „Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 97 (1906): 2.

middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>364</sup> In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it surfaces especially in natural scientific works.<sup>365</sup> Dühring's critical history has a negative view of the historical in that it is not interested in the past for the past's sake: past occurrences are seen as a prologue to the present. In his *Critical History of Philosophy*, he writes:

The past is what first completely unlocks the understanding of the present. The other way around, and far more so, the present is a key to the past and this is a truth which should be forgotten least of all in critical historical writing. Only that which we experience directly in our closest environment gives us points of reference and comparison for far away things we wish to grasp.<sup>366</sup>

Dühring affirms Schopenhauer's statement that "history was of little use as it cannot acquaint people with the true spirit of the ideas of philosophy". Why does history not allow the discovery of the "true spirit"? He cites two forms of false historicism that he believes stand in the way of communicating real ideas: the first example is a *fact positivism*, which involves uncritical "accepting and outwardly directed behavior"; this perspective is especially dangerous as it has no concept of the reality (*Dasein*) of history, and the gap that it allows is not even noticed, and therefore much is reported which is not understood. The reader, who falsely assumes that the historian knows what he is writing about, is inevitably lead astray.<sup>367</sup> The second false form of historical thinking, Dühring believes, goes too far in the other direction. Certain historians proceed from an arbitrary perspective, namely their own subjective system. They try to apply their own limited system of knowledge to the history they are writing, and they place their own ideas into history (Hegel is meant here). Dühring is of the opinion that this perspective reigned supreme until the 1850s, and no purely objective portrayal could limit its power.<sup>368</sup> Dühring's criticism of writing history from the perspective of a system seems not to be consistent, as he advocates the idea that the history of philosophy should be in a sense philosophy itself. He says in his lecture on the history of philosophy: "An objective portrayal is necessary and needed, but it is not possible without a system".<sup>369</sup> Dühring tries to justify the self-contradictory stance through the assertion that modern natural

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<sup>364</sup> The earliest example which I have been able to find is Adam Wilhelm Franzen's *Eine critische Geschichte der Lehre von der Unsterblichkeit* (Lübeck: J. Schmidt, 1747).

<sup>365</sup> The most well-known attempt to define critical history came from Nietzsche in the second of his untimely meditations, published in 1874: *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*. As the title of the book indicates, Nietzsche sought to analyze the practical ramifications of history for how people live. He developed a typology of different perspectives of the past: active striving (monumental), preserving and honoring (antiquarian) and guiding and emancipating (critical). Cf. Nietzsche, *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* (Zürich: Diogenes Verlag, 1984), 19 et seq.

<sup>366</sup> KGP, 4th edition, 7.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>369</sup> "Geschichte der Philosophie," Lecture Notes, UA/HUB (cf. Appendices I).

science enables a system to be purified.<sup>370</sup> The goal of Dühring's critical history is not only to bring systematic philosophizing into historical writing, but also to be practically effective. History has relevance for the present and future. Dühring's goal is to "make history" through history. Historical narrative is seen as a two way street, so to speak. "The present must be understood from the past and the past from the present".<sup>371</sup>

The first of Dühring's historical works to be written was *Critical History of Philosophy from its Beginnings to the Present* published in 1869. This book, which is also the core of his concept of critical history, was one of the most popular histories of philosophy in its day and retained substantial success on the book market for some time to come.<sup>372</sup> The theme of conflict and antagonism, recurrent in Dühring's work, plays an important role in this history. The book gives importance to failed attempts to solve problems. Dühring values the inductive method of gaining knowledge, which proceeds from specific facts to make general conclusions: in contrast to deductions which advance from the safe haven of already-established premises, inductions are open to mistake. As mentioned, like William Whewell, Dühring sees the inductive method as the main instrument of natural science and philosophy. In proceeding inductively, mistakes are likely to happen and Dühring, in his historical account of philosophy, sees this positively. There is a kind of pragmatism in error out of which something unintended but positive develops. As an example of the virtue of failed attempts he points to the Eleatics' conception of the subjectivity of space, which he rejects as erroneous idealism, only to praise it a few lines later as having paved the way for Kant's correct idea.<sup>373</sup> Another example is Thales' idea that water is the most basic element of nature: despite the falseness of the idea, it was a notion that was "for the state of knowledge of nature at the time a relatively successful idea". Schopenhauer's pessimism, which, as mentioned in Chapter Three, he considers to be wrong, he writes, benefited philosophy by posing a new question. Dühring reproaches Wilhelm Whewell, a thinker that he otherwise greatly admires, for not giving credit to the Ionian thinkers Thales, Anaxamander, and Anaximenes credit they

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<sup>370</sup> KGP, 4th edition, 6 et seq.

<sup>371</sup> "Geschichte der Philosophie," op. cit.

<sup>372</sup> The academic reviews of the book, aside from Alois Riehl's praise, were largely negative. Jürgen Bona Meyer regretted the book's popularity, referring to it as "poison in the hands of students". Idem, "Zur Philosophie der Gegenwart," 46. The twenty-two year old Austrian philosopher and psychologist Alexius Meinong criticized the book for its bringing an "ethical moment" into the history of science and philosophy, which "leads to distorted views". Idem, "Zur Charakteristik der 'Gesinnungsphilosoph'," op. cit., 454. Conrad Hermann in my opinion is more objective than Meinong, and correctly disparages Dühring's disregard for history, which "turns history upside down" by generally "making the marginal and insignificant into the most important and primary". Hermann, "Kritische Geschichte der Philosophie von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Von Dr. Eugen Dühring," 483-484. See also Riehl's positive review of *Critical History of Philosophy*: „Zur Geschichte der Philosophie," *Philosophische Monatshefte* 11 (1875): 165-179.

<sup>373</sup> KGP, 4th edition, 38.

deserve; Whewell overlooked, in Dühring's opinion, the important connection between these thinkers as precursors of the successful work of Laplace. According to Dühring, if the great modern mathematician Laplace had been alive at that time, he would have thought just like those Ionic thinkers.<sup>374</sup> With his great penchant for "fundamental notions" Dühring holds that even erroneous views are often important preliminary steps or building blocks for scientific progress.

Another apparent paradox, which Dühring's critical history of philosophy highlights, is how corrupt societal circumstances can bring forth positive actions. Decaying societal conditions create antagonism from which forms of morality can develop. He says: "There is a process of decay everywhere; where it is predominant, the old must perish and new come into being and the other way around".<sup>375</sup> The classical Greek philosophy is for Dühring an example of such decay; Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle cannot be separated from the degenerated conditions.<sup>376</sup>

There are for Dühring a certain number of basic viewpoints that need to be focused upon to avoid arbitrariness in the portrayal of history. Everything that comes later stems from the original basic forms which existed at the beginning of philosophy. Like Plato, he believes in basic types which exist throughout time. The types which Dühring postulates are not, however, "outside of time", but somewhat similar to Max Weber's conception of "ideal types" rather "in the order of events".

Where the human mind moves towards universal thought and directs its exertion towards bringing forth a world-encompassing philosophical form of consciousness, it cannot avoid the first basic forms of direct perception, and must fall prey to them with each such highly intense attempt. Philosophizing without them would mean as much as preparing the collective representations and yet trying to do without the basic pattern and form.<sup>377</sup>

Dühring makes a comparison between Hegel and Heraclitus, both of whom search for "reality in change", and Herbart and the Eleatics who create a "fixed immovable being".<sup>378</sup> History – or rather, forces in history – are the precondition for future philosophizing. Geldsetzer sees this as an attempt by Dühring to reduce history to certain forms of behavior, and again we see

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<sup>374</sup> "Wilhelm Whewell," *op. cit.*, 849.

<sup>375</sup> "Geschichte der Philosophie," Lecture Notes, UB/HUB (cf. Appendices I).

<sup>376</sup> Conrad correctly emphasizes Schopenhauer's influence on Dühring, seeing a strong negativity and pessimism. *Idem*, "Kritische Geschichte der Philosophie von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Von Dr. Eugen Dühring," 483 and 485.

<sup>377</sup> KGP, 4th edition, 17.

<sup>378</sup> KGP, 36. (This comparison was removed from the later editions of the book.)

Dühring's affinity for original "fundamental fertilizing notions" and Dühring's non-historical perspective.<sup>379</sup>

The book's reference to general scientific developments, especially in mathematics and mechanics, shows the influence of Buckle. Philosophy is not seen as unified or as something complete, but in connection with other cultural factors. Geographic and time divisions are taken into consideration, as is the distinction of different schools and sects. These fixed components are, however, only a background for the creative individuals which act relatively independent of the circumstances. For Dühring, the history of philosophy consists of a few centuries of Greek life and a few centuries of the new scientific culture. The first era began, like the religious cosmogony, with the question of the origin of the world. Whereas the myths created analogies to human activity, fantasizing using the conscious faculties of the mind, philosophy proceeded through the observation of the process of nature pointing to an aggregate condition. This method is valid to a degree, according to Dühring, and not as far away from a modern standpoint as one would think. He places special emphasis on the pre-Socratic thinkers in the first era of philosophy. The highest level of theoretical originality is to be found within the circle of these philosophers. Following them, the only new direction opened was to be seen in Socrates' moral thinking, which, through its teachings and good example, bestowed honor on philosophy, strongly contrasting to the corruption of the sophists. Socrates' inspiration was followed by an era of universalism represented by Plato and Aristotle, as well as the "character-building philosophy" of the Epicurians and the Stoics. Dühring's disliking of religion colors his view of the Middle Ages, which he sees as a desert and a gap in the history of philosophy. He writes, "The Middle Ages lived in a real darkness of the intellect".<sup>380</sup> Philosophy came back to life through positive speculation on nature. For Dühring, the only true philosopher of the Middle Ages is Roger Bacon, again an outsider who developed independent notions on science.

In the modern epoch, Dühring concentrates on the thinkers who he sees as embodying heroic individualism. Perhaps his favorite among them is the Italian friar Giordano Bruno, who broke with the church as he saw that church teachings did not go along with the new results of science. Dühring gives special recognition to the Germans for having shaped modern philosophy and particularly recognizes Immanuel Kant, who he sees as having revived the theoretical impetus of the Eleatics. In his lecture he teaches: "The Germans do not have the

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<sup>379</sup> Geldsetzer, *Die Philosophie der Philosophiegeschichtsschreibung im 19. Jahrhundert*, 161. Jürgen Große, *Kritik der Geschichte. Probleme und Formen seit 1900*, 155 and 173-174.

<sup>380</sup> "Geschichte der Philosophie," op. cit..

aesthetic talent of the Greeks; their talent is more awkward, but actually becomes more subtle. The mythic Kant is not the fine harmonic type. He is behind the Greeks in this respect, but he is more keen and deeper”.<sup>381</sup>

Although praising German philosophy, Dühring places more weight on the collective European development, not respecting the traditional divisions placed by most historians of modern philosophy.<sup>382</sup> In a sense, he creates a revisionist history that would be carried on by some philosophers after him. The method of epistemology normally seen to have begun with Kant, according to Dühring, goes back to the empiricism of John Locke and David Hume.<sup>383</sup> Locke was the first person to seriously contemplate the origin of metaphysical concepts. There was, according to Dühring, a turn to the inner self initiated by Locke and Hume’s critique of the intellect.<sup>384</sup> Locke analyzed concepts as they were and not how they came about. In that he presupposed nothing (i.e. postulates the intellect as a *tabula rasa*), Locke intended to reach the pure content of concepts, and thus attacked the metaphysical and moral principles of earlier, predominantly continental philosophy. According to Dühring, Locke wished to find the inner individual history of the conceptual world. He aimed to check the validity of opinions, views and ideas; in a word, to practice critical philosophy. Locke’s reflections on the concept of substance were for Dühring a clear example of his original critique of concepts. Before Locke, philosophers had seen “substance” as being a non-specifically defined conveyor of certain phenomena. The term was, as they conceived it, “a means of information and a refuge of ignorance”. In truth, they recognized, according to Locke, only an inclusive concept of facts or characteristics that appear coherent. After Locke, the concept of substance could not be used as a “way out” anymore. Dühring emphasizes that Locke’s critique signifies a differentiation of the psychologically necessary and proven content of an idea from its historical admixture. Locke’s virtuosity lies in the self-inspection of the individual concepts. The main characteristic, which this form of criticism holds to, is proving that perception is a necessary starting point of philosophical cognition. For Dühring, the limits of Locke’s method lie in this criteria as its success apparently depends on *from whom* and *in which time* it was handled.

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<sup>381</sup> Ibid. Later Dühring would criticize and polemicize against Kant harshly, writing a series of articles in his magazine *Personalist und Emancipator* titled “Kant’s Cant”.

<sup>382</sup> Dühring criticizes Hermann Lotze, one of the judges who gave him first prize in the essay contest on the history of mechanics, for not emphasizing the European prerequisites in the development of aesthetics in Germany. Dühring, “Lotze, Geschichte der Aesthetik in Deutschland,” *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 3 (1868): 386.

<sup>383</sup> This view, which Schopenhauer had also expressed, had already been articulated in one of his early publications. Cf. “Der Positivismus in der Philosophie,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrs-Schrift* 28 (1865): 181.

<sup>384</sup> KGP, 313.

After Locke, David Hume is the second most significant figure in the founding of criticism. He is especially praised for his honorable character. Dühring sees Hume being labeled as a “skeptic” as merely coincidental side note. The purpose of his philosophizing was to free the intellect, which for Dühring is really the opposite of true skepticism. Critical history is not interested in skepticism, but rather in the critique of the intellect. The inquiry of and inspection of the common concept of causality is, according to Dühring, what is original and characteristic in the metaphysics of the Scottish thinker. After Locke, there was no way back to inborn ideas. Hume was convinced that all knowledge had to be obtained sensually. The scrutiny of the ideas of causality is essential for the foundation of criticism. Hume postulates that all of our specific judgments of the causal connection of natural processes are based on experience. The concept of causality is acquired empirically and not inborn in our intellect. Hume took another critical step forward by claiming that experience as such contains nothing which includes the normal concept of causality. No one knows what the causal band in the mechanical communication of movement means in and of itself. Dühring claims: “Even today the accountability on those basic principles of proof, by which knowledge attained through experience supports strictly derived thought, are missing”.<sup>385</sup> David Hume is, according to Dühring, the greatest representative of criticism in the history of philosophy.

The book *Critical History of the General Principles of Mechanics* offers further insight into the concept of history in Dühring’s *Weltanschauung*. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the work was not written for the larger public, as his others were, but rather for the committee of academics in a prestigious book contest on the history of mechanics sponsored by the Benecke Foundation of the University of Göttingen in 1869. Although conceived and carried out in a more sober academic style than his other books, the signature of the Dühring world view can be observed, and Dühring himself saw the book as representing an “inner necessity” of his system.<sup>386</sup>

The book was an important part of his general scientific concept. Here again we are confronted with the spirit of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this time its emphasis of mathematics and the law of motion. From the beginning of his studies onwards, Dühring had been convinced “that a major part of the schematic questions regarding *Weltanschauung* had to be transferred away from the nebulous area of uncertain wavering and affectedly confused metaphysics to the solid ground of pure mechanics and rational mechanics”.<sup>387</sup> He wanted to portray mechanics

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<sup>385</sup> KGP, 314.

<sup>386</sup> CP, 528.

<sup>387</sup> CP, 528.

as being entirely rational; through his depiction of the history of mechanical truths, he sought to build a bridge between pure logic and mathematics on the one hand, and the “whole reality of empirical laws”, on the other. His intention was to place stress on strict science in order to show the invalidity of groundless ideology.<sup>388</sup>

The concept of *Gesinnung* and heroic struggle play only a minor role in this work, but he places particular weight on Robert Mayer’s discovery of the law of energy equivalence, which he sees as the stimulus towards a new critical orientation of past traditions.<sup>389</sup> The book follows the lines of Dühring’s concept of critical history in general, but it is in a sense unique. A critical history of mechanics, in his opinion, has a special place in the theory of science and is an unavoidable pre-condition for the advancement of knowledge. It also combines with the principles of pure mathematics in dealing with an object whose examination leaves a purely psychological area, based on direct perception, as it were, putting its foot in the area of material reality for the first time.<sup>390</sup> The history of mechanics is seen as a “material pedestal” for higher efforts and is a basic component of scientific history in general. It should attain a consciousness of all basic insight into mechanics and the methods of its application as well as concentrate on the solution of specific problems of natural mechanics. Following Dühring’s general concept, the history of mechanics can and should only be written by a specialist in the area, and should involve participation in furthering the development of the subject. The aspect of a system from which the history emerges is also given significance. He writes: “The system is an inner necessity through which the course of the development of science will always have to return, even if the facility and impulse are lost for some epoch”.<sup>391</sup> In Dühring’s general *Weltanschauung*, “system” signifies “knowledge” as opposed to the “desire” of the coincidentally-occurring individual fates, and the skills of an individual man. There is also an emphasis on pragmatism in the book: he emphasizes that his own aims are in line with those of Galileo, who, through his own history, wanted to offer a helpful introduction for future scientists free from the classic portrayal of dogmatic material. Dühring writes: “Only such a history whose conception goes to the roots of the matter can hope not only to contribute something to increasing knowledge of what has been, but also to provide impetus, orientation and guidance for future productive activity”.<sup>392</sup>

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<sup>388</sup> SLF, 340.

<sup>389</sup> For more on this cf. his article on Mayer from the *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart*, “J.R. Mayer, Die Mechanik der Wärme,” 321.

<sup>390</sup> KGM, x.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii.

Dühring's third critical history, *Critical History of Political Economy and Socialism*, will be addressed in our analysis of Dühring's system of social economics in Part Three, so our description of the book here will have to remain brief. When the book was published in 1871, and for some time thereafter, it was one of the more commercially successful portrayals of the history of political economy.<sup>393</sup> At the time it was the only comprehensive portrayal of the history of political economy to include theories of the latest currents of the socialist movement, and for this reason alone was praised for its originality, even by opponents of socialism.<sup>394</sup> The connection between political economy and socialism fits into the symmetric structure of Dühring's philosophy: political economy represents objective isolated "knowledge", and socialism represents the impulsive instinctual factor of "desire".<sup>395</sup> Dühring again underlines, "The creative driving forces can only be found when one goes to the roots of very enlightened thought".<sup>396</sup> The structure of his system with its twofold point of attack of "knowledge" alongside "desire" is applied to political economic history. Material conditions are considered along with "the motive of shaping material forces in society". The material supply is a relatively independent realm of investigation: "The idea that the treatment of this area can be ennobled through purely ideal or aesthetic efforts is indefensible. The material economy is the precondition for all intellectual considerations and not the other way around. It would be disastrous if a social theory tried to steer the material basis. The common roots of political economy are only in the sphere of material interests. The crisis of life and the critique of thought both make sure at the same time that both forces for better or for worse meet each other".<sup>397</sup> Political economy in general corresponds with the power of knowledge, while the critique of thought applies to socialism. He insists that the two powers are related and complement each other. The social and political combinations, politics in a general sense, were the cause and not the effect of economic appropriation – not the economic conditions themselves.

The goal of a history of political economy is to view successful and unsuccessful attempts by modern man to find laws in the material interests of society through the means of science. This began, according to Dühring, less than a century earlier and, in the book's introduction, he states that his own scholarship as an historian is meant to embody the "liberal impulse of

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<sup>393</sup> Cf. Alfred Kruse, "Eugen Dühring's wissenschaftliche Isolierung," 210.

<sup>394</sup> See the review by Friedrich von Baerenbach, "Die Sozialwissenschaften in der Gegenwart," *Unsere Zeit* 15 (1879): 52-57. Baerenbach speaks on p. 53 of the book's success due to "the originality of the topic" and the "originality of the whole endeavor". Although critical of Dühring, Gustav Schmoller praises the book as well. Cf. Schmoller, *Zur Literaturgeschichte der Staats- und Sozialwissenschaften*, 162.

<sup>395</sup> KGN, 3rd edition, 5.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>397</sup> KGN, 3rd edition, 8.

the 18<sup>th</sup> century” against the “backwards state and societal views of the restoration”.<sup>398</sup> The knowledge of the field must be considered along with the great scientific personalities who brought this knowledge. Regarding the latter, he adds that “it is less about the people who are brought forth by the epoch than those who made the epoch”.<sup>399</sup> Behind every theory is a creative personality. There are two different areas of investigation, that of nature and that of man. Science is united, but this differentiation is needed to provide clarity and to hold back one-sided positions.

As in the *Critical History of Philosophy*, the conventional portrayal of the development of political economy is disregarded. Those who speak of a progression from mercantilism to physiocracy and finally to the industrial system are, in Dühring’s opinion, misguided. Only the last phase, which he believes was begun by Hume and Smith, deserves the name of science. He takes the time to follow the development of the, from his perspective, unscientific thought on economics dating back to the ancients. True to his fondness for historical precursors and the “*Anfangsdenken*”, the first section of the book, dealing with these pre-scientific attempts, is one of the longest of the book! The first glimmer of a consciousness of economics begins with the Greeks which the Romans merely copied. As in philosophy, he sees the Middle Ages as a “desert” where thinking was dominated by religious superstition. Not surprisingly, considering his own attraction to the thought of Carey and List, he views mercantilism positively. The physiocrats and their postulates of a natural development based on agriculture signified a “breaking away from the state” and the first steps from practice to theory, but their efforts were deluded and marred by fantastic ideas.<sup>400</sup> He pays homage to Quensay, Turgot, and the astute innovation of Hume and Smith. The third section of the book, titled “The Theoretical Industrial System”, which was labeled by von Baerenbach as the “masterly achievement” (*Glanzleistung*) of the book, is an account of the theoretical achievements of Adam Smith, as well as the legacy he created.<sup>401</sup> Less objective and written with the intent of justifying his own systematic pursuits is the section on the political economy of Malthus and Ricardo (section four). Dühring does not always refrain from *ad hominem* attacks: for example, calling Malthus’ character into question by claiming that the clergyman married for money; Malthusianism is viewed as a tool of the British upper middle class to keep the working class in check. Ricardo does not fare better, although according to Dühring, he cannot be denied a certain virtuosity.

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<sup>398</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>401</sup> Von Baerenbach, “Die Sozialwissenschaften in der Gegenwart,” 55.

The most original aspect of the book is perhaps Dühring's treatment of the history of socialism. Dühring is clearly on the side of socialism (despite his claim of complete impartiality to the contrary), and yet issues a scathing critique of the early socialist thinkers, who in his opinion are largely not of sound mind. The genealogy of socialism is characterized by a far greater "perversities" (*Verkehrtheit*) than that of political economy. Socialism is, according to Dühring, even younger than political economy, and did not begin until the French Revolution. Babeuf and Saint-Simon are dealt with as important pre-cursors of socialism who went beyond the mere utopian ideas of their predecessors; Babeuf is a "man of action", and Saint-Simon a "man of theory". Much attention and analysis is given to Thünen and List as representatives of German political economy, as well as to Henry C. Carey, who, as we have seen, is Dühring's intellectual mentor. As we will show in detail below, the *Critical History of Political Economy and Socialism* delivers in-depth analysis and critique of the socialist views of Marx and Lassalle. Fittingly, the book closes with a plea for supporting individuality as the way of fostering social justice and of improving the collective fate of man.<sup>402</sup>

### 5. *Critical Summary*

Nietzsche emphasized that history was one of the most cherished possessions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and perhaps nowhere is the *Promethean* character of Dühring's intellectual efforts more apparent than in his philosophy of history, which boldly and defiantly attempts to alter the bourgeois historical consciousness of his day.<sup>403</sup> As was the case with his philosophical and political economic thought, Dühring follows historical paragons in his approach to history. He emulates Buckle at attempting to apply the deductive methods of natural science to history, thereby filtering out arbitrary, "mere-human" occurrences. Comte's postulate of the existence of a new scientific age ushered in by the French Revolution serves as a pillar for Dühring's fight for political and social reform.

Dühring's own philosophy of history is preoccupied with the political agenda of the Enlightenment and its idea of emancipation. His view of history becomes non-historical in that he sees the past as a "series of points of now", the most important of which is the here-and-now. The subjective view of the past, which Dühring's thought represents, has its roots in the epistemological considerations of his general philosophy. The downplaying of Reason and

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<sup>402</sup> KGN, 3rd edition, 594-595.

<sup>403</sup> Hermann saw in Dühring's book "the attempt to destroy the history of philosophy as a unity and as an ordered whole". Conrad Hermann, "Kritische Geschichte der Philosophie von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Von Dr. E. Dühring," *Philosophische Monatshefte* 3 (1869): 488.

contemplative abstraction in favor of the concrete Understanding in Dühring's philosophy, as described in Chapter Three, has its corollary in his view of the past: history is disparaged for its concern with superfluous abstraction in the form of disjointed facts and collected information without attention being given to the forces behind what has created the events.<sup>404</sup> The inherent tendency of his *Weltanschauung* to favor visual perception and concrete causation cause Dühring to depreciate history. He conducts himself thoroughly negatively to the established, traditional historical narrative of his day in a way that was certainly shocking for some of his more conservative contemporaries.

His view of intellectual history represents a form of "revisionism" in that it involves a substantial reinterpretation of major events of the generally accepted narrative.<sup>405</sup> He reinterprets historical data from a practical and subjective perspective suited to his worldview, and thereby molds the past to give his own cause legitimacy. In the history of philosophy, he boldly places the pre-Socratic philosophy of the Eleatics above Plato; he takes away Kant's credit for creating critical philosophy and gives this honor to John Locke. In the field of political economy, it is no different: the powerful British school is stripped of its stature and the American Henry C. Carey is made the true heir to Adam Smith. In the area of mechanics he reduces the legendary physicist Hermann Helmholtz to being the plagiarist of Robert Mayer. In literature, Goethe is placed behind the today little-known Bürger. Dühring's revisionist schemes presuppose an established narrative, embedded in the intellectual consciousness of his day, which it aims to replace. The great task of changing or unseating the traditional perspective, which he sets for himself, calls for a certain destructiveness, which gives his historical writing its strongly pessimistic tenor.

And yet Dühring's philosophy of history was not without original elements. He advocates applying strict natural scientific methods by using the method of induction, anticipating what would later become the *Lamprecht Streit*, while at the same time going to great lengths to theorize on the role of the individual in history, coming up with an original concept of the transmission of enlightened mindsets.<sup>406</sup> With regard to the latter, he creates a form of

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<sup>404</sup> Dühring never bothered to consider history from an epistemological point of view, but perhaps one could say that his critique of the accepted historical narrative lies in its emphasis of "efficient causes" as opposed to "final causes". Dühring wishes to emphasize the factors *from which* history is made (final causes) rather than *by which* history comes about (efficient causes). Cf. Schopenhauer's clear elaboration on the distinction between *causa finalis* and *causa efficiens*. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World As Will and Representation*, vol. 2, trans. E.F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, Inc.), 331.

<sup>405</sup> The term "revisionism" was made popular by Eduard Bernstein, who, as we have seen, was influenced by Dühring's practical ad hoc suggestions for improving the situation of the workers.

<sup>406</sup> During the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, introspection or self-analysis became an ever-stronger approach to solving problems in philosophy. One example of this can be observed in Schopenhauer's essay "On Genius". As

hermeneutics which involves personal introspection and the identifying of oneself with certain figures of the past – an idea that would capture the interest of other scholars as well.<sup>407</sup> His critical histories are able to incorporate this method into their narrative, making them not only easy to read, but insightful with regards to the three disciplines they handled.

Finally, the basic structure of history that Dühring adopts from St. Simon and Comte gives insight into the core of his thought, which can be seen as inherently pessimistic with only an optimistic gloss. Whereas the Marxist vision of history, with its doctrine of the inevitable revolution of the proletariat, was directed towards the future, from Dühring's perspective, the great turn of history has already occurred through the French Revolution. (We see here again the lack of a "will to a goal" in his thought.) Marx's science explains the inner workings of an inevitable revolution towards which society is gravitating; Dühring's science, on the other hand, turns to activism in the present in accordance with an event that has already occurred. Marx's view of history provides a certain consolation with the hope of revolution, as a turning point still to come; Dühring's is destructive, as it is inherently frustrated with the present, because it has yet to complete a revolution that has already happened.<sup>408</sup> Thus one senses a certain discomfort in Dühring's dealings with the past as the historical phenomena is viewed in relation to the ideals of justice set by the French Revolution.

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Egon Friedell points out, everything that Schopenhauer said about the genius was a description of Schopenhauer himself. *Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit*, 1228.

<sup>407</sup> This is a thought that would later be scientifically developed by Dühring's colleague at the Berlin University, Wilhelm Dilthey. In 1896 Dilthey wrote: "Wir können zunächst das Verstehen eines fremden Zustandes als einen Analogieschluss auffassen, der von einem äußeren physischen Vorgang vermittelt seiner Ähnlichkeit mit solchen Vorgängen, die wir mit bestimmten inneren Zustand verbunden finden, auf einen diesen ähnlichen inneren Zustand hingeht [...] Die Glieder des Nachbildungsvorganges sind gar nicht bloß durch logische Operationen, etwa durch einen Analogieschluss, miteinander verbunden. Nachbilden ist Nacherleben". *Beiträge zum Studium der Individualität*, 309 et seq. Another later representative of this direction was Otto Weininger who wrote: „Um einen Menschen zu erkennen oder darzustellen, muß man ihn verstehen. Um einen Menschen zu verstehen muß man mit ihm Ähnlichkeiten haben, man muß so sein wie er". *Geschlecht und Charakter*, 129.

<sup>408</sup> It might be claimed that the Marxian view of history therefore resembles Judaism and its inherent hope for the future Messiah, whereas Dühring's perspective is more akin to Christianity in that the great event, the coming of the Christ, has already occurred.

PART THREE:

DÜHRING'S SYSTEM OF SOCIOPOLITICAL  
ECONOMICS

THE PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOLAR feels compelled to systematize his work to give it clarity, cohesion, and staying power. For Kant, a system was not a static dogmatic doctrine, but rather a “tendency of the intellect to architectonically create and unify diverse findings under an idea”.<sup>409</sup> This “tendency of the intellect” became apparent in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as political economy began to take form as a science. Adam Smith came up with the ground breaking idea that wealth is based on work and is supported by the division on labor, making the teachings on value, prices and money interconnected. Although he did not make an effort to systematize his thought precisely, the Scottish thinker’s idea laid the foundation for the systems which were to follow. Smith died in 1790 and the harmonic unity of his teachings was disrupted through critique which would split political economy into the bourgeois and socialist economic teachings.

Amid the disunity of political economic theory existing in his day, Eugen Dühring sets the lofty goal of creating a system of social economics, based on the theories of Carey and List, which represent a third way between the dominant opposing schools stemming from Smith’s system.<sup>410</sup> Dühring’s system of sociopolitical economics, as we have chosen to name it, follows the same general principles as his Philosophy of the Actual in aiming to find a balance between the needs of the *individual* and the *good of the whole*. As stated in his *Critical Foundation of Political Economy* from 1866, he does not believe that there needs to be a theoretical choice between an individualistic approach to economics as opposed to one based on government organization. The true evolution of political economy is organic. When the individuals are truly independent, they tend to bind together, according to Dühring. He writes, “The interests of the whole and the groupings which create order will come into existence to a large extent as soon as the sphere of individual freedom is extended”.<sup>411</sup> As we saw in Chapter Four, Dühring is particularly critical of the two dominant schools of his day, the free traders and the socialists. David Ricardo, Thomas Robert Malthus, and John Stewart Mill, the main representatives of the “new British” school, Dühring believes, have falsified Adam Smith’s original teachings. Socialism, he holds, has remained bogged down by nebulous utopianism (particularly Robert Owen and Fourier), and has been unrealistic and impotent in its

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<sup>409</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft. Nach der ersten und zweiten Ausgabe*, ed. Raymund Caspar (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1944), 748. Nietzsche was wary of the mind’s tendency towards systematization: “I distrust all systemetizers. The will to a system shows a lack of honesty.” *Twilight of the Idols*, Aphorism 26, 8.

<sup>410</sup> Dühring’s 1867 lexical entry on political economy (*Volkswirtschaftslehre*) for Meyer’s encyclopedia gives an overview of his general perspective of the field. He contrasts the method of Adam Smith, which postulates general laws which are of permanent validity with the “eclecticism” of the historical perspective predominant in German “university economics”. Dühring speaks of “Germans-American achievements” (*deutsch-amerikanische Errungenschaften*) brought about through the ground breaking views of Carey and List, which he himself is a part of. Dühring, “Volkswirtschaftslehre,” 542.

<sup>411</sup> KGV, IX.

philanthropic efforts (Proudhon and Louis Blanc). He views St. Simon in a more positive light and takes on key ideas from the one-time mentor of Auguste Comte, namely the division of political economy's development from a harmonic to a critical phase, and also the idea of the significance of force in societal life.<sup>412</sup> As we have seen above, Dühring believes Henry C. Carey was able to overcome the pessimistic critical period in the development of political economy and, along with Friedrich List, create the basis for a renewed harmonic unity of the world economy. Dühring's political economy is in many ways an extension of Carey's system. Whereas the practically minded American had given the impetus for the replacement of the radically individualistic teachings, Dühring sought to supplement Carey's work by giving it philosophical underpinnings and systematization. Like his philosophy, his system of sociopolitical economics proceeds from the basis of matter (Dühring speaks of a "pedestal" of materialism) and presupposes discernible regularities of nature and society; it defies any type of "iron laws", such as those assumed by Malthus and Ricardo, that would limit man's freedom in a strict sense. His system seeks to combine theory and practice into a powerful force that can influence society.<sup>413</sup>

Despite its recognition of the value of the individual and the emphasis it places on the principle of self-reliance, Dühring's system is primarily concerned with the good of the whole. Even though he advocates laws of nature and shows reverence for the achievements of Hume and Smith, as Binder writes, Dühring proceeds "methodically on the grounds of socialism".<sup>414</sup> This approach is consistent with his philosophy, which has the highest ethical postulate, as we have seen above, of acting in consideration of life as a totality. What does this entail for economic theory? Dühring believes that the classical school of economics, which originated with Hume and Smith, had interpreted the economy from the isolated aspect of production without sufficiently considering the entire economic process. The new highest principle which his system offers, as we touched on in Chapter Four, is the view that not the "pure laws" of production, but the "political laws" of distribution, based on man made decisions, should be the basic point of departure for the science of political economy.<sup>415</sup> The cornerstone of his philosophy of economics is that capitalism is socially determined. Society is characterized by conditions of mutual dependence between individuals; through the factor of force, and the threat thereof, parts of society have become subjugated or suppressed. The

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<sup>412</sup> Alfred Kruse, "Eugen Dühring's wissenschaftliche Isolierung," 213.

<sup>413</sup> Dühring talks about the essence of his system in his autobiography. Cf., SLF, 296 et seq.

<sup>414</sup> Binder, SSED, 52.

<sup>415</sup> Dühring writes, "Die Naturgesetze der Politik und des Rechts oder Unrechts müssen heute den Ausgangspunkt für die tiefere wurzelnde Wirtschaftslehre bilden. Sie allein ergeben eine Einsicht, welche derjenigen aller früheren Wirtschaftstheorie überlegen ist." CNS, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 508.

concept of the *good of the whole*, however, dictates that the different interests will be balanced. In order to preserve the balance of the whole of society, laws of nature come into play, allowing distribution to determine the level of production.

In our analysis of his system of sociopolitical economics, it will be necessary to view Dühring's early writings from 1865, which issue a critique of "capital" as a concept of political economy.<sup>416</sup> We will also draw upon some of his early short essays, the majority of which were published in the supplemental volumes to Meyer's encyclopedia, *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart*. Following this, we will portray and analyze his system from the perspective of theory (Chapter Seven) and then practice (Chapter Eight) before attempting, perhaps most importantly, to consider the political and ethical consequences of his system within the context of the historical development of the European Left (Chapter Nine). It will be important to draw comparisons between his thoughts on economics and the principles of Dühring's Philosophy of the Actual to ascertain the degree of consistency in his ideas. In so doing, our goal is to understand Dühring's system not only in its historical context, but also in terms of how he perceived it himself and in terms of what he was attempting to accomplish.

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<sup>416</sup> "Kritik des Kapitalbegriffs und seiner Rolle in der Volkswirtschaftslehre," in *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*, ed. Bruno Hildebrandt (Jena: Friedrich Mauke, 1865), 316-343 [henceforth KKB].

## CHAPTER SIX

### EARLY GROUNDWORK

#### *1. The Social Question*

The social problems facing Germany in the incipient Industrial Revolution is the point of departure of Dühring's system. He assumes that science and philosophy can be used to successfully solve the enormous dilemmas and predicaments facing man in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and aims in particular to alleviate the troubles of the working class. Seen philosophically, despite all of the present adversity and sorrow, the world, according to Dühring, is evolving towards a higher good and the higher good of humankind can only be attained through the confrontation with societal evils. Humans are a part of a great general totality, but also part of a lesser totality, which is society. The Social Question must be dealt with rationally and in a way that improves *the whole of society*.

But just what was the Social Question of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and how was it dealt with? Jürgen Backhaus has shown that the German expression "*Soziale Frage*" is only roughly translatable as the "Social Question", as the English term was hardly used in political economic discourse of the Anglo-Saxon speaking world.<sup>417</sup> Despite the difficulties in defining the term precisely, there are many factors which can be listed seen as common denominators. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the impact of new sources of energy put to use through the steam engine and gas motors; machines began to replace manufacturing based on manual labor; immense social tension came about from increased production due to the progress of technology and the organization of labor. From a demographic perspective, large families became replaced by small urban family units. Conflict arose between workers and employers and the work place came to be loathed; societal groupings became organized to protect their own interests and class conflict intensified. In short, industrial society had created circumstances and problems never seen before in the course of history and there was demand to find rational solutions to the problems which had come into being.<sup>418</sup>

Already a catchphrase since the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *Soziale Frage* found a place in scientific discussions of economics during the early phase of Dühring's career as he was laying the groundwork for his system. There was no consensus on just what the question

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<sup>417</sup> Cf. Peter R. Senn, "Economists and the Social Question: a study of the periodical literature in English", in *The Social Question, Part II*, ed. Jürgen Backhaus, *Journal of Economic Studies* 33 (2006): 245.

<sup>418</sup> Cf. Carl Stegemann "Soziale Frage" in *Staatslexikon: Recht, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft in 5. Bänden*, 1233. Also Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1800-1866*, 241-243.

demanded of economists: some said it was the problem of highly uneven distribution of goods, where a privileged few were getting richer while the masses of the proletariat were becoming poorer and poorer; others saw it as the fight between capital and labor, i.e. between employers and employees; others said it is not *a* social question, but rather *many* social questions; some even said it was a figment of the imagination, and there was no problem at all.<sup>419</sup> Socialists and the “socialists of the chair” (*Kathedersozialisten*) alike were in agreement that the social question is one of a struggle of the man without capital against the man with capital. Socialists who called for more drastic measures claimed that the worker is destined to lose; the “socialists of the chair” said he can win with necessary help from the government.<sup>420</sup> The German economist Karl Rodbertus, an acquaintance of Dühring’s, dealt with the question as a threefold issue involving 1) the order of society 2) the reason for its disruption and 3) the means of its restoration.<sup>421</sup> In his essay “*The Demands of the Working Class*”, he asks the questions: “What do the working classes want? Will the other classes be able to withhold this from them? Will the demands of the workers be the grave of modern culture?”<sup>422</sup> As Günther Rudolf writes, Rodbertus wanted to find the scientific and practical consequences to fight both “terrible captives”: “pauperism”, or the impoverishment of large segments of the population, and the “economic crisis” brought about by the under consumption of the poor classes. Rodbertus saw the core of the problem as being the uneven balance of power between work and property.<sup>423</sup>

Dühring seeks answers to the questions asked by Rodbertus. The key to restoring a healthy social order is, in his opinion, to strengthen the weaker groups in such a way as to create a balance of forces (a view he sees connected with the process of Natural Law, as described in Chapter Four). Despite there being some similarity between his views and those of the socialists and *Kathedersozialisten*, Dühring’s perspective contrasts with the most well known authorities speaking out on the *Soziale Frage*. Too much of a realist to follow the utopian visions of the socialists, Dühring believes in the imperative of human will to determine the course of events. Whereas Marx assumes a non-political development of modern society dictated by purely economic forces and other representatives of social political economy advocate a patriarchic role of the state to ameliorate antagonism between workers and their

<sup>419</sup> Cf. Heinrich von Schiel, *Die Theorie der sozialen Frage* (Jena: Friedrich Mauke, 1871), 1 et seq.

<sup>420</sup> Cf. Julius Wolf, *Der Kathedersozialismus und die soziale Frage* (Berlin: George Reimer, 1899), 3 et seq.

<sup>421</sup> Cf. Günther Rudolf, „Karl Rodbertus und die soziale Frage,“ *Speech given at the Rodbertus Conference on 6.12.1995 in Greifswald, Berlin*, 4.

<sup>422</sup> Johann Karl Rodbertus, *Die Forderungen der arbeitenden Klassen* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1946), 9.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 5. On Rodbertus’ significance for the theories of socialism see an older article by the American professor at Brown University, E.B. Andrews, “Rodbertus’s Socialism, ” *The Journal of Political Economy* 1(December:1892): 50-67.

employers, Dühring's goal is to enable the workers to strengthen their position on their own to gain economic strength.<sup>424</sup>

He sees the *Soziale Frage* as an issue of the Germans, who have inherited the leading role in the socialist movement from the French. But Germany's efforts are still dependent on what the French have accomplished: "The nations that first take on a matter always influence those which have not yet tried".<sup>425</sup> There are also points in common for all nations, and creating an effective socialist movement will entail "all ideas and efforts, which look past the usual hands-off approach to interaction and which have their eye on some kind of organic construction" of society. Cooperatives are for Dühring such a socialist phenomenon, as they go against the principle of *laissez faire* by emphasizing partnership and curbing the will of the individual workers. Socialism involves the effort to create social associations which would not otherwise come into being without the special initiative of societal groups and within "hands off" interaction of the normal progression of things.<sup>426</sup> The movement is to proceed from its own organized strength in order to attain economic independence. From the perspective of Dühring's early work, the *Soziale Frage* is to be answered through organized political impetus as well as the understanding of complex economic concepts.

## 2. *The Concept of Capital*

In his early essay *Critique of the Concept of Capital and its Role in Political Economy*, Dühring meticulously attempts to come to an understanding of exactly what "capital" entails from a natural and juridical perspective.<sup>427</sup> His discourse on the nature of capital supports the views of Carey and List which were opposed to the British school of economics. The most basic element of an economy is a human workforce, on the one hand, and nature, on the other. Labor, which is a product of the social world, does not represent an asset which comes into being out of nothing. It has preconditions involving two main factors: 1) "basic existence" (*bloßes Dasein*), the basic material needed to work, i.e. nourishment and 2) "access to nature" or an object through which work is carried out.<sup>428</sup> Every workforce has to secure a part of nature which has been brought under the legal control of someone in order to operate. Capital,

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<sup>424</sup> See Chapter Eight below. Joseph A. Schumpeter defends Marx on this point emphatically stating that Marx's theory "has room for all kinds of motives". *History of Economic Analysis*, 440.

<sup>425</sup> "Der amerikanische Sozialismus," 113.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>427</sup> Albrecht points out that this writing is heavily under the influence of Dühring's legal studies. ED, 97. We have also drawn attention to the general influence of his study of law for his general *Weltanschauung*. Dühring was proud of his legal background and reproached Karl Marx, writing he "admittedly neglected his legal studies". KGN, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 503.

<sup>428</sup> KKB, 319-320.

Dühring holds, is a concept that has a societal correlation and must be considered from two points of view: the natural-technological and the legal. On the one hand, nature and the tools applied to it are given factors for carrying out work; here the actual ownership or demarcation of control is a non-issue, as only the “purpose” of the given work is what counts. On the other hand, the legal right over an object, the second main pre-condition, has two separate factors. One is positive, namely, the ability to control or to be able to use an object as one wills; the other is negative, being the right of exclusion.<sup>429</sup> According to Dühring, exclusion does not have to contain the character of ill intent, and yet it is the matrix of all social injustice. The exclusion of others from the control of an object, i.e. property, is a sign of respect for an individual and a person’s work. In contrast to Marxism, he sees ownership as a necessary demarcation of people’s fields of activity, any violation against which deserves reprisal.<sup>430</sup>

In the history of civilized society, from which the concept of capital has developed, any “work on nature” intrinsically involves the fact that there has already been a certain one-sided exclusion of the control of nature. The owner is seen at first as an *intermediary* who, due to his control of the access to nature, stands between the individual worker and nature, to which their work is directed. This intermediary will only give up the claims he has, which stem from nature, when others are obliged to relinquish a portion of their work to him. Only with this act of transfer given as a fee for providing the legal right of usage of nature (and, if necessary, the work already put into it) is the creation of what is called “capital” in economics allowed.<sup>431</sup>

Being conscious of the fact that human relations in history have been based on power or force, Dühring emphasizes that society has always consisted of “structures of order” which are historically inherited. Human interaction is based on legal rights which are a representation of power and always involve *exclusivity*. With power playing a decisive role in shaping economic conditions, Dühring believes that modern capitalism has not provided equal opportunity in its historical development: social conditions of economic intercourse take place in such a manner that some individuals have a greater opportunity to pursue their interests than others do. Thus economic exchange does not take place with even pre-conditions; due to existing historically inherited rights, title holders are granted unjust superiority over those who must relinquish all or parts of their rights to him. This is the phenomena of economic life and, according to Dühring, it is not beneficial to complain about this status as these conditions

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<sup>429</sup> KKB, 321.

<sup>430</sup> As we will see below, Dühring veers away from this opinion with his design of “economic communes”, which he later drops in the 1890s when he returns to a fervent individualism with a strong emphasis on private property.

<sup>431</sup> KKB, 321.

are based in the given social order, as it corresponds to human nature. Avoiding a one-sidedly accusing tone of many socialists, he recognizes the natural necessity of these conditions and writes that it can be seen that every order of law is bound to contain elements of injustice, namely the exploitation of superiority connected to law. He writes: “The misuse of power is not to be separated from its use”.<sup>432</sup> Power itself is not the problem. Outward measures to alleviate injustices are generally not effective and can only be applied to the most flagrant misuses of power; the only limits here are *moral* ones.

Capital for Dühring is primarily a *legal* power over nature, but at the same time represents a collection of work, which can be considered a piece of nature. Nature itself, however, is not to be understood as capital. It is only through private property ownership, according to Dühring, that capital is created. Only when nature becomes property, entailing that it is only accessible to those who control it through legal contract, is it to be considered a component of capital. Even raw nature, which has not been subject to human labor, but is claimed by exclusive law, is to be considered capital. The “initial production”, which Dühring defines as the result of direct interaction between nature and human labor, knows only capital in the form of raw ground (*roher Boden*), provided that it has become property. In time, real value is created as nature becomes shaped, as it were, by labor to become tool for production. Such capital can then be seen as the precondition of production, which can be an object of exclusive power and thus exclusive law.<sup>433</sup>

The concept of capital becomes more complicated when the various social factors that involve politics and power are taken into consideration. From a purely “natural” point of view, i.e. of pure production, capital is merely a tool. If production could be isolated completely from all other aspects of the economic process, this definition would be sufficient to characterize capital. (The problem of capital interest would be gone, as the “tool of production” would only be measured by the natural obstacles of procurement.) However, this definition does not correspond to reality. In modern capitalism, capital is also used as credit, i.e. as loan capital. The transfer from one hand to another for the purpose of being used by third parties, so prevalent in our society today, is for Dühring a decisive aspect of the concept of capital, which he incorporates in his theory of distribution to be dealt with below.<sup>434</sup> In contrast to Adam Smith, who taught that the basis of goods – and hence the trading thereof – was work,

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<sup>432</sup> Ibid., 323.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 330.

<sup>434</sup> Unlike many anarchist thinkers with whom he has much in common, Dühring never abandons the concept of credit.

Dühring sees the grounds of goods and bartering as the transfer of “defined control” (*abgegrenzte Herrschaft*). He writes, “Pure nature stops where the social world begins, i.e. where man delineates his control over nature”.<sup>435</sup> Capital becomes a precondition of production as far as it can be the object of *excluding power* and therefore also *excluding right*. Only in as far as there is a line of demarcation distinguishing ownership is there an issue of capital interest.

Seen politically and practically, Dühring’s theoretical considerations on capital are directed at finding a just economic solution for the German workers. He has respect, however, for the principle of individualism and does not follow socialists who want to do away with private property altogether. Capital is not to be seen negatively and is not something to complain about. He writes, “The kingdom of human sovereignty can only be erected on the ground of individuality. It would be going against gravity to want to avoid exclusion”.<sup>436</sup> Private property is, in his opinion, a necessary attribute of the human personality. The original principle that created property must be called upon in its purest form; this entails making sure that the exclusivity that lies in private property is kept in a tolerable balance. He concludes, “The issue is not a general fight against property, but rather keeping property on a strictly natural basis. The insanity of doing away with exclusivity inherent in the concept of capital has to be given up from the very beginning as an absurdity”.<sup>437</sup> Society has to be fair to the “natural” meaning of private property, which, Dühring writes, lies in demarcating fields of activity, and allowing for individual development. Capital only appears to be the cause of unjust exclusivity when legal institutions and conditions are not an expression of a natural balance of societal motives.<sup>438</sup>

Capital interest, which is concomitant with private property, is explained through Dühring’s views on distribution or exchange: it is a *tribute* for the owner of the capital who gives up his rights of exclusion; it is a fee for allowing the use of natural objects, which are his private property, to a third party. Interest is thus characterized by Dühring as property income. Sounding much like Carey, he writes: “The rate of interest is a measure of exertion that work has to overcome in its efforts to satisfy its needs. If this exertion is little in relationship to the fullness of the products, i.e. if the capital requirements of production are relatively non-

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<sup>435</sup> KKB, 326.

<sup>436</sup> KKB, 327.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid., 328.

<sup>438</sup> As will be shown below, Dühring assumes the existence of social laws (*soziale Gesetze*), which are to be distinguished from laws of nature. The former can create conditions which, although occurring in regular patterns, must be subjected to critique and reform.

substantial barriers of free development of human force, then these conditions would have to be expressed in the lowering of interest”.<sup>439</sup>

Although, as we will see, this position would be altered later, he sees the legal system and the government as having substantial significance for the development of interest, which serves to create a *balance* of societal interests. The more that legal measures work to give labor back its natural freedom (thus working against the natural gravitation of raw and unjust forces), the more the workers will benefit. The direction in which legal measures should be taken is towards combining weak business elements into larger units with the ability to become more self-reliant politically. Here Dühring is thinking of small businesses that wind up hurting their situation by competing against each other for access to capital. He advocates instead the formation of organizations consisting of small businesses that are to be recognized by the government.

At about the same time as William Stanley Jevons, Dühring turns his attention to what had been the “step child of political economy”, the theory of consumption.<sup>440</sup> Along the lines not only of List and Carey, but also of Ferdinand Lassalle, Dühring rejects the explanation of capital through savings. Individual savings only hold a moderate significance for the economy.<sup>441</sup> Reminiscent of his views on Natural Law and his ideas of the value of instinct in human affairs (cf. Chapter Four above), the main thrust of an economic system lies, according to Dühring, in the desire of the consumers, i.e. in the satisfaction of consumer needs. Thus the need of consumption remains mechanically balanced with the need of production. All economic progress begins here. Every need that comes along is impetus for production, be it a result of cultural progress that creates more needs for the individual or a rise of population that creates more needs of consumers. Production is determined by the development of demand, and not the other way around as Malthus’ teachings implied by saying the given capability of production determines the demand. Dühring writes, “The production of a nation is admittedly limited by the amount of capital it has at the moment. The size of capital determines how far work can be extended at a given moment and how profitable it can be.” However, he continues, the relationship between capital and work is mutual and with regard to the variations which come about one could just as easily claim “that production is a

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<sup>439</sup> Ibid., 338. Albrecht points out that this position would later be changed by Dühring. Cf. ED, 103.

<sup>440</sup> Friedrich Bülow, *Volkswirtschaftslehre. Eine Einführung in das wirtschafts- und sozialwissenschaftliche Denken* (Berlin and Frankfurt a. M.: Verlag Franz Vahlen, 1957), 464.

<sup>441</sup> Dühring, “Nationalökonomie im Jahre 1866,” *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 2 (1867): 504. Here it reads, “Die Nationalökonomische Anschauung Lists und Carey’s vereinigt sich mit der sozialen Agitation Lassalle’s zum Absturz jener Lehre von der Erheblichkeit eines durch Sparen gebildeten Lohnfonds”.

limitation of creating capital” as the other way around.<sup>442</sup> Production, he reasons, increases under the pressure or traction of consumption, i.e. the consumption required or the demand according to the means of needs. The origin of capital and its accumulation, he believes, lie in production, which will adjust to consumer needs and advance the tools production repeatedly to ease the processing before the manufacturing of goods begin. Dühring thus concludes that the correlation between consumption and production is more decisive than the amount of capital per se. He deduces that the need to raise wages is the most powerful motive to increase demand, and with it production.<sup>443</sup> This call for higher wages becomes a cornerstone of his social political efforts, allying him with the trend, later established in America theoretically by Francis Amasa Walker, and practically in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Henry Ford, which rebelled against the fixed idea of “static” or “natural” wages.<sup>444</sup>

### 3. *Capital and Labor*

Dühring’s articles in *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* indicate that he was up to date on the current discussion on political economy and the incipient socialist movement in the second half of the 1860s. He points out that the socialists had gained substantial impetus from the cotton crisis of 1861-1865, brought on by the America Civil War.<sup>445</sup> As a socialist movement began to germinate in Germany, more attention was cast towards political economy, with particular focus being given to the catchwords “capital” and “labor”. Socialism is, in Dühring’s opinion, an undeniable fact of his day; as he puts it, a “force of nature” that must be reckoned with. Many intellectuals at the time were of the opinion that the socialist movement could be fought and neutralized by proving that it was unscientifically utopian, unrealistic, and against human nature. In a missive with strong populist undertones, Dühring strongly disagrees:

You are wrong if you assume that there is a single other alternative. You do not recognize the instincts of socialism if you believe its power can be refuted through honest logic by pointing out its delusions and phantasms. You rightfully reproach it for not recognizing the

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<sup>442</sup> KKB, 341.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid., 342.

<sup>444</sup> In a chapter of his book on capitalism entitled “Prometheus Unbound – or the Enterpriser’s Function Explained”, John Chamberlain shows how American political economy, starting with Henry Carey and leading to Henry Ford, rebelled against the idea of “iron laws”. Cf. *The Roots of Capitalism*, revised edition (D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc.: Princeton, New Jersey, et al., 1965), 109-129. This American “Promethean” approach to economic matters, of which Chamberlain speaks, was embraced and advanced by Dühring.

<sup>445</sup> Dühring, “Kapital und Arbeit,” *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 1 (1866): 304. As we have mentioned above, Dühring was vehemently opposed to the Confederate States of America, which he disliked for its free trade ideology as well as for its, as he saw it, enshrinement of “oligarchy”. He takes the liberal - and we believe false - view that the American Civil War was an ethical conflict for which the South was justly punished: “Es war nichts als ein Akt der sozialen Gerechtigkeit, durch welchen der Süden der Vereinigten Staaten niedergetreten wurde”. KGV, 327.

acquisitive impulse of man, one of the main points of human nature, but is there only the choice between ignoring the individual roots of human labor, on the one hand, and the recognition of a restricted principle, on the other? [...] I for my part would rather dream with the socialists, than join a selfish cult of ‘common sense’.<sup>446</sup>

He was convinced that the parties of the day were incapable of finding adequate solutions, and he chose to be independent of party politics, not because he was a philosopher dealing with the abstract realm of ideas – Dühring took pride at suggesting direct practical measures – but rather because, pessimistically, he saw parties as being led by corrupt forces pursuing selfish and shortsighted policies. His hopes for transforming society lay with the masses, who he counted on influencing through his brand of realistic socialism. How the masses should exert their power remains unclear. In the early phase of his career, Dühring was of the opinion that the will of the individual must be “brought in balance” with the general interests.<sup>447</sup> Once a strong enough consciousness of the plight of the workers is developed, he reasoned, they will form a unit with the ability to help themselves.

The cornerstone of Dühring’s plans for reform, as we just saw, became the initiative to raise wages in order to stimulate consumption. The “iron laws” of classical political economy postulated that this could not be done.<sup>448</sup> Most theoreticians of the day assumed that the only way of increasing employment for workers in light of the limited capital at hand was by keeping wages low in order to assure that there would be sufficient means of capital accumulation left. If wages are raised, according to this line of thinking, the extra expenditure would be consumed from the capital and would not be available to update the equipment of production. In reality, as Dühring sees it, the procurement of assets and tools, i.e. real capital, is not a consequence of “abstention from pleasure”, but rather the result of work which is directed towards creating objects that make direct consumption easier. Important is having a large enough proportion of the labor force working towards modernization and the increasing of production equipment; if there is a proper division of the labor force within the production process, then there is no reason to keep wages low. The only real limit on the expansion of an enterprise is demand.<sup>449</sup> Dühring labels an alleged limit on capital as being a disturbance of

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<sup>446</sup> CA, 17.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid., 18. Dühring thought that the classical school of economics, which he negatively termed “party school”, made the grave error of only seeing “a heap of individuals” instead of realizing that groups were organic units of a structured whole. Cf. Ibid., 52.

<sup>448</sup> Chamberlain, op. cit., Chapter 5 “Gloomy Men and Iron Laws – or Capitalism in a Cage”.

<sup>449</sup> “Kapital und Arbeit,” 307. Henry Ford would prove in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that if wages are increased, so will demand and increased demand serves as a trigger for more production. Cf. Chamberlain, 111.

“circulation of political economic activity”.<sup>450</sup> Wages can only be taken from a surplus of business, i.e. from the result of production. It is, however, in this surplus that Dühring sees the “true right of labor”, which means “a claim to such influence of the absolute economic domination where purposeful political economic activity is a harmonic result”.<sup>451</sup> He aims to vent the powerful energy inherent in the labor force towards maximizing productivity. Free competition alone is not enough to facilitate an equal balance of supply and demand; this dogma of the classical school of political economy, according to Dühring, must be corrected by, as it were, bridling the “productive societal forces” through the creation of associations of workers and entrepreneurs which serve at once to represent the masses as well as to monitor collective production. There is an inherent disharmony between workers and entrepreneurs, as they represent conflicting interests, but by strengthening the position of the workers (through their own initiative), the merchant class and industrialists will realize it needs to accept the interest of labor, and a harmony between the two groups can be attained.

In the preliminary work towards creating his system, the *organic whole* of the economic process in which an equilibrium between capital and labor is attained moves into the foreground. The components of an economy should not be observed as isolated entities, but as parts of the *collective economy* working together in the circulation of business. As we saw in the last section, production, distribution, and consumption are interconnected. Especially distribution prepares the way for production and is determined by the nature of specific social pressures; it represents a sphere of processes that expand into the foundations of production. As Albrecht puts it, “social realities intrude into production, complementing other factors that have nothing to do with society; whereas the other way around, the naked results of production can never dominate the proportions of distribution”.<sup>452</sup> Production is also determined by demand, which represents a sum of unlimited needs and available means of purchasing. Although needs are capable of changing, at any given moment, Dühring reasons, they always remain a specific size. The specific need can always be considered a power of consumption (presupposing that a buying power is available) able to influence production. However, the higher productive forces are restricted due to the necessity of prior consumption. Only where the forces of consumption directly determine the measure of productive functions can we, according to Dühring, speak of a “natural correspondence”. An

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<sup>450</sup> Ibid., 89. Although not mentioned here by Dühring, Albrecht believes that the idea for increasing wages needs to be complemented by Carey’s concept of economic decentralization, where the suppliers and consumers are physically located closer together. Albrecht, ED, 106.

<sup>451</sup> “Kapital und Arbeit,” 306-307.

<sup>452</sup> Cf. Albrecht, ED, 107-108.

abstract need serving to bridge consumption and production “in and of itself” is not consumptive power; it is only *the potential* to create equivalents for products to be consumed. The power of consumption normally represents the ability to develop a certain productive activity. Dühring surmises that the consumption of the working class determines the nature of production, and thus the working wage is the regulator of production through its influence on consumption and its cooperation in the production process. By raising wages, he believes that a balance between consumption and production can be created. Thus the working class, in his opinion, possesses great power, not in a potential to seize the means of production (as Marxism advocated), but rather in the sense of being able to organize themselves and strengthen their position such that they are able to play a decisive role in production.<sup>453</sup>

Analogous to the teachings of Carey on the progression of the cultivation of soil (from worse to better, due to technological advance), Dühring advances the opinion that the barriers of nature will in time be more easily overcome, and thus an increase in production is to be expected. The energy set free through this development will allow the goal of achieving solidarity among the workers to be realized. The salient point of his book *Capital and Labor* is that the predicament of the workers was not merely financial, but rather involved the issue of dealing with the essence of the capitalist class and its organizations; the improvement of the conditions of the workers is a collective process which will be aided by technological advance. In Dühring’s opinion, to see the exploitation of the workers as stemming from “capital” is a grossly insufficient explanation.<sup>454</sup>

#### 4. *Group Interests and Economic Power*

From these elementary theoretical excursions on the concepts of capital and labor, Dühring moves into the realm of action and creating a program of social reform. While theory is crucially important, in his opinion, it remains incomplete without the necessary corollary of action and a plan for improving social conditions. Theory, in his opinion, as we touched on above, tends to develop out of practice; it then establishes itself and refines its tenets before moving forward to create reform. Already in the early stages leading up to his system, the individual who is seen as the “sovereign bearer of all sociality and its political forms” is a

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<sup>453</sup> Dühring, “Die neusten Lehren über den Arbeitslohn,” *Der Arbeiterfreund. Zeitschrift des Centralvereins im Preußen für das Wohl der arbeitenden Klassen* 2 (1864): 281 et seq.

<sup>454</sup> SLF, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 407. Here he writes, “Schon 1866 habe ich in meiner Schrift ‚Capital und Arbeit‘ geltend gemacht, dass die persönlich organisierte Geschäftsverbindungen weit mehr zu bedeuten haben, als die sachlichen Beträge an Capital. Es ist daher eine der größten und unzureichendsten Erklärungen, in den nackten Capitalbeträgen die Ursache der Ausbeutung, d.h. der ungerecht ausnützenden Bewirtschaftung der schwachen Elemente zu sehen”.

critical theoretical entity.<sup>455</sup> Individualism, as Dühring understands it in this case, is a principle which applies not only to the “specific” person, but also to social groupings within a society, the strongest of which is the nation itself. Analogous to the teachings of List, Dühring sees an inner connection between nations and economic development. As we saw in Chapter Four, List proposed an involvement of government in the development of the nation through protective tariffs, which enable a young nation to grow. Dühring advocates what could be termed “neo-mercantilist” policies which involve applying protective tariffs both for specific economic situations, as well as to provide fundamental developmental aid for the nation: tariffs enable the nation to stand as an individual entity among other international individual entities.<sup>456</sup> Albrecht correctly emphasizes Dühring’s debt to List, who overcame the view that the world economy consists of a collection of individual relationships or of a huge “pile of individual characters”. List conceived a structured whole whose members are the nations.<sup>457</sup> It is not the individuals dealing with one another per se who give impulse to the world economy, but rather nations or national economies which meet in latent or active competition.

Dühring’s neo-mercantilism goes beyond List in establishing that the principle of protection has absolute validity. Protective tariffs are not only to be implemented for a specific time but also as a means of government in general.<sup>458</sup> Just as nations represent united entities that exist side by side in a more or less antagonistic relationship, analogous groups within the nation itself represent organic societal units at odds with one another. Dühring applies List’s principle of protective tariffs, which were conceived for the preservation of developing nations, to concrete societal groupings to foster their development and freedom from coercion. As Albrecht has shown, Adam Smith’s political economy did not consider the dark side of human nature. Not only do nations face off antagonistically, groups are also antagonistic towards one another.<sup>459</sup> Thus the German working class, in Dühring’s opinion, must form a line of defense against the capitalists to gain the strength it needs to pursue its interest. Through independence, which the working class will gain, a balance of interests can be created to form a unity and thereby strengthen the nation.

Dühring does not, however, contradict Adam Smith’s axiom that it is the self-interest or acquisitive impulse of individual men that provides the impetus for economic life. The

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<sup>455</sup> CNS, 2nd edition, 4.

<sup>456</sup> Historically conscious, Dühring pays tribute to France’s foreign minister Colbert in an extensive study from 1864: “Colbert’s Handelspolitik in ihren Beziehungen zur Gegenwart,” *Grenzboten* 4 (1864): 404-418.

<sup>457</sup> Albrecht, ED, 111.

<sup>458</sup> Albrecht, “Die Ausgestaltung des listischen Nationalitätsprinzip durch Eugen Dühring,” 8-9. As will be shown below, he would change this view in the final phase of his career.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

principle of free and unlimited competition is the best form for any economy. The reality of how society is structured does not, however, allow individual force to be effective by itself. If people were to act only according to their own interests, there would only be, as Dühring terms it, “a pile of individuals” with no organic connection to one another; the result of which would be economically unjust and “the discrimination of one person by the other”. Believing that the “acquisitive impulse” of the individual can quickly become destructive selfishness of a single individual, Dühring advocates placing “organic bonds” in place of Smith’s individual. He sees moving beyond the private interests of acquisition to the interests of groups as part of a process of disciplining primal will; private interest must be brought in line with collective interest. He writes, “History, which itself works in the spirit of submission, discipline, and the force of nature inherent in the phenomenon of the social world will make sure that private will is purposely limited by the public will to be then combined in to a higher type of freedom”.<sup>460</sup>

Intervention by the government in the affairs of private citizens, however, cannot create this higher organic unity. Analogous to List’s teachings on the cooperation of nations, Dühring suggests, as we have seen above, the idea of creating social coalitions among workers, which represent a form of societal alliance as opposed to an agreement through or with the government. Self-reliance is the most basic form in which law is applied; the system guaranteeing legal rights is based on self-help.<sup>461</sup> He sees the coalitions as a purely political measure: “The coalitions are not economic, but rather a pure means of power. They belong therefore to a class of help that can be called political in a general sense. They are the only institution which owes its existence and effectiveness to the needs, the instincts, and the common sense of the masses”.<sup>462</sup> The formation of these groups, which are to include high and low waged workers, is based on his belief that a unification of the economically weak and underprivileged workers will facilitate a slow but sure freedom from economic suppression. He is convinced that the power of personal groups can influence production, but must fight strong resistance. Effusively, he writes:

The focal point has to be with the production organizations. But where is there any trace of political action there? We are still only consuming our wages the best we can, namely, through the consumer organizations, and the only progress that begins to touch production are the unfortunately still relatively backwards raw material and warehouse organizations- otherwise only the establishment of institutions such as the people’s credit deserves recognition. But

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<sup>460</sup> CA, 17. He also emphasizes that true self-interest does not involve “making profit”; sometimes it is better to do without in order to strengthen the productive forces of society. Cf. CU, 54.

<sup>461</sup> Cf. WL, 78.

<sup>462</sup> “Kapital und Arbeit,” 307.

have these types of credit unions become institutions for the common worker? The later is encouraged to become a capitalist in order to be able to be coerced. To date, only the small independent craftsman, and not the mere wage worker, is on his way to becoming successfully emancipated.<sup>463</sup>

His demands for the involvement of labor in production seem to go against his later, clearly-defined demarcation of this area as “pure economy”. The main point is, however, that workers should be motivated to take matters into their own hands and not be forced to seek help from the others. Receiving welfare contradicts the self-reliance of an individual as well as of a group. Dühring advocates the formation of independent groupings of producers who are in the position to make decisions independently from capitalist owners.

The coalitions are not merely economic institutions, as had been suggested in the form of cooperatives by Schulze-Delitzsch and by others in the form of unions, but rather loose, temporary organizations based on the principles of justice and freedom, which should advocate the interests of labor and build a sound social economy. Private property ownership and capital holdings are to be respected and, in contrast to “dreamy socialism”, the “fundamental powers are to remain”.<sup>464</sup> Dühring’s proposals are close to those of Ferdinand Lassalle, who suggested reforming the economy not by increasing wages but by creating “productive associations”. Whereas Lassalle wound up drifting towards the support of large-scale unions, as Kruse writes, Dühring’s proposals are in a sense more progressive for the time: social coalitions are favored to create an economic balance of what had been up to that point unequal parties of the working market; each individual group is to remain independent, thus more effectively protecting individual rights.<sup>465</sup> With his advocacy of coalitions, Dühring accepts the status of having the capitalist owners on the one hand and the wage workers on the other; “specification” is essential and unavoidable, as is the differentiation of wages according to one’s ability and level of education. Through all societal differences, in the early groundwork to his system, Dühring foresees the creation of a just balance and the harmony of interests as had been foreseen by Carey.<sup>466</sup>

##### 5. *The Prussian Social Exposé*

The *social exposé* Dühring had written as a commission for the Prussian ministry (see Chapter Two) presents the practical measures for helping the working class, which he develops in his

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<sup>463</sup> CU, 90.

<sup>464</sup> CU, 133.

<sup>465</sup> Alfred Kruse, “Eugen Dührings wissenschaftliche Isolierung,” 217.

<sup>466</sup> Cf. CU, 96.

other writings. As mentioned above, Dühring's expertise was sought in this matter due to the positive recognition given to his early theoretical writings.<sup>467</sup> The essay's point of departure, once again, involves his understanding of science as it relates to the good of the whole of society: *ad hoc* measures are to be taken to facilitate fields of action for social improvement. Social science should help the workforce through education, which will allow workers to help themselves without having to gain favors from the other classes. Contrary to Marx and Engels, Dühring's suggestions are practical and *not* revolutionary. Carl-Erich Vollgraf has illustrated how the wage issue fund becomes a key position in his concept for reform.<sup>468</sup> Dühring demands that the struggle for higher wages is the duty of the collective working force. He again expresses his critique of David Ricardo and Thomas Robert Malthus, the "neo-British direction" of bourgeois economics, reproaching them for considering the capitalist means of production given by nature as being unchangeable, and thus legitimizing the plight of the proletariat.<sup>469</sup>

In the first part of his paper, Dühring analyses the question of the effectiveness of the economic organizations of the workers, as they had been designed by Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch. He concludes that their success had been minimal, and he rejects "consumer organizations" as being an effort directed only towards helping workers *use* their wages, but not towards actually *raising* wages; from a profit point of view, consumer organizations benefited the interests of the employers more than the workers.<sup>470</sup> From his perspective, they are not a factor in the relationship between "capital" and "labor" because they offer little more than benefits for the individual when purchasing something. They take the side of the industrialists and if they were able to be put in place, they would support the development of the modern industry, but would also keep the money value of labor down. He sees the idea of "productive associations" as admitting that the concentration of production is objectively necessary and that the future ruling forms of industry should be on a large business scale, carried out through collective means. Being orientated towards small business and small amounts of capital, they mistakenly look for a way out of the precarious situation of the

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<sup>467</sup> Cf. Lothar Bucher to Dühring, 22 October 1865, in Dühring Papers, Box 6, HA/SBB. Vollgraf points out that Bismarck's motives in commissioning Dühring may have been an attempt to neutralize a political enemy by drawing him in closer to the state. "Ein 'Handgemenge' im Vorfeld des 'Anti-Dühring'," 110.

<sup>468</sup> The Scottish economist John Ramsay MacCulloch (1789-1864) had advocated maintaining economic harmony through the legalization of union activity to attain higher wages; this was seen as a necessary step towards closing the gap between "market prices" of work and fair working wages. *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.* The first edition of the writing, which appeared anonymously, was reviewed in a long article appearing in Julius Faucher's pro-free trade journal *Vierteljahrschrift für Volkswirtschaft und Kulturgeschichte* 28 (Berlin, 1867): 203-227.

<sup>470</sup> Hermann Wagener (i.e. Dühring), *Denkschrift über die wirtschaftlichen Associationen und socialen Coalitionen*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Leipzig: Th.Thust jun., 1868), 6 et seq.

economic conditions in a direction which contradicts the living conditions of modern industry. As mentioned above, he does not believe that productive associations will be able to compete with the entrepreneurs.

In the second half of the paper, he suggests creating unbridled support for workers coalitions, which had been banned in Prussia since 1845.<sup>471</sup> These organizations have the collective interests of the class as their point of departure in the fight for higher wages. Up to now, he reasons, they have been utilized in strikes. The future goal of the coalitions should be to curb the arbitrary action of the capitalists and to allow a “natural formation of labor law”.<sup>472</sup> Dühring foresees a role for the government here as dealing with the *Soziale Frage*. The government should not limit itself to the legalization of unions and strikes, as the capitalists have a greater advantage through limiting production or moving it abroad or through the hiring of low waged workers, etc. It should furthermore be considered that a battle between workers and owners cannot be a part of a normal sustained condition. The government should take a role in the collective relations between the wage worker and the enterprise and attempt to curb unreasonable demands from each side in order to facilitate the development of the national economy and economic stability. The government needs partners from both fractions with whom it can negotiate. On the part of the worker this needs to be “organized cooperatives” (*Genossenschaften*) whose main task would be the representation of a type of labor law. Fixed working hours and wages, the control of factory procedures and existing health insurance, unemployment insurance and retirement insurance belong to this realm. In general, Dühring suggests that the state should only intervene as an arbitrator in the negotiations between capital and work when no agreement can be reached.<sup>473</sup>

## 6. Critical Summary

The seminal political economic thought just covered took form in the second half of the 1860s before Dühring had finished conceptualizing his Philosophy of the Actual. His early works were preceded by his study of law, which influenced his thought on economics considerably. His point of departure is the “Social Question” facing Europe in the age of industrialization.

<sup>471</sup> Michael Kittner, *Arbeitskampf: Geschichte, Recht, Gegenwart* (München: Beck, 2005), 155-156.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>473</sup> Twenty-five years after the social exposé’s first publication, the writing came under critical scrutiny again. Cf. Johannes Berg, “Die Parteien im Deutschen Reichstage,” *Unsere Zeit* 1 (1882): 853-865. Berg sees Dühring’s ideas in the exposé as representing an authoritarian and conservative state socialism. In a footnote (p.859) he draws a comparison between Dühring’s exposé and Prince Clemens Wenzel von Metternich’s exposé “Über die staatliche Organisation des deutschen Buchhandels” from 1820, which he claims may have been written for Metternich by the romantic social philosopher Adam Müller (1779-1829). See also Kittner, *op. cit.*

Lacking revolutionary undertones as well as the furious indignation which would later accompany his theories, his thought remains focused on the theoretical and practical factual concerns of political economy. He is interested in the historical contexts of economic activity, and, although he speaks positively of “socialism”, is clearly committed to the established social order. Dühring looks down upon the hyper-rational and unproductive utopian socialism of the generation preceding him, while at the same time having great faith in the instinct of the working class. Believing that the alternatives of free trade, on the one hand, and state control, on the other, are inherently flawed, he begins his analysis to find an approach which can help the workers to help themselves.

Dühring's early understanding of the concept of capital already involves the - for his philosophy characteristic - fundamental separation of nature and freedom. Nature and the technology needed to work, on the one hand, are contrasted with the social world of legal power and control, on the other. In the early groundwork to his system, the social or legal aspect is not critically scrutinized as it would be later, but a clear demarcation is made. He points out that modern capitalism is socially determined and has developed without providing equal opportunity for the poorer elements of society. The social injustice of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is based, in his opinion, largely on conditions which are necessary. Power itself – at this stage - is not the issue for Dühring because it can be used either positively or negatively. Likewise, capital should not be seen one-sidedly in terms of exploitation and exclusion. In the groundwork to his system social justice is recognized as a moral issue, but the ethical elements involved in social theory are not yet elaborated on precisely. Certain elements which would become core concepts of his theory of sociopolitical economics can already be seen, however. He places emphasis, for example, on the general benefits of raising wages. Following the optimistic ideas of Carey, Dühring states that technology will lessen the barriers of nature and allow production to be increased to meet the needs of an expanding society. Analogous to List's ideas of the importance of the nation, he highlights the benefits of forming societal groupings to improve their position in society – a position which he admirably defends in his social exposé for the Prussian government. In favoring List's method to the more atomistic or individualistic approach of Adam Smith, Dühring points to the potential of selfishness and egotistical behavior of individual characters; it might be critically pointed out, however, that the potential for immoral or unlawful behavior also exists with groups, sometimes even more so (the organized mafia for example).

Despite the largely sober tone of his early writings, Dühring does exhibit some of the defiance towards vested authority which would characterize his career on the whole. As an evangelist for the ideas of Henry C. Carey, he pits himself directly against not only the powerful forces of “Manchester liberalism”, which were growing stronger in German society, but also against the German historical school of economics, which had shown an increasing presence at the universities since the 1850s. Although his social exposé was commissioned by the conservative Prussian government, the writing’s attack on the ideas of social reform put forth by Schulze-Delitzsch exhibits a certain rebelliousness, as it challenges beliefs that were gaining popularity at the time. With his support of the workers coalitions, as opposed to the economic cooperatives, he comes close to allying himself with the conservative forces of the Prussian upper class. He gives the government substantial power for regulating society, a position which he would abandon on a theoretical level in the years to come, as he developed his concept against centralized government based on violence (*Gewaltstaat*). At this stage, Dühring shows himself to be open to socialism, and he distinguishes himself for being the only academician to review Karl Marx’s *Das Kapital*.<sup>474</sup> Finally, in critically summarizing the early groundwork to his system of social economics, a tribute should be given to his prolific publishing in the early years, which can be seen in the Hildburghausen *Ergänzungsblätter zu Kenntnis der Gegenwart*. Particularly notable are also two essays written on John Stuart Mill and William Whewell in the magazine *Unser Zeit*, which exemplify Dühring’s talent as an independent-minded critic, as well as his instinct for identifying topical theoretical issues.

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<sup>474</sup> Dühring, „Marx, Das Kapital, Kritik der politischen Ökonomie,“ op. cit. *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 3(1868): 182 et seq.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES

#### *1. The Essence of Political Economy*

Dühring sees political economy as a science which did not exist before the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>475</sup> The young discipline, he writes, has made substantial progress and is moving from its originally political and practical point of departure towards becoming a theory of the *material interests* of nations and societal groups in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A scientific political economy calls for a critical theory “of the material existence of nations and individuals in collective and economic life”.<sup>476</sup> Despite the strong idealistic elements inherent in his philosophy, Dühring’s basic understanding of economics is realistic and functional. The object of the discipline is a societal budget, which includes anything requiring the expenditure of material means and spending. The preconditions of material existence are a particularly important object of the science. Economic management, i.e. the household expenditure needed to overcome obstacles and barriers to satisfy needs, is seen as an anthropological necessity, without which progress would be impossible. Anything incurring material costs employed to realize these needs is within the realm of the field; this includes not only strictly material needs such as groceries, housing, clothes, etc., but also necessary needs of thought, such as the services of teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc. The material conditions of existence make up a category and a domain in and of itself, which, for Dühring, is a relatively complete entity, not to be confused by abstraction and imagination. The “specific nature of the service, which gets created, is insignificant” as the only issue is the actual expenditure of material economic service, even when created by non-material performance. Economic management is a broad concept, entailing the collective public and private finances of a nation, but is an important foundation for the other societal functions which it serves.<sup>477</sup>

Political economy is also a discipline which cannot ignore sociopolitical contexts and must present a framework within which factors of “power” are incorporated alongside “natural” ones. It is tied in with collective societal existence, thus representing a *whole*, which should not be seen as existing separately or alongside of real economic life. “Economic freedom”, however, takes precedence over “political freedom” because the former is a precondition of

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<sup>475</sup> KG, 1. KGN, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 15-17. This opinion is also held by Salin, who, however, does give importance to the science’s pre-history. Cf. *Politische Ökonomie*. Mombert agrees, citing the origins of political economy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. *Geschichte der Nationalökonomie*, 1.

<sup>476</sup> CNS, 2. In the second and following editions, he defines it as “the science of the material existence of individuals, groups and nations”. CNS, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 3.

<sup>477</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 6-9.

the latter.<sup>478</sup> Dühring takes issue with any theory that does not consider the factors that are decisive preconditions for the established order, and, as in his philosophical and historical works, *fundamental causes* or “*Anfangsdenken*” play an essential role. He writes: “The preconditions of material existence, as far as they are dependent on effective collective causes and not to be attributed exclusively to the specific good or bad behavior of individual private economics, are the object of national and social economy”.<sup>479</sup>

Accepting a premise which contradicted the teaching of the *laissez faire* economics at the time, he insists that individual action taken by men in business is never to be completely separated from societal surroundings and is determined by general economic and societal conditions. For this reason Dühring implies that “national economy” (*Nationalökonomie*), the German term for the discipline, which had come into existence at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is more accurate than the more popular term “political economy” (*politische Ökonomie*) used by Marx and others. (It might be asked, however, why the term “political” should not be appropriate for national issues.) The *real* structure of a society is given a scientific status by Dühring, which, along the lines created by List, correlates to the certain societal stage of development.<sup>480</sup> Just as there is differentiation in the phases of societal growth, there are also important differences to consider within the structure of society at any given time. He also recognizes inherent dissimilarities in the abilities of individuals, and accepts the status of subordination and superiority in working conditions; egalitarianism, in his eyes, amounts to an absurdity in economic science, as “people do not require equality, but rather proportionality”.<sup>481</sup> He correctly asserts that the wrongness of egalitarianism is not that “certain aspects of subordination are removed, but rather that people believe that any political or social organism can exist without structure [...]”. Thus a war against differences in society makes sense only when the existing inequality is replaced by another. The economy of a society can only be viewed scientifically when its given structure and its complex ranking order, are taken into consideration.<sup>482</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> CSN, 3. Dühring is, however, ambivalent on this point, as on p.10 he writes that it would be “completely ignoring the basic point of departure for collective political economy” to ignore the forces of politically organized volition. This, as we will see below, is a point of contention he has with Marxism.

<sup>479</sup> CNS, 2.

<sup>480</sup> Albrecht, ED, 134. Cf. also Albrecht, “Die Ausgestaltung des listischen Nationalitätprinzip durch Eugen Dühring”, 8-9. Dühring’s reservations towards the abstract method of classical liberalism are brought in connection with List’s principle of the nation.

<sup>481</sup> KG, 309.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, 310. This is one key point that separates Dühring from extreme political leftists, with whom he otherwise has much in common.

Although every society represents an entity that is in a process of development, the material existence of any phase of development is the only basis for scientific analysis. For the phase being analyzed, trade is of less importance to Dühring than is production. Commerce is only one aspect within the larger framework of the supplying of materials. Price theories are also of a secondary nature, when they are not directly related to the political aspect of distribution. Production is, in his system, the cornerstone of political economy. His concern for the social conditions of production cause him, like Carey, to give substantial weight to technical advance, which he believes facilitates economic activity.

The task of political economy ultimately involves attempting to explain the causes of economic phenomena, which can be perceived according to “laws”. The role of laws in the economic process continues to be a point of controversy in methodological discussions. As we define them, laws are not to be thought of in terms of manmade legislation, e.g. civil law or common law, based on human will, but rather as metaphors applied to the unchanging movement or regularities of nature. Laws amount to causal formulas that apply the principle of sufficient reason to societal phenomena.<sup>483</sup> According to Dühring, the laws of economics differ from those of nature, but “to claim that there are no laws in political economy, or as one says, no laws of nature, means nothing less than to virtually negate the possibility of a scientific penetration of the material”.<sup>484</sup> As in his critique of historicism, analyzed in Chapter Five, Dühring emphasizes that a science which merely depicts the given actualities, while having elementary value, remains incomplete: “A living science does not merely group facts of the present and past, but also penetrates into the causal context determined by law, such that it may ascertain something of the necessity of the future and be able to judge possibilities of interest”.<sup>485</sup> This understanding of “laws” is the basis of the methodology of Dühring’s system to which we will now elaborate on.

## *2. Methodological and Conceptual Clarification*

Dühring’s approach to economics can be seen as an attempt to synthesize the methods of classical economic theory and that of the Historical School. The physiocrats and Adam Smith worked largely with visions of society that neglected political aberrations. They tended to see economic activity as an idea and believed that it was determined by laws of nature. Dühring

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<sup>483</sup> For Dühring, man is a part of nature. Whereas Schopenhauer carefully separated the intellect from nature Dühring sees the intellect as a part of nature, although the laws which govern it are different than those applying to “pure nature”. (Schopenhauer wrote, “Generally, nature signifies that which operates, urges, and creates without the intervention of the intellect”. *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 2, 269.)

<sup>484</sup> KG, 171.

<sup>485</sup> CNS, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 6.

accepts laws of nature as existing in society, but qualifies their abstract methodological value by also considering the factor of “human intervention” in economic development. Analogous to his philosophy of history, he sees the economy not only as the “progressive work of nature”, but also in terms of “human striving” which can be moral and heroic, but, more often than not, egotistical and oppressive. His belief that “man is a product of history” and that “the present must be understood from the past, and the other way around” allies him not only with German historical school, but with Marxist socialism as well.<sup>486</sup>

From a theoretical perspective, political economy, like science in general, is concerned with the application of the *principle of sufficient reason* towards the phenomena of economic activity which it attempted to examine and explain.<sup>487</sup> Its two main approaches for determining causality are the “abstract-isolation method”, whereby a phenomenon is freed from any given byproducts which might influence it (applied by the physiocrats and Adam Smith), and the “concrete-historical method”, which proceeds by examining the past and gathering necessary facts, figures, and details to explain economic development in its relevant context (applied by the German Historical School).<sup>488</sup> Both methods disclose causality, but whereas the abstract-isolating approach – assuming it adheres to their general pre-conditions – has absolute validity, i.e. what is deduced from it stands as true, the concrete-historic approach has inductive value and is thus subject to error, or is only applicable for a certain phase of economic life.

Dühring’s system of sociopolitical economy applies both of these general approaches. His allegiance to the scientific thought of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as his fondness for *fundamental causes* leads him to give special preponderance to the abstract-isolating method, i.e. economics in its pure form; like the classical School, Dühring, for example, presupposes

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<sup>486</sup> Cf. Dühring, “Geschichte der Philosophie,” *Vorlesungsmitschrift 1870* (cf. Appendices I). Hanni Binder emphasizes Dühring’s kinship with the German historical school and with Marxism. SSED, 52-53. On Dühring’s understanding of laws of nature in political economy see also Albrecht, ED, 138-141.

<sup>487</sup> This epistemological point of departure was expressed most lucidly, from a purely philosophical perspective, by Arthur Schopenhauer in his doctoral dissertation from 1813, *Über die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde – Eine philosophische Abhandlung*, 5th edition (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1891). This short monograph aims to provide procedural instructions on the principle which is the basis for all science.

<sup>488</sup> Cf. Binder, SSED, 16. The “battle of methods” (*Methodenstreit*), which broke out between Gustav Schmoller and Carl Menger in 1883 roughly followed the lines of these two different methods, although, as Schumpeter pointed out, there were great misunderstandings between the two parties. Schmoller is generally portrayed as the leader of a “young historical school” and Menger of the “school of marginal utility”. Hansen and Backhaus have argued that the conflict had many aspects that have often been overlooked, and that particularly Schmoller’s methodological position, which was anchored in empiricism, has been misunderstood. Cf. Jürgen Backhaus and Reginald Hansen, “Methodenstreit in der Nationalökonomie,” *Journal for General Philosophy of Science* 31 (2000): 307-336. Also Reginald Hansen, “Der Methodenstreit in den Sozialwissenschaften zwischen Gustav Schmoller und Karl Menger. Seine wissenschaftshistorische und wissenschaftstheoretische Bedeutung,” in *Beiträge zur Entwicklung der Wissenschaftstheorie im 19. Jahrhundert* 1, ed. A. Diemer (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1968), 137-173.

economic self-interest and competition. Abstract or pure factors can be determined by concentrating on the *original context* of economic development, free of any non-economical facts. The application of abstract-isolating laws to current social and political conditions is, according to Dühring, a special task of political economy and signifies the emancipation of free thought concerning the past and present.<sup>489</sup> At the same time, the conditions as they *actually* exist must also be taken into consideration. Because of the fact that the main goal of a general theory of economics is the examination of “the given facts and the conditions directed to the foreseeable future”, one has to consider political or social laws which, in contrast to the pure laws of nature, are a result of human volition and desire. Laws which relate to human interaction involve *free will*, whose regularities, Dühring believes, can also be traced. Free will is not only the rational or conscious decisions a person makes, but also “instinct and impulse, lower and higher interests, passion and energy”; it is the “capability to act according to principles and thus to let the given elements of one’s own essence become factors to be implemented”.<sup>490</sup> Nature and free will are both realms of the Actual and entail a degree of necessity; the difference between the two spheres is in the way that the “prevailing necessity is conveyed”.<sup>491</sup> Conscious action and collective organized activities are the result of instinct and the powers of understanding within us. Humans create a world of institutions and facts towards which we are not obligated in the same way as we are towards those parts of nature “whose manner of action cannot be changed through our influence”.<sup>492</sup> To view arbitrary and often harmful human action as taking place according to laws of nature would be to give up the moral responsibility we have as human beings and to put the blame on nature for behavior which is, in reality, our own doing. This abstraction would “make rigidity a principle” and would involve a “completely false position towards science and (would) hinder knowledge of how history advances according to law”.<sup>493</sup> Thus the way that economics are perceived is to a certain degree determined by Laws of Development

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<sup>489</sup> CNS, 3rd edition, 7.

<sup>490</sup> CSN, 67.

<sup>491</sup> Concerning the world of human action, he writes, “allein die Vermittlungsart der in der Menschwelt herrschenden Notwendigkeit ist eine völlig andere”. CNS, 66. This distinction of Dühring’s anticipates the terminology of Tönnies, who distinguished between the “arbitrary” and “organic” will (*Kürwillen* and *Wesenswillen*). Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972). Dühring speaks of “arbitrary freedom” (*Willkürfreiheit*) as opposed to a more essential will rooted deeply in the subject’s intellect and character.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid. The work of Arnold Gehlen is of great significance with regard to institutions. See *Der Mensch. Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt*, as well as *Urmensch und Spätkultur*, op. cit. Dühring’s largely negative bearing towards institutions has more in common with the views of Theodor W. Adorno (*The Authoritarian Personality*) than the more ascetic ideas of Gehlen. Gehlen and Adorno debated publically on the significance of institutions in West Germany in the 1960s.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid. In the section below on the consequences of his system, it will be shown how this outlook of Dühring’s lends itself towards the critique and even eradication of institutions and other entities of society.

(*Entwicklungsgesetze*).<sup>494</sup> These laws refer to “conscious organization and the effects of economic and social understanding”. They are changeable and capable of development as history progresses.<sup>495</sup> Laws of Development are important, he believes, as they secure that certain societal entities are not seen as having an unchangeable status, as is often the case.<sup>496</sup>

In light of the two different types of “laws” affecting the phenomena of economics, Dühring finds it necessary to create a division of labor, so to speak, for perceiving economic phenomena. The two main categories of his system become “production”, which follows laws of nature in the strict sense, and “distribution”, which corresponds to the factor of the political laws. These two categories are, in his opinion, the basis of all economic management and all economic phenomena should be considered in relationship to them. Production and distribution are the outermost measures of division for the portrayal of economic processes and phenomena. Dühring writes:

The production of the means of existence through work applied to nature is apparently the first and simplest thought, best exemplified by a single imaginary person isolated in nature from his own kind, and by a great collective subject, called a nation, as long as the latter is not concerned with classes, groups and individuals. On the other hand, if you ask about quantities in which the means of existence are available to the different elements of society, there you have the practical and theoretical problem of distribution.<sup>497</sup>

Whereas before his time different means of income such as salary, interest, rents were traditionally considered by political economy to involve laws of production, Dühring categorizes them under the concept of distribution, thus seeing them as involving political-social conditions. The strictly individual consideration, be it one isolated person (like Robinson Crusoe on an island) or a single nation seen as a united whole, can be considered in a vacuum, but in the actual development of history other individuals and other nations come into play, influencing the course of the economic development. In theory, trade between different parties can take place on even terms; in reality, power and politics come into play. Ultimately, according to Dühring, the factor of coercion and repression are decisive.<sup>498</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> Cf. Binder, SSED, 52-53 and also Albrecht, ED, 138-139.

<sup>495</sup> CNS, 66. Binder emphasizes that by conceiving Laws of Development, Dühring distances himself from the classical school of economics and, despite the recognition he gives to *laissez faire* principles, is “basically on socialist grounds”. SSED, 52.

<sup>496</sup> Preiser suggests that they would be better termed “main features of development” or at least “historical laws”. Cf. Erich Preiser, *National-Ökonomie Heute. Eine Einführung in die Volkswirtschaftslehre* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1963), 31-32.

<sup>497</sup> CNS, 14-16.

<sup>498</sup> As shown in our portrayal of his philosophy above, Dühring has strong preponderance for pessimism, which is clearly seen in this pillar of his economic theory. Although he recognizes the need for hierarchy and

Aside from recognizing political factors that influence the economy, Dühring places heavy emphasis on factual data and quantitative considerations. Regarding the former, the German historical school of political economy – and German historicism in general – made great strides in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Despite his attacks on what he terms “pseudo- historicism”, he is quick to recognize the significance of the historical in political economy. He admits that the historical school filled in a gap by collecting important facts from the past, not only in political economy, but especially in the field of law. Facts are, however, not to be accepted passively, but should be viewed critically and utilized for gaining insight into regularities in the economic process; factual data should not remain isolated, but rather should be applied with specific, unified aspects in mind. Like Carey, he holds that quantitative considerations of the facts are of the utmost importance. He considers the size ratios of economic life to be the main critical principle of his economic teachings and, in this respect, Albrecht sees Dühring as a “precursor of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s development towards quantitative analysis”.<sup>499</sup> The quantitative method is especially important when trying to verify causal connections in the facts of economic life. Without a concise estimate of the size it is next to impossible for research to command the overflow of data. Dühring therefore gives importance to statistical figures, which are to be complemented by intellectual insight. Albrecht cites Dühring’s critique of Ricardo’s ground rent theory as an application of the quantitative method.<sup>500</sup>

As mentioned, for Dühring, the goal of all economic management is the fulfillment of material human needs. Regardless of whether economic activity is considered from the perspective of production or distribution, political economy must deal with the concepts of *prosperity* and *wealth*. “Prosperity” is a general term defined as a level to which needs are naturally formed and can be purposefully satisfied without overburdening the workforce; as a general societal phenomenon it applies to the needs of owners as it does to those of workers. “Wealth”, on the other hand, is a term used for the purpose of political economy, and entails not only the technical power over nature, but also a social and political power of “people over people”; it can be measured on the basis of individual examples, in the same economic

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differentiation in society, he, in our opinion, mistakenly assumes that the differences in the past were due to unjust force.

<sup>499</sup> Albrecht, ED, 137. Auguste Comte was of the opinion that political economy, as a social science, should be approached with the inductive method and mathematics should be applied to the field.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid., 137-138. Although Dühring is a follower of Carey’s teaching on the progression of the cultivation of land from worse to the better soil, he admits that for Ricardo’s teachings and the principle of differentiation, it is not the order of the ground cultivation which is the decisive factor, but rather the circumstance of the revenue. Carey apparently overlooked this. If one checks the actual value of the real revenues, instead of being satisfied with establishing the fact that there is a difference in revenue, it becomes apparent that the differences are so insignificant that it is impossible to make this the cornerstone of a theory of distribution.

society, at the same time. Dühring holds that prosperity corresponds to production and wealth to distribution.<sup>501</sup>

Another basic term of political economy – to be dealt with in detail below – is the concept of “value”. Like the Austrian theory of subjective or marginal utility, which was conceived around the same time, Dühring attempts to find a sound explanation for the causes of real value estimation. Seen basically, the concept of value involves finding a measure for mutual performances and services in economic intercourse. Dühring is particularly conscious of the difference between “price” and “value”, and is of the opinion that, in the explanation of economic phenomena, only the price is relevant. The term “value”, however, is an essential component of “price”, and one of its preconditions. Value is the more general concept of the two; price, which is the expression of value in money, is a social phenomenon determined by the principle of competition and the law of supply and demand. It is explained by the basic relationship between bartered goods or services and is only an aid towards calculating value. “Value”, on the other hand, is completely independent of barter and serves as an explanation for the basic relationship of traded goods or services.<sup>502</sup>

For Dühring, the concept of “value” is to be seen in context with the phenomena of basic human needs. It has its place as a practical element of everyday life, but must also be considered from a purely scientific point of view. Both types of valuation, the practical and the theoretical, involve the same principles of estimation and, according to Dühring, a single measure of value. He defines value as “an estimation of a certain standing that objects and services have in societal intercourse”.<sup>503</sup> Value should be considered the result of an estimation of human need, on the one hand, and hindrance to production, on the other. Following Carey, he postulates value as involving efforts exerted to obtain something, and that anything which one has free access to, such as the sunlight or the air, has no value. Dühring writes: “The large or small obstacles which the different natural conditions present for the efforts to produce something – and through which large or small expenditure of economic force is needed – determines the large or small estimation of results won., i.e., in other words, the high or low value”.<sup>504</sup> It is not what something performs, but rather what we must perform in order to reach it that decides the existence and size of the value; for him,

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<sup>501</sup> CNS, 23.

<sup>502</sup> Binder, SSED, 24. See also Albrecht, *Eugen Dührings Wertlehre. Nebst einem Exkurs zur Marxschen Wertlehre* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1914), 43.

<sup>503</sup> “Der Wert ist die einem Schätzungsergebnis entsprechende Geltung, welche die wirtschaftlichen Dinge und Leistungen im Verkehr haben”. CNS, 21.

<sup>504</sup> CNS, 26. Dühring also emphasizes the importance of rarity for value. If something is rare, then the hindrance to obtaining it is also greater. *Ibid.*, 28.

*effort* is the basis of what the cost entails.<sup>505</sup> Dühring divides the hindrances into the pure “natural production value”, on the one hand, and social “political production value”, on the other. Regarding the latter, Dühring brings subjective elements into play, which are irreconcilable with Carey’s teachings. Value does not only concern barriers to production, but also the second factor of distribution plays a decisive role. He argues that the costs applied to each individual good, as well as the costs of reproduction, are the result of a *balance of costs* according to the influence of the different elements existing at a given at the time. One element is the obstacle of nature; the other is obstacle of man.<sup>506</sup> One man prevents another from access to the resource of nature through his position and demands a tribute so that the others are forced to use more individual strength than they would if they were facing the free nature directly. The factor of “position value” favoring one man over another, Dühring believes, creates a different concept of value than if only the “production value” were considered. The payment of the tribute which a person makes due to the position value lessens the value of the counter service. The actual price received for the given effort is less than it would have been if it were performed directly. Position value thus determines the basic relationship between goods and services themselves.<sup>507</sup> In the final question of the concrete measurement of value, Dühring comes to the conclusion that precious metals in the form of metal money should be used.

The scale of a society’s wealth depends on how productive a given economy is. Dühring views the concept “productivity”, to be dealt with in detail in the next section, in terms of the actual creation of something (production, pure economy) versus its profitability (distribution, political economy). Productivity signifies “the yield of the means of existence”, and production is anything that facilitates the creation of food, clothes, housing and similar conditions needed for living.<sup>508</sup> Following Carey, who was the first political economist to carefully differentiate between intellectual work and physical work in his theory, Dühring cites services, such as teaching, engineering, law, medicine, etc., which support expenditure and future production, as a part of production. Whereas productivity concerns output, profitability for Dühring is a measure of how much the individual gains from the company (analogous to wealth as opposed to prosperity). He draws conclusions for his system: the productivity of an economy is measured as being dependent on whether the production is

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<sup>505</sup> This seems to us to be a profound assessment. Value does not exist in a vacuum, but is inseparable from human behavior, i.e. human labor.

<sup>506</sup> CNS, 29. Also WCA, 116-117; and Lamberz, *Carey und Dühring. Ein Vergleich ihrer nationalökonomischen Lehren*, 63-64.

<sup>507</sup> CNS, 31-32.

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.

determined by the needs of a small group through a large mass of others' labor, or through the balanced need of the population at large. How productivity is controlled, according to the different types of consumption, takes precedence over the issue of the proportions of productivity between the main economic branches. The aspects of the most optimal means of production power, with regard to the collective economy, recede behind the general issue of the "direction of the society" and the leadership of the productivity under the existing conditions.<sup>509</sup> "Profitability" must include "productivity" (just as "wealth" includes "prosperity") because the goals of profit involve a certain level of productivity.<sup>510</sup>

### 3. *Production and Distribution*

Although he is carefully to demarcate the boundaries between the two areas and makes them separate pillars in the architectonics of his system, Dühring emphasizes that production and distribution are causally connected in such a way that each process is a precondition of the other. Whereas Carey saw production as a condition of nature, Dühring holds that it is substantially influenced by distribution, writing "it would be an unscientific endeavor to assume laws of production and laws of distribution in the sense that the conditions influencing the one do not play a role in the other".<sup>511</sup> We will first analyze the role of production in his system, which tends to represent a stable isolated factor in the economic process, before dealing with the phenomenon of distribution, which involves social factors stemming from political power. As in his approach to political economy in general, Dühring attempts to have a united perspective in dealing with these two core concepts in the processes of capitalism.

Production for Dühring includes all activities that are necessary to prepare goods and services for consumption.<sup>512</sup> It has an inherent technical priority because, seen anthropologically, humans are forced to behave in an *indirect* manner. Rather than fulfilling our needs instantly or directly, we are forced to apply abstract Reason and utilize different entities to obtain desired results. Man creates tools which are necessary to bridge the gap between thought and the fulfillment of particular needs.<sup>513</sup> Dühring uses the example of Robinson Crusoe stranded on an island with an axe at his disposal, who is at an immense advantage over a man who has

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<sup>509</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>510</sup> Dühring is particularly proud of the distinction he makes between the two terms and draws attention to this aspect of his theory in a chapter on his life achievements in his autobiography. SLF, 281.

<sup>511</sup> CNS, 69.

<sup>512</sup> KNS,18. He divides his analysis into three "general laws" which apply to the process: 1) equipping the workforce and division of labor 2) distance and transport 3) population and the depletion of natural resources. See the section "Allgemeinste Gesetze – Erste Gruppe. Bedingungen der Produktivitätssteigerung" divided into three chapters: „1. Ausstattung der Menschkräfte und Arbeitsteilung. 2. Entfernung und Transport. 3. Bevölkerung und Erschöpfung der Hilfsquellen“, in CNS, 65-102. Cf. the analysis of Albrecht, ED, 174-188.

<sup>513</sup> Cf. Arnold Gehlen, *Urmensch und Spätkultur. Philosophische Ergebnisse und Aussagen*, 11-12.

only his hands. In industrial society, technological machinery evolves through the development of collective societal needs; technology relieves pressure and enables society to overcome the resistance of nature in order for our needs to be met. Machinery is created to surmount this resistance by expanding the means of human activity; thus technology becomes economic in its origin and goal. Dühring sees it as a mark of all economic progress:

If one wishes to have an elementary formula for the law of machinery or armament, it could be formulated as follows: the productivity of economic means, natural resources, and manpower is increased by inventions and discoveries, and this occurs, namely, completely independent of distribution, which may experience or make decisive changes, but which does not determine the character of the main result.<sup>514</sup>

But exactly how and why does technical progress come about? Dühring's perspective has an affinity with the views later held by the French Nobel Prize winner Alexis Carrel (1873-1944), whose book *Man, the Unknown* contained the thesis that humans reach their highest potential through antagonism.<sup>515</sup> Dühring is of the opinion that industrial technology developed in Europe as opposed to Asia and tropical countries due to the more meager conditions of nature, which forced man from being a "suckling of nature" towards learning to control it and channel its energy. He writes:

Man, instead of remaining a passive being at the mercy of nature, became an active, self-reliant power which no longer looked at nature with servile reverence. He came to know his external environment as a mere tool and put the study of the laws of nature in place of hope and fear. He replaced the art of magic, the incantation of the cult with the great art of technology, of active intervention and of culture.<sup>516</sup>

Economic progress is, according to Dühring, not dependent on capital, but rather on the abilities and the will of citizens to make the creation of capital technically possible. Like the Stoics and Cicero, Dühring speaks of man's "second nature"; for him, this involves everything which man creates to free himself from the chains of nature and to achieve progress. Thus the advance of technology, in and of itself, i.e. in its pure isolated form, is seen in a positive light, although in Dühring's opinion its advantages have not been shared with the lower classes. The fact that technology has even hurt the workers by taking jobs away from them is not, he believes, a factor of production itself, but rather a problem of distribution.<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> CNS, 71. Dühring reproaches Adam Smith for not taking technology into consideration. Ibid., 70.

<sup>515</sup> Carrel, *Man, the Unknown* (West Drayton, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1948). Also Gehlen, *Der Mensch*, 429-431.

<sup>516</sup> CNS, 74-75.

<sup>517</sup> CNS, 78.

The next precondition of a sound economy is the institution of the *division of labor*, which Dühring understands to be the specialization of different professions. There are two different divisions of labor; one is the strict sense of dividing certain procedures in as many small parts as possible to improve efficiency (as emphasized by Adam Smith). The other is in the broad sense of dividing economic functions into different professions whose main branches are agriculture, industry and trade.<sup>518</sup> Division of labor is a normal and indeed unavoidable prerequisite of economic development. Specialization in general is a necessary factor of all economic activity, and where a person chooses a profession, it should be according to his or her aptitude – a statement which stands in direct contrast to the perspective of Marxism, which condemned the division of labor as evil on the ground that it deprived freedom.<sup>519</sup>

The concept of the division of labor, Dühring writes, should be carefully distinguished from the Law of Division of Labor. The latter dictates that the separation of professions and the dissection of the different professional activities increase the productivity of labor, and that the productiveness of human efforts advances according to the level of specialization. Whereas the concept of division of labor dates back thousands of years, the Law of Division of Labor is, in Dühring's opinion, an exclusively modern phenomenon because it is dependent on a certain level of technological advancement.<sup>520</sup> He is opposed to divisions of function, which are based on political factors involving coercion in one form or another, although admitting that such societal conditions have their place in organizing a pure division of labor.<sup>521</sup> Coercion can also face an entire nation: the benefits of an international division of labor, advocated by the free trading school, are therefore downplayed in favor of interprovincial divisions (in agricultural and industrial provinces), which he sees as being more important. He writes that “the one-sided theory of an international division of labor, in which the all round training of intra-national abilities are ignored and are partially suppressed is far more a dogma of the monopoly of industry and trade of individual countries than a plausible principle based on pure science”.<sup>522</sup>

The negative side-effects of the division of labor highlighted by Marxists and other socialists who see the worker becoming a slave of the machine through specialized work are, according

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<sup>518</sup> Ibid.

<sup>519</sup> Cf. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, 188. Tucker writes that Marx never abandoned the idea that occupational specialization was a form of slavery. Engels wrote in “Anti-Dühring”: “In the division of labour, man is also divided. All other physical and mental faculties are sacrificed to the development of one single activity. This stunting of man's faculties grows in the same measure as the division of labour, which attains its highest development in manufacture”. Quoted from *ibid.*, 189.

<sup>520</sup> CNS, 80.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*, 81 and also 273-274.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

to Dühring, in reality a result of societal coercion and not the division of labor itself. When suppression is removed from society, the institution of the division of labor is a natural institution which does not infringe on human dignity.<sup>523</sup>

The second chapter of Dühring's treatment of production involves distances and transport. Transportation is far more than a mere aid to trade: it is a *producing power* of decisive significance. Lack of sufficient transportation is a barrier to cooperation.<sup>524</sup> The creation and improvement of means of transportation are positive factors for increasing economic activity. Dühring writes, "Space and transport are two of the main causes through which the cooperation of productive forces are either thwarted or supported".<sup>525</sup> Natural barriers to transportation can only be overcome through the power of production, created through the increase in the density of the population. This new force has its limits when the work and money involved in the transport outweigh the given capacity of consumption. Expressing his philosophy's affinity for the finite, Dühring envisions a "closing phase" of economic development. This applies for each product as it does for productive development. Division of labor and the development of transportation are more favorable towards increasing production within smaller areas than within larger ones. He writes that there is "no substantial production without sufficient means of transporting masses of material to other locations, and no development to the highest level without the eradication of great distances between the main branches of supply and demand!"<sup>526</sup> The original groupings of economic activity are based on the natural barriers to transportation, such as mountain ranges, great bodies of water, etc., which make themselves felt even in the later stages of economic development. Although the overcoming of barriers to transportation enables a further division of labor between previously isolated economic areas, Dühring emphasizes that its most productive application is within local boundaries. He writes:

It would be a mistake to believe that the progress of culture will enable long-distance transport to be improved to the degree that a maximum productiveness can be achieved through the interaction of productive forces between remote points. On the contrary, this maximum productivity is to be found in the opposite direction. The greatest results are achieved not by

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<sup>523</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>524</sup> Albrecht emphasizes that the logistical factor of the division of labor had been overlooked until the days of Dühring's role model, Friedrich List, who saw the expansion of economic activity as a positive phenomenon for economic growth. ED, 179.

<sup>525</sup> CNS, 97.

<sup>526</sup> CNS, 3rd edition, 94. Dühring touches here on the theory of industrial location (*industrielle Standortlehre*), which had been developed by Thünen and was later expanded upon by Roscher and Alfred Weber. The latter, similar to Dühring, concentrated on creating cost advantages for businesses. Cf. Weber, *Über den Standort der Industrien, Teil I., Reine Theorie des Standorts* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1922).

overcoming great distances, but rather by localizing the division of labor itself, in other words, by forming a closer framework for the most diverse organization possible.<sup>527</sup>

The nature of transport and its costs, according to Dühring, dictate that the highest productivity comes from localization, for which local traffic is the most economic.

The natural art, on which the organization of political economy is based, finds its ultimate purpose not only through world trade, which is a one-sided expression of its power, but rather through local development of internally organized economic groups in which the circulation of transportation becomes more and more self-sufficient and offers its own richly shaped life.<sup>528</sup>

Already in the mid 1870s, Dühring exhibits skepticism towards globalization in terms of the possibility of united cooperation among nations. In his opinion, an economy can be stimulated by expanding world trade to remote corners of the globe, but domestic factors will determine how productive it can be. Its output may become more diverse, but an international division of labor is never an end in itself to reach the highest productivity of a world economy.<sup>529</sup> The opposition between the agrarian and commercial sectors remains, according to Dühring, a challenge for the organization of economic commerce. The best option for commercial gain is to be joined to the source of agriculture and raw materials (e.g. coal and ore). Although primary production, i.e. the direct transmission of raw materials into use for industry, is an asset for a country, Dühring emphasizes that a one-sided development of the primary sector can become a disadvantage when the commercial sector remains underdeveloped. If this is the case, then large amounts of raw materials will have to be transported to faraway places at relatively low prices. Economies based around primary production must therefore gravitate naturally towards creating their own industries with a division of labor in order to have a market within the proximity of the production.

From this perspective, Dühring uses the terms “extension” and “intensity” of political economy according to whether the division of labor is scattered or not connected with one another or whether it is united and brought into cooperation as directly as possible. Extension involves the scattering of people and their production over wide, sparsely populated areas; communities remain small, isolated, and there is little chance of mutual economic stimulation taking place. Intensity entails a concentration of the population and strong differentiation of production, as well as technical and societal meshing of different forces.

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<sup>527</sup> CNS, 92.

<sup>528</sup> CNS, 92-93.

<sup>529</sup> Albrecht, ED, 181.

The two types of economies exhibit extremely different types of developmental features. In the extensively developed economy, the trade of the different scattered elements is “sucked in” to a single centralized point. The centers are dominated by unproductive trade, whose existence is based on absorbing and suppressing opposing isolated circles. Dühring warns of an unhealthy economic centralization which, much like political centralization, thwarts dynamic forces of local autonomy. An intensive political economy, on the other hand, allows for a localization of power through which a concentration of all available and still to be created means of production can be connected; it allows for the creation of a decentralized nucleus and healthy commerce, which creates more productive power.<sup>530</sup>

The idea of economic self-reliance, as we have seen, is a cornerstone of Dühring’s theoretical considerations of economic activity. A collective economy leads to its highest levels of production when the smaller economic entities converge, allowing themselves to become independent before connecting with other entities. The individual entities should diversify and develop a division of labor which will allow them to become independent. Points of production and markets have to be as close as possible to one another before the division of labor can increase productivity over wider areas. As essential as transport and minimizing distances travelled are for localizing and centralizing economic life, Dühring emphasizes that “pure politics” are an even more decisive factor. You will never be able to sustain political freedom in the long term, he holds, if economic independence is not the basis of the economy. By the same token, you will never be able to achieve economic localization if you cannot create the possibility for small circles to have an active interest in determining their own fate.<sup>531</sup> The ideas of political freedom and economic freedom therefore belong together, as do the concepts of centralization and decentralization. “Concentration” and “localization” go hand in hand and represent healthy organization. Intensive division of labor, he believes, should be the goal of all political economy.<sup>532</sup>

The third group of economic laws of production involves the strengthening of productive forces through *population increase*. Here, Dühring’s ideas are based on the work of Carey and List that were directed towards contradicting the thesis of Malthus that the population tends to increase faster than the means of production; for List and Carey, production is determined by

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<sup>530</sup> CNS, 100.

<sup>531</sup> CNS, 101.

<sup>532</sup> “Unter Voraussetzung eines solchen Sprachgebrauchs würden Concentration und Localisation im Politischen wie im Wirtschaftlichen mit einander vereinbar und eigentlich nichts weiter als seine, doppelt verzweigte Thätigkeit sein, die aller natürlichen und gesunden Organisation zu Grunde liegt. In diesem Sinne würde die intensive, nicht die extensive Arbeitsteilung das letzte Ziel der Volkswirtschaft bleiben”. Ibid., 102.

the *needs* of the population and a larger population expands the means of production. This position had previously been held by J. H. G. von Justi (1741-1791), who wrote, “As a country can never have enough inhabitants, it is above all imperative to support increasing the population wherever possible”.<sup>533</sup> Dühring sees increasing the population as a chance to maximize organizing power and to unite people to take common action and strengthen society.<sup>534</sup> The increase of man power, which applies strengthened effort to the forces of nature in order to manage the work, will result in the growth in production yield as relates to the expansion of the needs created by the increase in population. If the natural aids of production are depleted, then this principle may not hold.

There are, however, certain factors which limit the growth of a population. If population growth is at all feasible depends on advances in the possibilities of application of technical means, which are largely determined by the extent of the commercial development of a country. Moreover, connecting the means of organized power with high-tech installation can only be effective if the process is able to outperform the traditionally changed economic structure. Every condition of the collective economic structure possesses a maximal capacity for the population. An extension of the capacity of the population is not possible without the economic structure being changed into a new form which has new possibilities for the exploitation of organized power being created by the population increase and high-tech installation.

List and Carey had drawn attention to the fact that each type of economic framework, e.g. agrarian, industrial, etc., has a certain population capacity; Marx had also emphasized the limits of population growth.<sup>535</sup> Dühring gives List credit for having given great consideration to the growth of agricultural and industrial societies, and for having determined that, even under the same sources of natural resources, an industrial state has a substantially higher capacity of population expansion.<sup>536</sup> The direct resources available are not as important as the way that labor is organized, i.e. how man’s existence is secured through the administration of productive forces. Dühring was sure that man is more dependent on himself than he is on nature, and calls again for self-reliance in matters of economics. Complementing List, he writes that an economic area which is diverse and well-rounded has a higher capacity than one

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<sup>533</sup> Quoted from Mombert, *Geschichte der Nationalökonomie*, 188. This is also in line with the traditional cameralist position, as for example advocated by Theodore Ludwig Lau (1670-1740), that populousness breeds prosperity. Cf. *Entwurf einer wohl-eingerichteten Policey* (Frankfurt am Main: F. Förster, 1717).

<sup>534</sup> CNS, 102. Broczyner calls this “the core of Dühring’s positive concept”. *Die sozialistischen Systeme von Hertzka und Oppenheimer in ihrer Abhängigkeit von Eugen Dühring*, 36.

<sup>535</sup> Marx, *Das Kapital*, 675 et seq.

<sup>536</sup> CNS, 108.

which has a relatively one-sided commercial character; an industrial state which exports its own or foreign agricultural products in processed form is better off than one which only covers its own needs. An economy based on agriculture has a relatively limited possibility to expand; virgin soil is cultivated very slowly. The expansion of the population is extremely limited, even when its natural resources are not used up. As mentioned on several occasions, Dühring believes that the Malthusian thesis that the population increases faster than the food supply has been refuted; the threat of a rapid expansion of the population has been overestimated. The only means for this occurring is where factory-produced goods can be exchanged with a more developed economy; this would, however, be a very costly procedure.<sup>537</sup> An increase in population should come naturally through the creation of a domestic industry. The industry becomes beneficial for agriculture and allows natural resources to be utilized more productively than before. The agricultural sector can also trade its products for more useful industrial products as the great distance that had to be overcome is minimized and less of the profit has to be paid towards transportation. Additionally, the business that was given to a foreign economy is now kept in the domestic market. Dühring sees this as a natural development which progresses in a path of least resistance.<sup>538</sup>

The social structure of an economy is also decisive for the size of the population. An economy with a system of wage earning, for example, is more productive than a system of slavery or indentured service; a larger country in which there is a balance in earnings between the propertied and working classes is more productive than one which has an uneven distribution of wealth. Dühring writes, “Higher wages place the focus of industry increasingly on its own market, which is formed through the broad sections of the population”.<sup>539</sup> He foresees a future in which the capacity of the population is increased and in which the difference between capital and labor is minimized, while the highest level of production and consumption is attained under the leadership of an industry continuously balanced between producers.<sup>540</sup> He does not, however, believe that the population can be increased forever; as in his philosophy, where every number is exact and finite and conforms to the “law of the determinate number”, the population also has its limit. This limit is, however, not connected to the conditions of production as it was for Malthus, but rather a question of space on the planet. The size of the population is not to be determined through mathematical equations.<sup>541</sup> He is confident that

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<sup>537</sup> Ibid., 111-112.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid., 117. Also see Albrecht, ED, 187.

<sup>541</sup> CNS, 199-120.

man will not be at the whim of nature, but rather can rationally manage the size of the population. With regard to the depletion of agricultural resources, which played a key role in Malthus' teachings, Dühring, like List and Carey, is sure that technology will step in to create better farming land.<sup>542</sup>

Jean Paul, the German romantic poet, once remarked that “only through man does man enter into the light of day” (*Wunderbare Gesellschaft in der Neujahrsnacht*). An economy can only begin to develop through human interaction. Whereas the Laws of Production deal with man's relationship to nature, in Dühring's system, the Laws of Distribution have a political character and concern the relationship of man to man and human groups in competition with each other. Capitalist theorists have generally tended to downplay distribution, but Dühring, like the Russian economist Michael Tugan-Baranowsky (1865-1919), gives the process a prominent place in the collective theory of political economy.<sup>543</sup> Distribution has always been a major issue for socialists, building for them a point of departure from which a more just society can be pursued.<sup>544</sup> In terms of the Philosophy of the Actual, as we have mentioned, production relates to nature and knowledge, distribution to freedom and desire. *Pure laws* of nature relate to production, and the *political laws* of human history apply to distribution.<sup>545</sup>

Dühring is in agreement with Adam Smith and the classical school of political economy that nothing occurs in economics without material interests.<sup>546</sup> Interests involve the fulfillment of needs as well as the will to increase economic power. The pursuit of one's interest results in another key factor of economic activity: competition. Competition is defined as the “basic condition of the simultaneous perception of the same interests by different individuals, who, independently from one another, pursue the same purpose”.<sup>547</sup> It keeps individuals in check as men are forced to give up or redefine their financial ambitions, if they are to sustain sustenance at all. The competition for supplies or markets involves a type of struggle through which every consumer looks for his own advantage at the cost of the other consumers.

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<sup>542</sup> To List and Carey's credit, this did happen with the advent of fertilizer, which was developed through the chemical discoveries of Justus von Liebig (1803-1873).

<sup>543</sup> Cf. Michael Tugan-Baranokowski, *Soziale Theorie der Verteilung* (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1913).

<sup>544</sup> Pointed out by Ludwig von Mises in *Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis*. Translated by J. Kahane (Auburn, Alabama: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2009), 154 et seq.

<sup>545</sup> As with those of production, Dühring handles the laws of distribution into three chapters: 1) the principle of interest and law of supply and demand. 2) Ground rents, capital profit and working wages. 3) Mutual conditions of income. See section three of *Cursus of National and Social Economy*, “Allgemeine Gesetze. – Zweite Gruppe. Interesse, Concurrenz und Verteilung” divided into three chapters: 1. “Interessenprinzip und Gesetz von Angebot und Nachfrage” 2. “Bodenrente, Capitalgewinn und Arbeitslohn” 3. “Gegenseitige Verhältnisse der Einkünftsearten”. See also Albrecht, ED, 188-200.

<sup>546</sup> CSN, 124.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid., 137.

The principle of competition brings forth a Law of Supply and Demand. Demand is something different than a mere need; only needs which are accompanied by buying power and a will to buy something are of interest in political economy. Demand is increased in correlation to the level of a price; the relationship between a service and return service is altered by a change in size of supply and demand's relationship.<sup>548</sup> The theory of value explains the relationship between service and return service; the Law of Supply and Demand, for Dühring, compares a "past" and a "present". His approach here can be labeled historical: he rejects the idea of an equilibrium, which Carey had postulated, in favor of simple observation of past successive conditions. The size of the service and return is fully dependent on the size of the relationship of supply and demand, a fact which can be derived empirically. Dühring speaks of "inner causes" which apparently stem from individual motivation and are connected with the factor of competition.<sup>549</sup>

If there were only two competitors, representing two main interests, squaring off against each other, there would be an evenly proportional exchange in service. In reality, numerous buyers and sellers compete with one another.<sup>550</sup> If the need for a product is lessened substantially, it is in the interest of the entrepreneur to speed up his production to outdo the others in order for more pressure to be put on the size of the service or counter service as it would have been without a competitor.<sup>551</sup> Thus the consideration of changes in the relationship from supply and demand, as well as that of the individual competition among suppliers and consumers, is necessary for knowledge of shaping prices.<sup>552</sup>

With regard to competition between suppliers and consumers, the *urgency* of demand and the offer, as well as the *balance of economic power*, needs to be considered.<sup>553</sup> A shortage of stocks of important goods creates economic power for the supplier, a shortage of demand economic power for the consumer. The power on both sides of the equation is a precondition of any form of acquisition, of economic taxation, or of exploitation, which is, according to Dühring, to a certain degree natural and not the result of societal malformations. Individual competition works in the same direction, due to the existing conditions of ownership. The wealthier elements of society hold on to their control of supply in light of a shortage of stocks, thereby retaining their consumption of the most sought-after articles under the most miserable

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<sup>548</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>549</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>550</sup> This is a core concept of Carey's teachings, which Dühring draws attention to in one of his early publications in the *Vossische Zeitung*. "Carey als Arbeiterökonom," 2-4.

<sup>551</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>552</sup> Albrecht, ED, 190.

<sup>553</sup> CNS, 143.

conditions. This increases the power of the seller to demand high prices that are out of proportion.<sup>554</sup>

Although Dühring is otherwise disinclined to sanction the authority of government, when it comes to the most urgent needs of the public, he believes an “organizing power” is needed – a position which reveals his inherent rationalism, we will add. Competition, he emphasizes, does not operate under the same conditions, but rather according to the existing economic *balance of power*. Nature itself creates a limit for the possibility of free competition. He cites England’s position as an island as unfair conditions for competition and the reason for its long-standing monopoly of world trade. With individuals and societal groupings it is no different; fair competition remains the exception. According to Dühring, political economy has either neglected the unequal conditions of trading completely or refused to see the causal connections of economic, social, and political differences with regard to available opportunity.<sup>555</sup>

Generally, the existence of free competition, or even the perception of free competition, works against every type of monopoly positioning. As a realist, Dühring sees, however, that there is a tendency towards monopolies, which are created by nature; all competition proceeds on regulated courses, and contains substantial inequality to some degree. Monopolies, artificially created by men, take form when competition is cornered in a centralized fashion and few enterprises control the market.<sup>556</sup> As there are monopolies, or near monopolies, in almost all types and levels of economic commerce, competition is far from free and therefore the chances of harmonically balancing it and making it truly free are, at best, limited.

He criticizes the idea that the relationship between supply and demand is intrinsically connected, as had been postulated by the classical school of economics. In reality, he holds, there are two different directions, one of progress and expansion, the other of regression and of limitation. Expansive movement is when there is more competition in production than there is among consumers; the other way around, when the demand outweighs production,

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<sup>554</sup> Following the lead of Dühring and Oppenheimer, the question of power in economics was taken by the Japanese economist Yasuma Takata (1883-1971). Takata, a controversial scholar in his own right, was a pronounced anti-Marxist and lost his position at Kyoto University in 1946. Cf. *Power Theory of Economics*, trans. Douglas W. Anthony (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995).

<sup>555</sup> CNS, 160.

<sup>556</sup> CNS, 162. Jane Robinson argued that ultimate free trade and monopolies were not alternatives, but rather extremes which hardly exist in reality. Towards the end of her life she became critical of classical economics, without referring to the early critique of the British school by Carey, List, and Dühring. Cf. Robinson, *The Economics of Imperfect Competition* (London: Macmillan, 1969).

competition is ruinous in every respect.<sup>557</sup> A progressive condition of political economy is therefore one where, under the prevailing economic order, the demand for workers is ahead of the supply; supply ahead of the working force characterizes an economic regression. The existing balance between those seeking work and those looking for work does not need to be significantly disrupted, “but it is necessary that in the moving adjustment of this balance the increase is on the demand for labor”. The other way around is, for Dühring, a sign of “depletion and corruption”.<sup>558</sup> The changes which come about according to the direction of the development for the level of wages are, according to Dühring, determined not by competition, but by the collective conditions of the economy, and secondarily through individual competition, which in a regressive economy influences the offer of labor more than the demand of it. To ignore the factor of production and place sole emphasis on the interplay of economic agents, as the theory of free competition presupposes, without considering the framework conditions is, in Dühring’s opinion, meager.

Competition, in Dühring’s opinion, does not cause consumption to be adjusted to production. In reality, the limits applying to production and consumption are to be found in the general basic laws of increasing productivity as well as in social subordination. He writes:

Competition cannot encourage production where the latter is forced to stop due to a lack of technological power or other preconditions. The factor of motivation first becomes possible the other way around in that expanding the dimensions of production is decisive. A demand for goods, which begins to surpass the supply, up to now, is the only condition in which one can continue to imagine a power of competition which would enhance production. However, this demand for the necessities of life and the corresponding power of competition cannot exist if those who come to the market as consumers cannot come up with the money. Where is the ability for extended purchasing, the ability to pay higher prices - the effective, i.e. solvent demand, as Adam Smith called it – supposed to come from if not from an extension of the usage of manpower?<sup>559</sup>

Thus production determines competition, and not the other way around. It is not “free competition”, according to Dühring, which creates a harmonic balance of interests, but rather production which decides the possibility of such a balance according to its own laws. The law of competition is restricted to the explanation of the level of prices, and certain less important changes and vicissitudes.

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<sup>557</sup> CNS, 146.

<sup>558</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>559</sup> CNS, 148.

A second group of distribution laws concerns the three main forms of earnings: ground rent, capital profit, and working wages. Dühring divides these earnings according to their social-economic nature into *rents* and *capital interest* on one side, and *wages* on the other. The former are tributes given to the owner of land for the use of his property and his role as “master” over a certain amount of workers dependent on him. Wages, on the other hand, are the payment for the workers support. Rents and wages are inherently connected to the given social order of history up to the present. Dühring writes, “Rent of possession and payment of wages belong together. The one belongs to the other, and both progress alongside one another throughout history without ever equalization or convergence being possible”.<sup>560</sup> Wages are not an appropriate retribution for a service rendered in the production process, but rather are a payment through which the support and continuation of work is secured.<sup>561</sup> Dühring insists that the support and production costs change by necessity according to the different amounts, the time and place, and the type of service.<sup>562</sup> He rejects Ricardo’s loan equalization to the level of the sustenance, reasoning that the time difference between a pay raise or cut and the increase or decrease in the birthrate make it too inexact for it to have scientific validity. Dühring defines labor, as it relates to wages, as any activity towards overcoming economic obstacles, from the lowest to the highest variety, in as far as they can be conceived differently from the functions of ground and capital ownership; this includes the activities of a manual laborer as well as those of the industrial civil servant. The differentiation in the payment for different activities, rejected by many socialist doctrines, results from the given costs though which higher qualification is originally created. Dühring tries to explain the general increase of the actual level of wages throughout history: with the progression of the economy, different qualifications of work develop, and thus the cost of training increases. In a progressing economy, the demand for labor increases at the same time so that, in the interplay between supply and demand, the balance tips towards the price of labor. The progression of an economy following its laws of production, as Dühring sees it, is the primary reason for the increase of wages; the law of competition is not a factor. The decisive point is that work only receives a payment for its dependence on property, while property claims the service surplus for itself. This is similar to the Marxist concept of *surplus value*.<sup>563</sup>

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<sup>560</sup> CNS, 201. Dühring’s use of the term “rent of possession” (*Besitzrente*) is criticized by Engels, who believes that it is the equivalent of what Marx calls “surplus value” and Rodbertus simply calls “rent”. Engels, *Herr Dühring’s Revolution in Science*, 244.

<sup>561</sup> CNS, 191.

<sup>562</sup> As Albrecht points out, this definition is reminiscent of Ricardo. ED, 195.

<sup>563</sup> This is pointed out by Albrecht. *Ibid.*, 196. Engels is of the same opinion. *Herr Eugen Dühring’s Revolution in Science*, 244.

“Ground rent” is the income that an owner receives for his property. Dühring views the category differently than the theoreticians of the classical school in that for him ground rent comes into existence historically through the use of force. According to Ricardo, rent was to be calculated corresponding to the differences in fertility of the different lands, i.e. the differing amounts that the land could yield; any costs incurred for the improvement of the land by the owner were to be added on to the rent. Ricardo wrote:

If of two adjoining farms of the same extent and of the same natural fertility one had all the conveniences of farming buildings, were, besides, properly drained and manured, and advantageously divided by hedges, fences, and walls, while the other had none of these advantages, more remuneration would naturally be paid for the use of one than for the use of the other; yet in both cases this remuneration would be called rent.<sup>564</sup>

Thus there is one portion of rent paid for the use of land, i.e. “the original power of the land”, and another paid for the use of capital. Dühring gives a completely different explanation. Recreating an original state where the first men conquered other men and subjugated them under their control, he postulates that only a one-sided usage of force can create rent. He writes, “The subjugation of the workforce is in this sense also a reason for rent when there is no mention of a sale of products and the earnings delivers products and not money”.<sup>565</sup> What is for Ricardo a tribute for a level of expenditure and investment given is for Dühring power based on subjugation. The subjugation of labor for him is the origin of rent, even when there is no sale brought forth from the land. Ground rent is to be found “where farming takes place through some form of subjugation of work. The political and social character of the original formation of rent is hereby illustrated”.<sup>566</sup>

Capital gain is the net income of an enterprise in which a certain amount of means of production exist.<sup>567</sup> It is a company’s net income, minus the running costs of the means of production working in the company. Its main character is the acquisition of the revenue of a workforce and can be considered another form of property income. Dühring rejects any theory of production in which the capital gain is seen as a payment for the technical machinery of work: the fact that pure work becomes more productive, being boosted by technical machinery, in his opinion, does not give the “dead machines” a claim to absorb more than

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<sup>564</sup> Quoted from Edwin Cannan, *A History of the Theories of Production and Distribution in English Political Economy from 1776 to 1848* (London: Percival and Co., 1893), 194-195.

<sup>565</sup> CNS, 170.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid., 181.

what is necessary for their reproduction.<sup>568</sup> Natural capital, in the sense of technology and tools applied to enhance production is needed in every form of economics, but the concern for its reproduction and proliferation should not be confused with the creation of capital gain, which to Dühring is an inherently different process.<sup>569</sup> Dühring is vehement that capital profit also not be considered a compensation for the dangers involved in the application of capital. If capital profit were to be seen as remuneration for risk taken, it would have to be considered primarily the result of the acquisition of a part of the work in the enterprise, i.e. a result of the dependency of labor on the owner of the means of production. It is in reality, he concludes, not a part of the scheme of pure production, but rather a matter of distribution, resulting from social conditions and the power structure of society.

From the matrix of economic power which capital represents, there is a second form to be reckoned with: loan capital. Loan capital, in Dühring's opinion, is based on the extension of the possibility to institute ground rent and capital gain, which, he believes, is a result of historical development and should be viewed as such; the main issue in this "system of income" is the factor of interest.<sup>570</sup> As Binder points out Dühring has a narrower view of interest than most economists: it is seen merely as a return service for the lending of capital.<sup>571</sup> Dühring rejects the ideas that interest is a reward for "wavering one's right of usage" or for the "difference in value from current and future services". It is also not "transferring one's own power" to another individual. The real reason for borrowing rates ultimately stems from one-sided collection of wealth based on the right of property.<sup>572</sup> This was made possible through an unjust acquisition of the labor of others (*fremde Arbeitskraft*), i.e. through political subjugation. All explanations and justifications of interest through production are, in his opinion, indefensible and invalid. Just as the control of land is only possible through the ruling of people, capital ownership has no other practical significance than the indirect violence (*Gewalt*) over people.<sup>573</sup> Although he was to qualify this position in the third and fourth version of *Cursus* by holding that there was "just" and an "unjust" interest, the fight against interest – seen as unjust authority - is a step towards emancipation.

#### 4. *Valuation and Money*

Dühring's basic concept of value has been briefly dealt with above. Value, which always has to be distinguished from price, is an estimation which must take two factors into consideration: firstly, the ability to fulfill a certain need and secondly, the amount of

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<sup>568</sup> Ibid. 183 Also Albrecht, ED, 198.

<sup>569</sup> CNS, 183.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>571</sup> Binder, SSED, 28.

<sup>572</sup> Albrecht, ED, 199.

<sup>573</sup> CNS, 189.

resistance one needs to overcome in order to produce something. The former is what Dühring terms a subjective estimation and is individual from case to case; the latter pertains to objective or material elements and can be divided into the two areas of natural resistance (production value) and human resistance (position value). The term value, he believes, should be used extremely carefully in political economy, as there are great misconceptions of what it exactly entails. The problem is that the word is inherently connected with a purpose, and nearly inevitably contains wishful thinking. He prefers the word “*Geltung*” which translated into English involves “validity” as well as a certain “application”; as Albrecht points out, it emphasizes the difficulty of acquiring the object obtained.<sup>574</sup> There are two possibilities of measuring profit: either it is seen as stemming from power and the ability to acquire (position value), or it is the equivalent of a service (production value). Both factors involve resistance, but with the former the resistance is nature, and with the latter it is man and social power. In Dühring’s opinion, only in the sense of the service to produce does a measurement of value take place. However, political economy, according to Dühring, involves both explanations. To mix the two principles would be to mix up the movement of the compass with the compass itself.<sup>575</sup> He sees an important role for exact valuation in science: “As the penetration into the causes of actual processes is the main consideration of all science, the theory of value deals with the causes of practical estimations of value, which means it deals with the principles of estimating actual current economic activity”.<sup>576</sup>

In dealing with the issue of value, he writes, the factor of “price” has to be considered. Prices are a reflection of social conditions and, as with value in general, they are to be seen from two sides: as exchange equivalents for services rendered (and hence a reflection of the factor of production), and also as social ties. Seen strictly objectively, the price is “the money equivalent of a good or service”. Prices are a natural and necessary element of any economic society that has application wherever costs of production emerge. The costs of production represent the “resistance to production”, which apply in the same fashion for the production value. The price is therefore the money equivalent of the production value.<sup>577</sup> Generally formulated, the value is the logical basis for the formation of prices, and no more. The basic “need” (*Bedürfnis*) and the “resistance to production” (*Beschaffungswiderstand*) are the measure of value. The resistance involved corresponds to labor, but to measure something by the amount of work involved would be foolish because it would be reducing the highly

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<sup>574</sup> Albrecht, *Eugen Dührings Wertlehre. Nebst einem Exkurs zur Marxschen Wertlehre*, 5.

<sup>575</sup> KGV, 212.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>577</sup> Binder, SSED, 24.

complex and diverse factors of human needs to one element. The forms of labor are so inherently different, Dühring writes, that to put them all under one umbrella is counter constructive. The value of labor must correspond to the specific branch of the work involved and time itself cannot be the measure because it “is something vague because its content is what is important”.<sup>578</sup>

Dühring sees a way out of the quandary in the concept of money.<sup>579</sup> Money in the form of precious metal can be a measure of labor for the simple reason that, according to Dühring, it is a good like any other and has its value in the force that is needed to obtain it, i.e. the work involved in acquiring the metal which is fixed and unified; the price that it takes on the market correspondingly becomes the measuring stick. The value of a good is determined by a comparison with the value of the metal.<sup>580</sup>

Money’s general function is to serve as a final means of balancing service and return service and to provide legal repayment of debt in general.<sup>581</sup> It has its origins in commerce and, depending on whether its scope is large or small, a world currency must take the form of metal money, or national coins, or finally paper money of a national or local scale. Money serves as a “directive” from person to person; it conveys the mechanism of service and return service moving freely in any direction. For Dühring, the universality of metal money makes it the most suitable to be used in society. He also places weight on the *finality* of paying service through money so that no other operation of consummation exists in the process of commerce, as, for example, the payment of notes.

Unlike Ricardo, as well as his predecessors and immediate successors, who gave neither “money” nor “credit” a level importance in influencing production and distribution, Dühring concerns himself with the two concepts as entities that affect the economy. Regarding the practical possibility of using notes of central national institutes as money, he distinguishes between *real* money and *credit* money. The application of money in commerce is based very generally on the “expectation” that is connected with its realization; thus it is accepted and is seen as the best means of return service. With metal money, the collateral is given by nature and cannot be traced back to any “arbitrary stipulation” (*willkürliche Übereinkunft*).<sup>582</sup> Credit

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<sup>578</sup> CNS, 3rd edition, 30. As mentioned above, Dühring originally took the time of labor into consideration.

<sup>579</sup> Binder draws attention to the factor of money as a solution to the conflict between value and labor. SSED, 26. As she points out, in the first two editions of *Cursus of National and Social Economy* (1873, 1876), working time is a valid measure of labor. In the third edition from 1894, this position is changed.

<sup>580</sup> Ibid. CNS, 3rd edition, 264.

<sup>581</sup> CNS, 41.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid., 43.

money, which had been an important entity of economic development since the early phases of capitalism, is completely different, in Dühring's opinion. Its general recognition does not stem from nature, but rather has its origins in the mutual *good will of men* to fulfill their obligations. It has the advantage over money that it is not dependent on legal conditions, as it has no liability. He does not, however, believe that a credit system is possible without a real money system. He writes, "Not even the concepts and provisions of credit figures can be thought of without referring to a valuable and needed good".<sup>583</sup> The development which led to the usage of metal as money is far from arbitrary and can be explained naturally through the constitution of precious metals. A complete dethroning of metal, even as a document for paper money, would be an arbitrary deviation from a solid and naturally founded development. He writes:

The specific value inherent in money is a mediator of estimation and measurement which is not only of real, but also scientific necessity[...] one reaches a usable general value estimation only through the role of money and namely pre-monetary money, thus by historical necessity ultimately only through precious metals which assert themselves permanently as money material.<sup>584</sup>

The concept of money thus comes to play a decisive role in his system of sociopolitical economics, and represents the ethos of his *Weltanschauung* and general bearing towards science more than perhaps any of its other theoretical elements. Dühring proceeds from the assumption that metal money can be used completely freely. To hinder someone from owning, buying, or trading any given object – and quantities of precious metal in particular – aside from any particular reason that can be legally justified – is, for him, a crime. Basic freedom is a status which precedes any other activity. The unlimited usage of money is more than an idealistic expression of the principles of his philosophy; for Dühring, it offers insight into the true contexts of economic activity. Dühring sees "fiat currencies" conjured into existence by the state as being a sign of coercion as for him money can never be an agreement or arrangement between different parties. Real money is an "institution of nature".<sup>585</sup> The advance of civilization would never have been possible without precious metals; men did not choose metals as an option to use for their own purposes, but rather, nature made this path necessary for man to follow. Austrian jurist and bank director Hermann Schwarzwald spoke of the "anti-conventionalism of Dühring's theory of money", which scorns the arbitrariness of the government's policy of printing money and creating debt that goes against a practical,

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<sup>583</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>584</sup> CNS, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 30.

<sup>585</sup> CNS, 45.

natural foundation of money.<sup>586</sup> Dühring believes it is necessary to apply the abstract isolating method to understand money and to create a monetary theory free from not only the acts of government but also from the whims of society in order to reach the “necessity of nature”.<sup>587</sup>

### 5. Critical Summary

The theoretical principles of Dühring’s system of sociopolitical economics do not only aim at applying scientific method to economic phenomena, they also involve the ethos of social reform. Unlike many socialist radicals, Dühring remains aware that it is not enough to come up with a philosophy or theory to change society. Without the necessary corollary of pragmatic action, pure theory will change nothing. It is for this reason that he looks towards the field of political economy as a means of improving society. His system contains the same structural balance between practice and theory which we have referred to above. It ambitiously aims at having a unified method for assessing economic phenomena. Political economy is defined realistically as the “material existence of individuals, groups, and nations in collective economic life”; he stresses the issue of “food security which comes through individual cooperation”.<sup>588</sup> Along with this realistic basic premise, he integrates idealistic sociopolitical contexts into his system, believing that political economy must present a “system of reference” (*Bezugssystem*) in which decisions of power are integrated alongside natural ones. A system that does not consider the preconditions, or fundamental causes, of economic activity is deficient, in his opinion. He aims to distinguish the factor of the “natural” as opposed to the “manmade”, i.e. the “pure” phenomena of nature as opposed to “social” conditions created by man. Production is seen as a pure element of the economic process, reflecting man’s relationship to nature; distribution, on the other hand, involves man’s affiliation with his fellow man. Dühring treats both elements of economic activity separately, but finally joins them together placing special accentuation on the politically determined process of distribution. The exact assessment of both factors is applied by Dühring in nearly every theoretical element of political economy he examines. Whether he is distinguishing between “wealth” and “value”, or between “money” and “price”, or contrasting “production” versus “position value”, there is a constant interplay between the factor of the “natural” versus

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<sup>586</sup> Hermann Schwarzwald, “Das Silber und das Dühringsche Gewichtsgeld,” *Sendbogen für Dühringsche Geisteshaltung und Lebensgestaltung* 66 (July 1937): 5. See also idem, *Geld für Deutschland und Österreich. Denkschrift für die Staatsmänner Deutschlands und Österreich-Ungarns anlässlich des Krieges 1914* (Vienna, 1914), 25.

<sup>587</sup> WCA, 160.

<sup>588</sup> Cf. CNS, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 3. Franz Oppenheimer criticizes Dühring’s emphasis on “material things”, which he believed hindered him from finding the mechanism of property based on force, which in Oppenheimer’s opinion was the monopoly. Oppenheimer, *Theorie der reinen und politischen Ökonomie* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1923), 205-206.

the “man-made”. This method is not only fruitful in his application of particular concepts, but it also causes him to give more attention to the important factor of tools, machinery, and technology in general – a “manmade” entity largely ignored by classical economics. Dühring, like Marx and other socialist theorists, also applies the abstract or deductive approach to economics. His system, in our opinion, rises above Marxism methodologically in that it not only addresses the issue of natural vs. manmade happenings, but also integrates the two factors into the structure of his discourse. The edifice of the system is based on a the balanced pillars of theory and practice, of nature as opposed to politics, or, as he often chooses to express it, of “knowledge” and “desire” (*Wissen und Wollen*). If the 19<sup>th</sup> century was an age of “measurement and exactness” (Adolf Max Vogt), then the architectonics of Dühring’s system are certainly an expression of the epoch.<sup>589</sup>

Despite Dühring’s attempt at a coherent approach, his method, in our opinion, cannot be considered unified in the strict sense of the term. In order to include both the political and the natural, he abandons, we believe, a truly unified natural scientific method by viewing the laws that apply to human action and the “manmade world” as being different from those applying to nature. In *Cursus of National and Social Economy* (1873), he speaks of a “difference in the way that necessity is conveyed” between laws of nature and laws effecting the realm of man.<sup>590</sup> Where Dühring otherwise strives for clarity and exactness in thinking, he, in our opinion, abandons a truly critical perspective in that he neglects, or even ignores, the basic premise of the concept of “law”, which involves the Intellect’s application of the principle of sufficient reason as an instrument of measuring causality, to the phenomena of economic activity. Human action differs from purely natural occurrences in that it is based on motivation in its different forms, but the human mind’s *means* of determining causality, the principle of sufficient reason, as Kant and especially Schopenhauer have demonstrated, remains the same regardless of what its object is. From Dühring’s uncritical perspective, logic is not a tool of Reason; it is a universal phenomenon of the Actual itself. As Reason is not fixed as a faculty of the mind, it has, according to Dühring, a dynamic of its own, which allows for “different levels of necessity”. The term “necessary” always implies a result entailing a sufficient cause. The manner in which the necessity of the human world can be

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<sup>589</sup> This clear structural division between the theoretical and the historical separates Dühring not only from Marxism, but also from the historical school. During the famous *Methodenstreit* (Battle of the Methods) of political economy of the 1880s, one of the main charges brought forth by Carl Menger against the historical school was that it did not differentiate clearly between historical and theoretical science. Annette, Wittkau, *Historismus*, 74.

<sup>590</sup> CNS, 66. Here it reads, “die Vermittlungsart der in der Menschenwelt herrschenden Notwendigkeit ist eine völlig andere”.

conveyed differently, we do not see. When Dühring postulates Laws of Development, involving necessary actions which create future events, he has, in our opinion, left the realm of pure science to presuppose certain alleged imperatives, which are vague. In so doing he is in good company, however. The German historical school also postulated the necessity of seeing all economic phenomena in a given social context and, if we go back further, Dühring's understanding of Laws of Development, as they apply to man's institutions, states, conditions, and history in the broadest sense, bears some resemblance to Hegel's concept of Objective Spirit, which Gehlen likened with his concept of institutions.<sup>591</sup> Despite the fact that Dühring's method is not clear in this case, we agree with Albrecht, who gives Dühring credit for not only having seen the significance of changeability in the social and the economic, as well as in all phenomena conditioned by man, as opposed to the immutability of nature, but also at least trying to evaluate it epistemologically.<sup>592</sup>

In his emphasis of the individual or historical, Dühring, like his mentor Carey, whose approach to economics John Chamberlain once associated with the "Promethean spirit", creates theoretical postulates which attest to the self-reliance of man.<sup>593</sup> The economy is seen in terms of "human striving": man is not held down by the "iron laws" that the pessimistic economists of his day professed. Man is able to determine his own fate. Value is not something predetermined, but is seen rather as a challenge, i.e. in terms of resistance to be overcome; it is the equivalent to what a person must do to obtain something. A certain antagonism in human matters is, for Dühring, positive and necessary. Through careful planning and effective division of labor, not only wealth but also prosperity in general can be advanced. Through organization, an economy can develop intensively to support the localization of production, which will save time and money, and will facilitate positive human association. Contradicting the pessimistic population laws postulated by Malthus, he believes that the population will increase prosperity and not hinder it. Half of a century before Henry Ford, Dühring also advocates higher wages for employees, which he believes will help production rather than thwarting it. He tries to prove that some of the fundamental tenets of capitalism, such as the doctrine of free competition, are fatally flawed. And perhaps nowhere is the Promethean character of his thought more apparent than in his concept of money: money is a human institution which is based in nature and owes its existence to no higher authority. The Philosophy of the Actual's materialist point of departure, and especially its

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<sup>591</sup> Gehlen, *Urmensch und Spätkultur*, 8.

<sup>592</sup> Albrecht, „Dührings Stellung in der Dogmengeschichte der Volkswirtschaftslehre,“ 756.

<sup>593</sup> Cf. Chamberlain, *The Roots of Capitalism*, 110-111.

inherent discomfort with abstraction, come to the forefront in his monetary theory; money can never be created at the whim of the powerful. The theoretical principles of Dühring's system of sociopolitical economics, which have served to break the shackles of authority, pave the way for the concrete reform of society.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SOCIAL IMPERATIVE

#### *1. Towards a Post-Utopian Socialism*

Political economy, in Dühring's opinion, must move forward from the realm of abstract theory into that of concrete action. If capitalism is a socially determined phenomenon, as his theory assumes, then it can be reformed and molded. The task of science is not only to determine the laws of economics and social life in order that the occurrences of the past and present can be causally explained, Dühring requires that science also be able to draw conclusions for what will happen in the impending future.<sup>594</sup> For the Philosophy of the Actual, we remember, science does not only involve "what is", but also "what ought to be". This imperative does not apply to the abstract isolated laws of nature which have universal validity, but only to social or cultural laws. For the laws that apply to man, Dühring even suggests a new nomenclature: instead of the term "sci-ence" (*Wissenschaft*), rooted in knowledge, Dühring suggests "vol-ence" (*Wollenschaft*), rooted in volition.<sup>595</sup> Utopian visions are to be replaced by authentic modern socialism, which, as Sombart pointed out, from its inception following the French Revolution to the present consisted of two main groups: the reformatory and the revolutionary.<sup>596</sup> Dühring's system clearly belongs to the former direction, whose efforts were directed towards civic activism and the advocacy of practical suggestions to better society. In "reformatory socialism", with few exceptions, it was usually practical measures which provided impetus for fundamental theoretical policy; one thinks of the ethical perspectives of Sismondi or Carlyle. Binder is of the opinion that, with Dühring, the opposite is the case: practical initiative is a corollary to his theoretical system, but not its originator.<sup>597</sup> The Philosophy of the Actual is, however, inherently orientated to the practical insofar as it is vehemently opposed to any ideas of an incognizable background of the world that misdirects men's actions. The very basis of Dühring's philosophy could therefore be seen as practical, in the negative sense, in that it warns against irrational thought and behavior not in line with things *how things really are*. If this inherently practical principle of the Actual can be accepted as theory, then it is correct that "practical suggestions serve to advance a united

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<sup>594</sup> CNS, third edition, 6-7.

<sup>595</sup> As Lamberz points out, Dühring discusses here the controversial issue of value judgments in science. Cf. *Dühring und Carey. Ein Vergleich ihrer nationalökonomischen Lehren*, 37. It seems to us that with these clearly articulated views on using science to steer social behavior that Dühring would have to be seen as a forerunner of what Karl Popper would later term "piecemeal social engineering". Cf., *The Open Society and its Enemies*, op. cit..

<sup>596</sup> Werner Sombart, *Sozialismus und Soziale Bewegung*, op. cit. 22.

<sup>597</sup> Hanni Binder, SSBB, 102. Unlike Ricardo and other theoreticians, Dühring had, of course, little actual practice in business.

theoretical system”.<sup>598</sup> Dühring is, however, not a pure theoretician; practice and theory belong to higher unity.

Carey had expressed the opinion that the restricting oppressive forces of society would inevitably be eliminated through the development of the economy. Of this Dühring was not so sure; it would certainly not happen without conscious political initiative. Carey’s perspective, he believed, was correct in its pure, isolated form, but it lacked exact scientific foundation, as it did not sufficiently consider sociopolitical *disturbances* and offered no practical plan to alleviate them. The harmonic balance of the economy is not a norm which comes into effect automatically. If the wages of the workers increase naturally with increasing profit of the general economy (as Carey postulated), workers will ultimately want a portion of the ownership rather than being “rented” by the owners. This fact, according to Dühring, will lead to strong resistance from owners, as they follow their interests. To improve an economy, sociopolitical disturbances must be dealt with first. The science of political economy must therefore be accompanied by social reform.

Despite his lineage from the Left and his affinity to the “Young Hegelians” in particular, Dühring does not expect a reshaping of society to take place through the *real socialism* of his day, which he sees as still not having overcome the utopian elements of the older socialism.<sup>599</sup> He is of the opinion that for such a movement to implement change, it must concentrate on current social and economic conditions and not be distracted by abstract religious or historical-philosophical beliefs. Socialism represents for him a theory and a brand of politics which will eventually be united with the teachings of political economy. Theory is destined to become united with practice. The result will be a synthesis in which the older political economic teachings are replaced by new social theory from which socioeconomic views and postulates will be able to be abstracted.

Dühring believes his system offers a practical imperative to create a more progressive version of socialism and uses the term “utopian Socialism” polemically – as had Marx and Engels – to find fault with the ideas of early French socialists such as St. Simon, Fourier, and Blanc.<sup>600</sup> Without wanting to lose the main practical thrust of socialism, which he defines as “a movement to catalyze intellectual and political emancipation of society through a reshaping of material interests”, the practical element of Dühring’s system seeks to reform its tenets by

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<sup>598</sup> Ibid.

<sup>599</sup> In his very first writings in the 1860s, Dühring expressed confidence in socialism, but as time passed he became increasingly more critical of the movement.

<sup>600</sup> Ibid., 273.

replacing older doctrine with a more scientific model, as he sees it, free from fantastic suggestion. Whereas Marx and Engels had attempted to do much the same, Dühring's work represents a more thorough philosophical approach which, as we have seen in Chapter Three, gives greater value to the individual and focuses on metaphysical, ontological and epistemological concerns.<sup>601</sup> His skepticism towards abstraction and his epistemological emphasis on concrete perception puts him at odds with previous socialist visions.

Utopia was an important product of the historical development of the modern world. It came into existence at a time when European men and women were severing their ties with their homelands and beginning to journey in great numbers to settle in the new world. During the early modern period, as Europeans were branching out into all corners of the globe, the concept of a far off place, an attainable social paradise, somewhere in the distant future had great appeal.<sup>602</sup> The term utopia, which was invented by Thomas More, became historically relevant in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, whose science and worldview formed the basis of Dühring's thought. It is probably not coincidental that the "physical abstraction" of the European emigrants, who separated themselves from their homelands to live in other countries and other regions of the globe, was accompanied by the "intellectual abstraction" of utopia. A better future for society was thought up and pursued. The new imagined ideas were soon followed by concrete actions to improve society and to create a just society. The French Revolution, which Dühring saw as the turning point of human history, achieved the unseating of the monarchy and the feudal order, but the *abstract power* of utopia did not lose strength. The visions sought by the revolutionaries were not fulfilled immediately and the forces of abstraction and utopianism now adjusted themselves to the impending industrial revolution. Rather than simply "thinking away" the unpleasant present social conditions with abstract plans and visions, utopian thought changed into a more realistic theory of progress with an emphasis on creating "productivity" through work. Saint-Simon, who was perhaps the most important ideologue in this new vision, proclaimed that all men will be able to work in "the industrial workshop of the future".<sup>603</sup>

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<sup>601</sup> August Bebel spoke of Dühring as "a new type of communist". Cf. Bebel, "Ein neuer Kommunist". Harold Höffding labels Dühring's philosophy one of the "most interesting speculative attempts of our day", and emphasizes the "close connection between the thought and the personality of the thinker," in Dühring's work. *A History of Modern Philosophy II*, trans. B.E. Meyer (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), 561.

<sup>602</sup> Cf. Reinhart Kosellek, *Critique and Crisis. Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988), 5-12.

<sup>603</sup> Cf. Hanno Kesting, *Geschichtsphilosophie und Weltbürgerkrieg* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1959), 41.

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed, much of the once seemingly endless space in the world had been filled and social visionaries changed their way of looking into the future. Technology progressed rapidly, and it became harder to envision just what the future would hold; one could say that, in a sense, utopians became more myopic, as they no longer looked into the distant future, but now turned to positive science to show that paradise was just around the corner, if only certain obstacles were *eradicated*. What had once been a pure abstraction, now took on a more concrete form as the Social Question was discovered, as we have illustrated in Chapter Six above.<sup>604</sup> Soon science and philosophy were used to show how the best society could be achieved. The idea of *servitude* and *domination* (and a socialist opposition to the existence of such a relationship) became a dynamic force shaping society. The goal of “overcoming suppression” became a mighty instrument for the mobilization of the masses to change human conditions. Specific “obstacles standing in the way of a better society” were shown to be unjustifiably hindering moral progress. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century such “hindrances to a better humanity” had many different names: the state, the bourgeoisie, capitalists, freemasons, Jesuits, Jews.

The socialist movement, which clearly involved bourgeois utopianism, had many different focal points. “Labor” was a common denominator, but also the idea of “taking away” or confiscation to better society became influential. Pierre Joseph Proudhon proclaimed “property is theft” and dispossession became a common cry among radicals.<sup>605</sup> Saint-Simon's emphasis was not on “taking away”, but rather on creating productivity. Half a century later, in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels introduced the term “utopian socialism”, which for them was advocated by unrealistic thinkers who simply conceived the best possible world, but were unable to do what was necessary to have it happen. The Marxist alternative became known as “scientific socialism”. The newly-founded emphasis on work and production, which had begun long before Marx and Engels, and the development of a scientific political economy curbed the utopian fantasies of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but did not end them. The utopias of More and Harrington were discounted, but others, based more on an appreciation of the reality of work as a social factor, came into being, e.g. Fichte's Utopian book *The Closed Commercial State* ( *Der geschlossene Handelsstaat*), which bears a strong resemblance to Saint-Simon's ideas. Owen and Fourier also aimed for a scientific application

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<sup>604</sup> Cf. *The Social Question*, ed. Jürgen Backhaus, *Journal of Economic* 33 (2006).

<sup>605</sup> Nolte points out that it is often overlooked that for Proudhon the term “property” only applied to the kind of estates which could force citizens to pay tolls. Ernst Nolte, *Marxismus und Industrielle Revolution*, 278. See also Edmond Laskine, “Die Entwicklung des juristischen Sozialismus,” *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus* 3 (1913): 27-28.

of socialism, and – in contrast to Marx and Engels – tested it by attempting to form socialist communities.

Among the socialists of the day, Dühring's favorite is perhaps Louis Blanc, whose book *Organisation du Travail* influenced him substantially. Blanc's idea that free trade and unbridled competition end up creating a suppression of the weak receives his approval (although Dühring would change his position on competition), as do his practical suggestions for a purposeful organization of labor. Regarding the latter, he criticizes Blanc for putting too much emphasis on the idea of *noblesse oblige* as a factor to help the workers and not considering their own power to improve their situation through self-initiative. He also supports Blanc's idea of having a conscious organization of labor, instead of leaving the situation up to the interplay of forces in society. This is a realistic goal if the natural factors in societal intercourse are taken into consideration. Government funding is admissible, but the state should otherwise be prohibited from organizing, or even owning, social workshops. As we have seen, he supports the strengthening of production through the initiative of the workers and the creation of a larger united organization to control production.<sup>606</sup>

Although Marx and Engels had aimed to rise above the ideas put forth by Blanc, Fourier, and others, and believed to have overcome utopia through scientific method, as Muravachik points out, they ultimately postulated theories which could be neither proven nor disproven.<sup>607</sup> Particularly with their views of a classless society, the Marxists remained captured in an unrealistic utopianism, the roots of which were in the Hegelian dialectic. The Hegelian philosophy, which highlighted the Social Question emphasizing the dynamics of domination and servitude, had given legitimacy to the dissolution of the old feudal and half-feudal society.<sup>608</sup> Marx was only one member (by no means the most prominent) of the Young or Left Hegelians, who utilized the master's methods, but rejected his more traditionalist ideas, particularly his view on Christianity and religion, which the "Right Hegelians" still held in high esteem. Marx sought to legitimize Hegel's theories by making them more concrete and integrating them into scientific political economy. The dialectic was to be complemented by economic realism and only then could society be revolutionized.

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<sup>606</sup> As will be shown below, in the final phase of his career, Dühring comes to advocate extremely individualist positions; at this stage, he ceases to advocate any positive intervention from the government. In the first and second edition to his *Critical History of Political Economy*, he expresses agreement with Blanc's support of state measures, writing, for example, "The realization or proper guarantee of social rights is usually unthinkable without the creation of regulating central organs." KGN. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 471. This sentence is omitted in the third edition from 1900.

<sup>607</sup> Muravachik, "The Rise and Fall of Socialism," *Bradley Lecture Series* (February: 1999).

<sup>608</sup> Cf. Kesting, *Herrschaft und Knechtschaft*, 8.

As mentioned above, Dühring was the first scholar to review the first volume of *Das Kapital* when it appeared in 1867.<sup>609</sup> His review was factual and neutral, but made reference to Marx's "application of Hegelian speculation and dialectic towards the teachings of political economy", which, when one knows Dühring, was a clear reproach.<sup>610</sup> With the publication of *Critical History of National and Political Economy*, Dühring intensified his critique of Marx's teachings, and the 1875 second edition of the book left no room for doubt that he was an all-out opponent of Marxism.<sup>611</sup> His critique of the most prominent socialist thinker of all time is excessively polemical, but also exhibits fundamental philosophical differences between the two men. Dühring first examines the issue of "method" before moving on to the concept of "value" and then, to "general philosophy" – Engels would imitate the same pattern in his "anti-Dühring" book.<sup>612</sup> He goes on the offensive against Marx not only for ignoring the factor of politics in the field of economics, but also for abusing healthy logic, for playing a "metamorphosis game" with concepts and history, and for "siring a bastard of historical and logical imagination".<sup>613</sup> He finds that Marx offers no realistic vision for the future and remains caught in an unproductive "logic of sorrow" (*Elendslogik*), which prevents true socialism from advancing. Due to its misunderstanding of the eminent political nature of modern society, according to Dühring, Marxism represents a non-philosophical perspective. He believes that a more individualistic, and yet scientifically minded philosophy which utilizes the methods of positivism can advance the socialist cause beyond the utopian historical constructions of the dialectical method. He rejects Marx's concept of the process of capitalistic economic development with the argument that the formula 'value-money-value' is nothing less than a confusing necessity and a degeneration of the idea of acquisition that dominates modern capitalism. Marx's theory of value, constructed through a coarse semblance of dialectic, is none other than the same theory of Ricardo.<sup>614</sup> He questions Marx's teachings on surplus value, comparing it unfavorably with his own theory of wages. Marxism, according to Dühring, remains fixated on the weakness of the workers and not their own

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<sup>609</sup> "Marx, *Das Kapital*," op. cit.

<sup>610</sup> Ibid., 182. In the epilogue to the second volume of *Capital*, Marx mentions Dühring's review and defends himself against the charge of using uncritical Hegelianism. "In einer Recension des ersten Bandes dieses Werks bemerkt Dr. Dühring, daß meine treue Anhänglichkeit an das Skelett der hegelischen Logik soweit geht, daß ich sogar in den Cirkulationsformen Hegelischer Schlußfiguren entdeckte. Mein Verhältnis zu Hegel's Dialektik ist sehr einfach. Hegel ist mein Lehrer und das klugthuende Epigonen-Geschwätz, das diesen eminenten Denker beseitigt zu haben meint, ist mir einfach lächerlich. Ich habe mir die Freiheit genommen, mich zu meinem Lehrer kritisch zu verhalten, seine Dialektik ihres Mysticismus zu entkleiden u. sie dadurch wesentlich zu verändern." *Das Kapital Ökonomisches Manuskript 1868-1870*, Zweites Buch: Das Zirkulationsprozeß des Kapitals (Manuskript II), in *Mega/II/11/6*, 32.

<sup>611</sup> Vollgraf, "Ein ‚Handgemenge‘ im Vorfeld des ‚Anti-Dühring‘," 243.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>613</sup> Cf. KGN, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 480.

<sup>614</sup> Ibid., 499.

strength or ability to improve their position themselves. He refuses to believe that there is a law of history which will save the workers from capitalistic exploitation.<sup>615</sup> A postulate of extreme tension where opposites face off in battle, as the dialectic calls for, is a sign of powerlessness and a lack of mental discipline. The transferring of the means of production to societal property, a core concept of Marxism, is rejected as a nebulous mystification, lacking any tangible content whatsoever. From a philosophical perspective, Marx's brand of socialism, in his opinion, lacks a clear program and ultimately leads to a quietism, in which self-reliance is handed over to a "dialectical reflection of concepts".<sup>616</sup> Dühring's system of social economics aims at going beyond pure utopian socialism by creating a vision of the future based on the development of the given modern capitalist system, rather than the construction of a rational "natural order". Whereas Marx and Engels advocated revolution as an answer to the social question, Dühring denounces *deus ex machine* solutions that will change society suddenly.

## 2. *Advancement of Labor through "Conscious Strength"*

Despite his philosophy's adherence to the scientific method of positivism and its postulate of materialism as the basis for all intellectual discourse, as we have seen above, Dühring emphasizes the factor of human volition in the course of history. History is not merely a product of nature, but consists of patterns and trends brought forth rationally by humans. The conscious use of force by certain societal groupings is seen as the origin of an unjust distribution of wealth in society. Although his basic historical outlook on the development of society is pessimistic, his perspective is not fatalistic, as he is unwilling to accept the bad, and becomes an ardent fighter against it. Just as political factors shaped the development of capitalism to the unfair disadvantage of the working class, just retribution for the working class, he believes, can be attained through *conscious self-initiative*.

Dühring has a positive assessment of industrialization. He sees the general historical development of the distribution between property, rent and wages as showing that the

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<sup>615</sup> This Marxian idea of history heading to a certain goal was the main object of Karl Popper's critique of Marxism.

<sup>616</sup> As we saw, Marx defended himself against Dühring's charges in the epilogue of the second edition of *Das Kapital* by writing that he rejects Hegel's philosophy as well as the ideal side of his philosophy; he argues that he is not being led by ideas, but rather by material phenomenon. In the third edition to *Critical History of Political Economy and Socialism* (1879), Dühring answers Marx by pointing out that Marx really represents radicalism in the form of the Hegelian dialectic and that the use of this method, which is an affront to clear thinking, leads to confusing word games with an arbitrary movement of facts. Vollgraf, "Marx' 'Randnoten' zu Dühring's 'Kritische Geschichte der Nationalökonomie,'" 240. Marx's rejection of the Hegelian philosophy contrasted with Engel's defense of Hegel in his "Anti-Dühring", which, as Vollgraf's excellent article portrays in detail, Marx helped Engels to prepare.

emergence of industry and the gravitation of the workforce to the cities has improved the conditions of labor, not only in the city, but also in the agrarian sector. The new fast-moving period of economic development, dominated by the machinery of the factories, is initially unfavorable for the workers from an economic perspective. Technical power, he argues, came into the possession of the owners and then made a portion of the work redundant so that competition among the workers increased and wages dropped. In the further progression of the development of industry, Dühring holds, this process was reversed: despite the pressure which the machine puts the worker under, the demand for work increases, which creates the possibility of a gradual improvement of wages. As we saw in the last section, the increase in population will create an increase in demand in the future, which will ultimately raise wages. The increase in the demand for work signifies, an increase in the intensity of farming and ultimately an intensification of the entire economy. He argues that the workers' perception of their deficiencies and the good which can be achieved along with what he calls their "accompanying strength" will help to alleviate the unfavorable situation. He writes:

The ability to attain a certain objective can only be found in connection with a certain consciousness of one's own strength. If a social reorganization is ever to come, it will not only be the abuse, but also the results of positive support which play a role.<sup>617</sup>

Even the darkest cloud of suppression has a silver lining: the positive side of indentured labor was, for example, that it was a transitional phenomenon. It could not have the staying power that slavery once had as it put the worker in a precarious and contradictory position. The slave's basic material needs were taken care of and were not a topic of discussion. In the wage labor system, the situation is just the opposite: workers needs are not taken care of, i.e. they are dealt with according to the workers' own initiative, but they have a voice to issue complaints. Uncertainty of existence and economic pressure, Dühring argues, is the first impetus towards a united effort to achieve better wages. Through this train of thought, he comes to a modification of Carey's principle of harmonic distribution, which, as we have seen, was based on what the Americans termed the "unity of law". Dühring utilizes the factor of history, or the Laws of Development, as they had been labeled by the German historical school. In place of illusory harmony, Dühring stresses "real forms of life" which may be unflattering, but which help "the world of work to attain consciousness and strength".<sup>618</sup> Here we observe his departure from the perspective of rational Natural Law in favor of an

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<sup>617</sup> CNS, 202.

<sup>618</sup> Ibid., 211.

adherence towards a form of historical realism directed by Laws of Development, a position he shares not only with the *Kathedersozialisten*, but also the Marxists.<sup>619</sup>

“Real forms for life”, according to Dühring, involve injustice and exploitation, as well as positive political action aimed at eradicating the conditions of subordination and domination. Through his negative experience in connection with his social exposé written for the Prussian government, Dühring lost faith that measures could be taken from above, i.e. by the government, to benefit the workers. A just social balance of forces in society will never be attained through the initiative of its economically stronger elements, which are, he believes, ruthless by nature. He explicitly speaks out against a system of profit sharing and equity participation for workers through the help of penny stocks, and expects little aid from associations and cooperatives. Productive cooperatives can be of help for the socially suppressed lower classes, but not in the form of state issued credit. Cooperatives, in his opinion, lack the financial strength necessary for success. To find a solution, Dühring invokes his own unusual understanding of Natural Law, which we dealt with above: the only true protection against the arbitrary measures taken by “superior classes” of any given society is the *fear of exploitation* which arises instinctually to defend them for survival. Giving application to his theory of “reactive sensation” established in *The Worth of Life* (Cf. Chapter Four), he writes that the preservation of justice depends on a balance of forces in society; justice is preserved by the weaker elements of society, who automatically take the brunt of social injustice and feel a resentment, which motivates them to take action. The instincts which are brought forth when injustice occurs belong to the “economics of man” and have influence the development of society.<sup>620</sup> It is up to the workers themselves to improve their situation and to correct any injustice inflicted upon them; self-initiative is the first and most important means of attaining social justice.

The remedy for improving the situation, as we have seen above, is the formation of labor coalitions to fight for higher wages.<sup>621</sup> Dühring believes higher wages will increase

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<sup>619</sup> Despite the theoretical similarities he shared with the *Kathedersozialisten*, he became one of their biggest critics, even favoring the Marxists before them. Although Dühring, as we will see below, was excluded from academic discussion on a university level after his dismissal from the university in 1877, there were other scholars at the university who fought the socialist of the chair. One example was the conservative Jewish German scholar Prof. Dr. Julius Wolf, who gave a presentation on the socialism of the chair and the *Soziale Frage* to the Social Scientific Students Association of Berlin. Cf. Wolff, *Der Kathedersozialismus und die soziale Frage* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1899).

<sup>620</sup> KGV, 433-434. Dühring’s idea of an equilibrium of instinct influenced Nietzsche, who believed that the struggle for existence ended in a community whose standpoint was balance. Cf. Gerhardt, “Das ‘Princip des Gleichgewichts’,” 124-125.

<sup>621</sup> In Germany, coalitions were banned after Napoleon’s victory in the area occupied by France. In 1845, Prussia made coalition efforts illegal. It was not until 1872 that the ban was lifted in the German empire. Michael

production and change the ruling and the serving class's patterns of consumption; higher wages will shape the circulation of production and consumption in a more natural way, causing production to be geared more towards the needs of the working class and away from the luxury consumption articles of the rich. The amount taken away from the rent of the business and put in the hands of the workers through higher wages leads to an increase in demand on the market; this positively effects production, and steers it away from more useless specialization and towards fulfilling the needs of the workers.<sup>622</sup>

Dühring's plan to improve the conditions of the workers through coalitions once again highlights substantial differences to the ideas of Marx. Marx sees improvement for the workers coming dialectically from the increasingly precarious situation they face, caused by oppression and exploitation through capital. Dühring condemns the idea that improvement can stem from weakness; change can only come through strength, self-initiative, and self-reliance. By coming together in coalitions, the workers will have the power to improve their lot. Political organization and planning can further the interests of the workers movement, but without this "material force", which is the coalitions, nothing substantial can be accomplished. Dühring believes that "every law which has no power available to protect it is a vain phrase".<sup>623</sup> Be that as it may, the concept of the coalitions, which is directed primarily against the capitalists, will need – at least to some degree – sanctioning by the government.<sup>624</sup>

What is the role of the government exactly in these pursuits? Dühring sees two options: using present laws to have government try to create equality or trying to organize resistance to stand against the legal order. The former position, which Dühring labels "purely vegetative", is advocated by the free traders and signifies degradation and dissolution. In getting rid of all chains, the weaker will be even more at the mercy of the stronger. The latter position, though

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Kittner, *Arbeitskampf. Geschichte-Recht-Gegenwart*, 155.

<sup>622</sup> Tugan-Baranowsky, who also argues for higher wages, points out, however, that the increase in wages tends to lower the birth rate, as the worker making more money becomes culturally more sophisticated; with the added means at his disposal, he chooses to have a smaller family. *Soziale Theorie der Verteilung*, 32. Heinrich von Treitschke argued in his famous critique of social democracy titled "Socialism and its Patrons" (1874) that the working class had the highest wages in German history, but that the workers usually wasted the extra money they had. Cf. "Der Sozialismus und seine Gönner," op. cit., 507. In his extensive refutation of Treitschke, Gustav Schmoller showed that this claim was exaggerated. Cf. Schmoller, "Offenes Sendeschreiben an Herrn Professor Dr. Heinrich von Treitschke über einige Grundfragen des Rechts und der Volkswirtschaft. VII: Ihr Urtheil über die socialpolitischen Bewegungen und Erscheinungen der Gegenwart," in *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik* 24 (Jena: Friedrich Mauke, 1875), 93-94.

<sup>623</sup> KGV, 329.

<sup>624</sup> The state is to allow the coalitions. This is pointed out by Johannes Berg, a free-trader, who claims that Dühring wanted to conspire with the state to suppress the middle class. Cf. "Die Parteien im Deutschen Reichstage," op. cit., 857. In his social exposé, written for the Prussian government, Dühring appeals to the state to grant "coalition freedom" (*Coalitions-Freiheit*). Cf. Hermann Wagener (*vere Dühring*), *Denkschrift über die sozialen Coalitionen*, 36 et seq.

the organization of coalitions, is one of strength, and will be vehemently opposed by the powerful free-trade party. The free traders therefore preach the freedom of the individual; no groupings, they would argue, should be formed which can suppress the individual. The individual and his or her preference should be the last instance in order to prevent the formation of restrictive social mechanisms. This is, in reality, a method of dividing and conquering, which results with the will of the strong being introduced. These forces will do anything to prevent powerful political organization, such as workers coalitions, from forming. One method which he believes can be used is to support unification. At first, all associations are “steered in a direction of the greatest natural resistance” so that the real interests will seem innocent; then the opinion is spread that the tasks of such associations are not of a social political nature, but rather a purely economic nature. They preach the theoretical weakness of the force which they fear the most: strikes are looked down upon as being unconstructive. The intention remains to prevent the formation of societal groupings whose task it is to guarantee social justice and to check individual acts of injustice.<sup>625</sup> Dühring envisions limited government intervention as an instrument to allow the coalitions to come into existence. The free trade of his day, he believes, increases the freedom of the socially powerful, furthering their policies of oppression; the owners of businesses come together to make rules that strengthen their position, and their domination over workers will increase as the *laissez-faire* policies are extended. Increased centralization will make the local struggles of the workers even harder. Thus it is necessary for a third party to intervene to provide a balance of power to guarantee social justice. Government is an over-reaching, comprehensive power that, through act of legal administration and legislation, can intervene to prevent general societal interests from being damaged by the necessary battle of self-initiative. More like Carey than List, Dühring sees a permanent application of government measures to preserve the “independent economy and the natural solidarity of producers and consumers”.<sup>626</sup> He is, nevertheless, under no illusions that a centralized government made up of forces which primarily support the owning class will help the workers. Thus government, as a third “balancing” force, is, in Dühring’s opinion, not a viable force in the initial phase of the labor movement. Labor coalitions are the first and most important step towards bringing justice for the workers. Once

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<sup>625</sup> KGV, 331.

<sup>626</sup> Ibid., 333. Albrecht mistakenly says that Dühring’s views on protective tariffs are the same as List’s. Dühring clearly states that this principle of state intervention is “not historical”, i.e. not to be implemented temporarily at different phases, but is a permanent measure. Cf. Albrecht, ED, 222. Just as Dühring is philosophically wary of abstraction, he is also uncomfortable with government intervention. In the last phase of his career he comes to scorn the idea of tariffs in general. Cf. “Zöllner Aechtung,” PE 287 (October 1911).

a certain level of power is reached, his system calls for a grander possibility to improve society.

### 3. *Liberation from Criminal Government*

Due to the strong political imperative which his system entails Dühring cannot be considered a pure theoretician. The strict positivist method, which he originally advocates, although never abandoned completely, becomes altered when he emphasizes Laws of Development, which diverge from the flow of nature, giving leeway for man to determine his fate. As we saw in Chapter Three, he also introduces the concept of “rational imagination” into his philosophy, which enhances the role of the individual and makes room for creative intervention in the course of human development. These positions are connected with Dühring’s healthy belief in a principle of self-reliance, which applies to individuals, as it does to groups, as well as nations. His inclination towards the type of the *philosophical scholar* leads him away from purely scientific pursuits towards general speculation about society and how the principle of human freedom can find its highest expression. This involves, for Dühring, the eradication of all forms of coercion, the strongest of which, from an historical perspective, is the force of centralized government based on pure power (*Gewaltstaat*).

Dühring was trained as a scientist of the state, who, as we have seen, came to advocate the mercantilist-like theories of Carey and List which give substantial importance to the role of the state in economic activity. As we have seen above, he does not reject government intervention fundamentally, but rather proceeds historically to consider the exact role it has played in human affairs. As Carey had done before him, Dühring points to forms of suppression in the central government of ancient Rome. The Roman state, whose power was based on conquest and force, is a classic historical example of the ills of government based on force. The application of the Roman policies to the medieval conditions led to the centralization of the modern period. In Dühring’s opinion, the centralized governments of his time represented the extended power of the dynasties that had paved their way through conquest and inheritance of power. It represents an entity of power consisting, on the one hand, of a group of people, among whom is a sovereign figure; below this person are other people who function as the machinery of the government. There are also the masses, who show little initiative; their passive existence consists of paying taxes, military duty and carrying out work for the higher classes.<sup>627</sup> Criminal government is, Dühring believes, a historically inherited entity that would inevitably be overcome. The state of the present, he is

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<sup>627</sup> Ibid., 320.

sure, is a provisional arrangement and any judgments on the principle of government in general should not be derived from its present context. He concludes that even the worst government is better than the chaos that would appear by having no government at all. The government, or some regulation of the human community, is a necessity, but it should always be a "means", serving the individual citizens. Government should serve practical purposes, and Dühring warned against a "romantization of the state", where it is seen as a higher deity. Maintaining Carey's optimism in man's ability to shape society in a fair manner, he creates a concept of government that he believes can affirm the principle of "ruling from above", while at the same time upholding the values of freedom and justice.

Dühring's answer to the "oppressive criminal state" is his concept of Free Society (*freie Gesellschaft*). He envisions a community based on the principle of "voluntary association", much as Carey had used the term. The suggestions for labor coalitions, described in the last section, are now seen as a provisory application without a final or principal forgoing of further measures.<sup>628</sup> Inspired by one of his great intellectual heroes, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Dühring advocates a type of social contract that respects the rights of the individual while preserving a balance of power between the individual groups of society. In the "Free Society", individuals stand on an equal basis and there is no room for domination and subordination. Believing, like Carey, in the possibility of a harmony of interest, Dühring writes that highest principle of communal life is the exclusion of domination and servitude. In a society based on justice, there is no third force to arbitrate between two conflicting parties; the parties themselves would work out their differences together. Government is there only to preserve the "natural justice", which involves balancing the given powers in the society.<sup>629</sup> For Dühring, true power only exists on the ground of individuality, and social improvement has to be found on this basis.<sup>630</sup>

The Free Society, which was first introduced in *Cursus of Philosophy* in 1875, is complemented one year later in the second edition to his *Cursus of National and Social Economy* by a design for a system of "economic communes", the culmination of Dühring's vision of liberal socialism.<sup>631</sup> Touched on briefly in Chapter Four, the economic communes

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<sup>628</sup> CNS, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 334-336.

<sup>629</sup> As dealt with above, in the last part of the first edition to his book *The Worth of Life*, Dühring claimed that reactive feeling or resentment was the only recognizable principle of justice or injustice. This emotive element existed, according to Dühring, not only in individuals, but also in societal groups. See CP, 224.

<sup>630</sup> With his particular emphasis on "individual freedom", Dühring tends to gravitate more towards the principles of the enlightenment held by British thinkers, whose views exhibited a certain contrast with the ideals of the French enlightenment.

<sup>631</sup> The design for the economic communes shows that Ludwig Marcuse's criticism of Dühring for "lacking a

are a scheme to grant complete local autonomy in a society which is completely free from political and social compulsion. Despite the fact that they were only broadly conceived (in no more than eleven pages), and were ultimately abandoned in the third edition of the book, they are a pronounced expression of Dühring's ethos of societal reform.<sup>632</sup> He envisions the creation of social units in which every member of the community will have a say; *property based on force (Gewalteigentum)* will be removed completely, and the goal of the communities is the self-management of work and the economic sovereignty of politically and socially free people. Although the term commune, particularly in its more recent connotation since the 1960s, brings to mind a group living closely together in heightened sensitivity and receptivity, Dühring's vision is decisively individualistic and does not resemble communist ideals in the traditional understanding of the concept: he aims to create what would be the logical conclusion of the free-trade capitalism. He writes, "All of the 18<sup>th</sup> century's authentic ideas of freedom and progress are given their due. The step is taken to make the economic personality truly free and independent, and to completely do away with oppressive institutions through which work is put under the control of ownership by means of social and political pressure." Economically, this means "cooperation towards production with equal rights, i.e. with principally the same working liabilities and the same claims of enjoyment".<sup>633</sup>

To design this economic system which rules out injustice and allows for local autonomy, Dühring uses the abstract and isolating method to envision society in its pure and genuine form, free from arbitrary development.<sup>634</sup> The basic form of all socialization is the unification of two people through interest or mutual sympathy. This bond, like all further socialization, amounts to an agreement of collaboration among free individuals, who are not under any form of social or political coercion. The economic communes are to take the place of government and are to create equality between the different societal forces, ruling out the suppression of one person through another. Government will be kept to an absolute minimum, intervening only when "natural justice" needs to be protected. The "emancipated society" is borderless

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will to a goal" (cf. Chapter Three, Critical Summary) is exaggerated. His voluminous writings show the will and the ability to carry out goals. However, the retraction of the scheme for the economic communes does show Dühring was haunted by ambiguity.

<sup>632</sup> On Dühring's system of economic communes see Alberto Chilosì, "Dühring's "societarian" model of economic communes and its influence on the development of socialist thought and practice," in *Eugen Dühring and the freedom of teaching and research*, ed. Jürgen Backhaus, *Journal of Economic Studies* 29 (2002): 293-305.

<sup>633</sup> CNS, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 514.

<sup>634</sup> As we have pointed out above, this is the method of classical economics. Methodologically the ideal type Dühring constructs bears similarity to Thünen's *The Isolated State* (Oxford, et al.: Pergamon Press, 1966). Dühring praises Thünen's originality, but believes he lacked a universal perspective and was too focused on mathematics. KGN, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 314-315.

and is to ultimately encompass the entire world. Its construction is based on the connection of individuals and its dimensions fit the historical state areas of Europe. The communes make up an ancestral and linguistic community upon whose leadership the society is based.<sup>635</sup> They function under the basic principle that labor, and not property ownership, should be the basis of earnings.<sup>636</sup> Earnings are distributed according to performance and workers are to be given the political right to have a position in the economic management of the commune. Thus the organized forced management, which Marxist socialism advocated (and was later historically realized), is replaced by *cooperative leadership* which respects the rights of the individual. Property is not to be abolished, but rather belongs to each individual community. Dühring hopes to balance the exclusive character of property by allowing free entry into the given communes. Free trade is to exist between the communes on the basis of the gold standard so that free association and competition between them can develop. Interest will be used by the communes to maintain and improve the means of production, thus giving the value added surplus to the community, but not to individuals. Individuals will be able to collect wealth, not in the form of capital, but rather in consumptive goods. A “societarian free association of movement” (*socialitäre Freizügigkeiten*) will allow individuals to pursue activities that correspond to their given talents. As soon as a community has a particularly high profit where its members attain a higher income than the average earnings of the individuals of the other communes, the working force of this economically more advanced community is to be increased until a balance with the other communes is attained. In doing this, Dühring hopes to have the entire system benefit from the success of a particular industrial branch. An absolute equality of earnings is never to be reached, but this corresponds to economic justice, as some performances are harder, less pleasant or more dangerous than others. The workers entering and leaving the communities will allow the supply of the communes to adapt to demand. If the demand for a product is higher than the supply, the prices will rise and thus the income of the members of the commune will increase; this will set off a migration of workers, which will enable an increase in production until a balance of earnings is created. With a balance of earnings as goal and not the increase of profit and rents, the emphasis of the economic commune plan is to increase the quality of life of the workers and create a harmonic society.<sup>637</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> One sees how an emphasis on concepts of “race”, which is associated with intolerance and elitism today, can entail a liberal egalitarian ethos.

<sup>636</sup> CNS, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 322.

<sup>637</sup> In the third edition of *Cursus of National and Political Economy*, Dühring gives up the scheme of economic communes after he had altered his theory of value. As we saw above, he comes to believe that time of work is an

According to the principles of the Philosophy of the Actual, Dühring cannot leave the design for the Free Society in a vacuum; it must be given realistic application. The development towards a truly liberated society will not appear out of thin air. Neither through revolution of the proletariat, along the lines of Marxism, nor through a natural principle of balance, as Carey envisioned, will this take place. Dühring's plan for reform will come into being through the mechanisms of the criminal state itself. When government becomes increasingly centralized, it inevitably extends itself to a point where it is doomed. Dühring gives historical examples of how centralization and loss of local autonomy maimed various states. The Greeks fell prey to Macedonianism under Alexander and eventually lost the Mediterranean to the Romans. The Romans consolidated the domains of their empire under one ruler and ultimately fell to the Teutons. Dühring speculated that these patterns of centralization and decay could continue until "the source of transformation" was gone, i.e. until there were no more enemies from abroad. Then it would be the "powers from within" which would topple the state based on violence.<sup>638</sup> Such centralization, "based on force and conquest", ultimately means the "death of a state" (*Staatentod*). He gives two reasons for why such an oppressive centralized government is not capable of enduring: 1) the core from which it proceeds becomes spoiled due to unavoidable corruption, partially stemming from apathy and lethargy, partially stemming from arrogance and luxury. 2) The ability of the central group to rule becomes increasingly weakened due to the ever increasing extension of the government's rule. In time, the local centers gain their own material advantages and soon begin to take on their own identity and political consciousness. This is, however, neither a natural nor an inevitable event as it had seemed for Carey. Ambiguous again, after emphasizing the dangers of centralization he maintains that not all local autonomy is positive. Dühring warns against a type of reactionary "romantic decentralization" which is a decentralizing force put into action by the centralized power itself. Particularly with English history in mind, Dühring cites how feudal elements within society could experiment with the local bourgeoisie in an effort to create a sense of "self-government" while really attaining a continuation of the old centralization.<sup>639</sup>

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insufficient means of measurement of the value of work, as the kind of work which is done within the given time is more important. Work performance is just as diverse as needs, and the one cannot be measured by the other. Related services must be measured in relation to each other, thus creating higher and lower groups of work. The characterization of the economic communes must be given up, not because its principle of justice was wrong, but rather because its postulate that work without ownership (*besitzlose Arbeit*) amounts to exploitation is false. Dühring emphasizes that initiative for social change must be connected with forms existing in the present, thus placing the concept for economic communes far into the future. CNS, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 316-323.

<sup>638</sup> CP, 322.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid.

The “criminal state”, he emphasizes, has an uncanny ability to maintain control. Writing in 1875, Dühring paints the picture of a police state that functions much as the government depicted by George Orwell in his book *1984*, and as was later realized, in the Marxist Leninist states of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. He points not only to the power of a government through its military, judiciary and police control, but equally important is the "police in the broader sense", a type of *thought control* which was implemented through the monopoly of schooling and the centralization of education. According to Dühring, oppressive government uses schools, from the lowest levels to the most scholarly universities, to sustain its political and ideological dogmas. He singles out the teaching of history as a particularly effective instrument of the criminal state: “The official government view of history as well as well as the corresponding views or even falsifications [...] are a means used by the police for the repression of thought”. Without *thought control*, Dühring writes, oppressive government cannot exist for long.<sup>640</sup>

The strict intellectual control that the government enforces does not, according to Dühring, mean that the government will protect its citizens from crime. Quite the contrary, in a centralized state, robbery and murder as well as other crimes flourish; the streets of the big cities are unsafe. Whenever a citizen or group of citizens tries to flee from these conditions to set up their own lives independently, there is no means for effective judiciary. This opens the door for the oppressive government to make accusations that can be neither affirmed nor disproved. The only security against false accusations by the state can be local courts, but, according to Dühring, the *Gewaltstaat* would be defeating itself if it were to let a localization of such decisions take place.

The centralized state ultimately becomes self-contradictory and falls prey to its own logic. Its ethos involves providing security, peace, and happiness, but this it is no longer able to do. Before the step towards the Free Society can take place, the reigns of the governments armed with force need to be taken. He writes, "Before one reaches the final emancipated society with all of its small political entities united under large organizations, one has to assume the inheritance of the centralized state, and use its already existing power as the basis for the restructuring of society".<sup>641</sup> To get rid of the oppressive force of the oppressive government, Dühring believes that its centralized functions have to be absorbed, and then its force or violence discarded. The false centralization which thrives on force, mind control, and

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<sup>640</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>641</sup> Ibid., 325-326.

suppression will be replaced by a just centralization based on the rights of the individuals. In this way, a bridge can be built from the government based on violence to the society based on freedom and natural local autonomy.

The Free Society – which is not proposed as a final solution to societal problems - will thus be instituted within the framework of government centralization. Once power is attained and the centralized mechanisms overcome, the development of the individual goes hand in hand with an elevation of the intellectual and moral level of the masses.

#### 4. “Universal Socialization” of Living Conditions

The emancipation of society from the powerful centralized governments of history, as Dühring understands it, involves an elevation of the capacity of the individual through what he terms “universal socialization”.<sup>642</sup> Once domination is eradicated and the “historical inhibiting means” (*historische Sperrmittel*) are removed, free association among men can set in, and people will accept that they live together with others who share the same fate as they do. They will subsequently learn to not only fight against injustice, but also to support each other.<sup>643</sup> Unlike many leftist visions which are largely egalitarian and ignore the inherent distinctions between humans, Dühring’s system emphasizes racial and ethnic peculiarities which make up a challenge for the process of socialization. The further development of society cannot remain indifferent to the “specialization of physical constitution and the manner of thinking and feeling belonging it”, as he puts it.<sup>644</sup> A multiracial or multicultural society, as it would be termed today, is looked down upon by Dühring not because he is opposed to it on the grounds of personal preference, but rather because he believes that within it intimate association between different ethnic groups is often forcefully coerced. Traditional society is, in his opinion, to blame for this. The historically inherited oppressive society (*Gewaltgesellschaft*), which is to be replaced by the Free Society, has created conditions in which material factors are decisive for the carnal behavior of its citizens. Viewing the developments in the rapidly growing metropolis of Berlin, he speaks of a “realm of coercion” which determines the sexual conditions of a society characterized by “marital, non-marital

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<sup>642</sup> Ibid., 387.

<sup>643</sup> On the concept of “socialization” see Wilhelm Röpke’s entry “Sozialisierung” in *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, eds. Ludwig Elster, et al. (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1926), 567-578 (Dühring mentioned on page 567).

<sup>644</sup> CP, 388. Although his focus on the factor of race begins in the 1880s after being fired from his university position and becoming estranged from Social Democracy, his system, as conceived in the 70s, already posits that ethnic factors are often more decisive for the makeup of a society than the ideas on which it is based.

and actual prostitution”.<sup>645</sup> The bondage of the existing *Gewaltgesellschaft* is a consequence of the traditional social constitution and its oppressive nature. While rejecting a Darwinian theory of evolution to explain human races, Dühring draws attention to certain factors that contribute to ethnic groupings. The blood differences between different races, tribes, groupings, etc., he writes, play a role in procreation, not in a Darwinian sense, but rather due to mechanisms of inner and climatic pre-conditions and cosmic forces, which determine the carnal groupings. Ethnic considerations should, he believes, form a basis of the marriages of the future.<sup>646</sup> He vehemently rejects the implementation of any kind of marriage laws by the state to improve social conditions, however, as, in his opinion, the freedom of custom is the only force that can perform this task.<sup>647</sup> He sees occasional racial mixing between strongly different ethnical entities as having exhibited beneficial effects, as different physiological qualities complement each other. He writes, “One can be certain that where personal inclination decides, the complete freedom of the combinations will do the least damage”.<sup>648</sup> The greatest damage to the physiological composition of any society, he believes, comes from the compulsion to marry, which, in his opinion, has been commonplace in the institution of marriage traditionally, particularly among Jews. Nature can be trusted to prevent “disharmonic ethnic mixing” ahead of time. It is only through false societal motivation that nature goes astray, in his opinion. If the “false coercion which double crosses nature” is removed then “individual freedom can be left on its own in good faith safely”.<sup>649</sup> He thus advocates “the old truth that freedom is self-evident and substantial, and any limitations on it are secondary and in need of justification”.<sup>650</sup> Racial problems are to be solved on their own through natural social conditions, not through forced institutional measures.<sup>651</sup>

Of great importance to the physiological composition of society is the role that women are to play. Dühring believes that, of all societal victims, women have suffered the most due to from oppression. He envisions an emancipated role for them to play in the Free Society. In his

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<sup>645</sup> Ibid., 389.

<sup>646</sup> He writes: “Die so zu sagen im Blut liegenden Unterschiede der Racen und Stämme hängen auf das Engste mit der Fortpflanzung zusammen. Lassen sie sich auch nicht vollständig und ausschließlich auf eine Abstammungstheorie Darwinischer Art zurückführen, so haben sie doch, nachdem sie einem durch die Zusammengehörigkeit innerer Schematismen und äußerer klimatischer oder sonst kosmischer Vorbedingungen entstanden waren, ihre Verbreitung durch die Beherrschung durch die geschlechtlichen Gruppierungen gefunden. Man wird also die Racengegensätze und Stammessonderungen vor allen Dingen zum Ausgangspunkt der Grundsätze über die Geschlechtsverbindungen machen müssen.” Ibid.

<sup>647</sup> His postulate clearly puts him at odds with the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 in National Socialist Germany.

<sup>648</sup> CP, 389.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid., 390.

<sup>650</sup> Ibid.

<sup>651</sup> As much as Dühring disliked the American South and had not approved of its society based on slavery, it can be assumed that he would have condemned the measures of the Kennedy and Johnson governments of the 1960s to forcefully integrate public schools in the South.

writing “*Women’s Way to Higher Education*”, he shows strong support for the women’s liberation movement in the 1870s, calling for the political and social equality of women by means of extending the educational and career spectrum of women. The women’s question was for him an important part of the Social Question.<sup>652</sup> The universal socialization of society involves women being admitted to higher teaching positions as well as to the study of medicine.<sup>653</sup> Whereas the conservative tenured professors, civil servants, and other academic groups often made reference to women’s physical and mental limitations, citing their tenderness, pregnancy, and menstruation as well as a purported deficiencies in the area of logic and abstract thinking, Dühring considers them to be fully capable, both mentally and physically, of carrying out scientific careers.<sup>654</sup> The career woman embodies, for him, the positive virtues of the middle class: a strong work ethic and devotion to duty. He envisions the creation of schooling and educational institutions for women. Women should be made more economically independent in their marriages by being given access to professional training; family duties are reconcilable with a professional career, but he still gives the main responsibility for the household and raising children to the woman. Throughout the course of history, marriage has, in his opinion, been an oppressive institution through which “women have been made the property of men”.<sup>655</sup> Dühring sees the family as originally having been a political entity and the head of the family as, up to then, having had the characteristics of a head of state.<sup>656</sup> When the “despot of a family” had the right to decide on the life and death of its members, it was a small version of a government based on violence. In the course of history, private violence in the family, he holds, has become more and more limited and the political role of the family has eventually been handed over to the state. The right of disciplining one’s family can no longer be seen as legal right, as it has only a pedagogical purpose. The remaining rights of fathers are only a small artifact of what their authority as head of a family once amounted to. Despite the shrinkage of the coercive elements in the family, the fact remains, according to Dühring, that “oppressive government, society dominated by property based on force and compulsory marriage” belong together as a sociological phenomenon.<sup>657</sup> As in the case with the German working class, Dühring believes

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<sup>652</sup> WBF, 2.

<sup>653</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>654</sup> Cf. Reményi, “Der Fall Eugen Dühring und die Diskussion um das Frauenstudium in Berlin,” in *Geschlechterverhältnisse in Medizin, Naturwissenschaft und Technik*, eds. M. Renneberg, and C. Meinel (Bassum, et al.: Verlag für die Geschichte der Naturwissenschaft und Technik, 1996), 271-272.

<sup>655</sup> CNS, 2nd edition, 321.

<sup>656</sup> CP, 289. Here, we believe, Dühring makes the classic mistake of many liberals of creating what Gehlen called a “moralischen Eintopf” (a moral stew) in where different institutions, with dissimilar moral ethoi, are combined without distinction. Cf. Gehlen, *Moral und Hypermoral*, op. cit.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid.

that self-reliance is the key to emancipation, the basis of which needs to be economic independence.<sup>658</sup>

Although he is a strong proponent of women's education, Dühring is careful to point out that, due to the present deficiencies of the German university system, it should not be desired for women to attain equality with men on this level. If the situation is intolerable for men at present, then, in his opinion, it does not make sense for women to strive for what is insufficient to begin with! He writes that women have the claim to something better than just being accepted to the university, which only makes sense if it facilitates access to new vocational branches.<sup>659</sup> Differing from other leftist thinkers in favor of women's rights, Dühring, not without good reason, is careful to emphasize that the issue of freedom and justice should not involve blurring the natural boundaries between men and women, but rather, on the contrary, should serve to see that diversity develops. "Thus it is not the principle of women's liberation to make the essential feminine characteristics masculine, or making the customs of the sexes the same or converge".<sup>660</sup> He believes that nature should take its course, and, as the artificial coercion created by society is removed, the natural differences between the sexes will become more pronounced in a healthy way. Once women's education has sufficiently advanced, they will be able to attain an intellectual maturity which will express their unique character.<sup>661</sup>

Whereas a new emancipated role of women is welcomed as a positive step towards overcoming the traditional society, the emancipation of the Jews is not. Dühring views the Jews as an element of the traditional oppressive society which needs to be overcome.<sup>662</sup> His

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<sup>658</sup> Cf. "Natürliche und künstliche Emancipation, I.," *Unterhaltungen am häuslichen Herd* 4 (1864): 798.

<sup>659</sup> WBF, 2nd edition, 38.

<sup>660</sup> WL, 7th edition, 352-353. This opinion is mirrored by Nietzsche. Nolte, *Nietzsche und der Nietzscheanismus*, 202.

<sup>661</sup> As a political advocate of the working class, Dühring is particularly outraged by the excessive physical labor which women are subjected to, and which, in his opinion, destroys femininity. Cf. "Natürliche und künstliche Emancipation, II.," op. cit. 818.

<sup>662</sup> Dühring's book on the Jews, *Die Judenfrage als Racen- Sitten- und Culturfrage* (Karlsruhe, Leipzig: Reuter, 1881), went through seven editions. There is an English translation of the second edition with an introductory essay written by the Indian scholar Alexander Jacob. *Eugen Dühring on the Jews* (Brighton: 1984 Press, 1997). For a better understanding of the nature of Dühring's anti-Semitism see the previously unpublished manuscript from the Dühring Papers of the *Staatsbibliothek*, printed in the Appendices below. The text was written two years before his book on the Jews was published. There have been numerous articles and two books devoted exclusively to the topic of Dühring's anti-Semitism: Briggitte Mogge, *Die Rhetorik des Hasses. Eugen Dühring und die Genese seines antisemitischen Wortschatzes* (Neuss: Gesellschaft für Buchdruckerein AG, 1977) and Peggy Cossmann *Physiodicee und Weltneimesis. Eugen Dührings physiomoralische Begründung des Moral- und Charakterantisemitismus* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007). The anti-Semitism of the German empire came from different ideological currents: two enemies of Dühring's, Heinrich von Treitschke and Adolf Wagner, were both known for their anti-Jewish sentiments. Treitschke contribution to the "*Antisemitismusstreit*" is well documented, and Adolf Wagner was a prominent member of Adolf Stoecker's Christian Social Party and spoke out against the Jews. Cf. Evalyn A. Clark, "Adolf Wagner: From National Economist to National Socialist," in

system's tendency towards radicalism in the name of emancipation becomes particularly apparent here. Charles Fourier had previously attacked the Jews from a socialist point of view for their merchant mentality and egotism, and members of the "Left Hegelians" were quick to follow suit.<sup>663</sup> Dühring's intense disapproval of Judaism was touched upon briefly in our portrayal of the role of history in his *Weltanschauung* and bearing towards science. It was not until the 1880s that his anti-Semitism came into the forefront of his literary efforts, but as early as 1866 he makes reference to what he sees as the peculiarities of the Jews. He writes that "the Jewish mind or the Semitic soul leads to a distinctive religion and philosophy".<sup>664</sup> In *Critical Foundation of Political Economy* he labels the Jews a pernicious element of traditional society and speaks of a "Semitic relationship to egotism".<sup>665</sup> Although his anti-Semitism was to escalate in the second half of his career, becoming "the center point of his *Weltanschauung*" (Voelscke), it was only of peripheral importance to his system as conceived in the 1870s. However, for a system of sociopolitical economics which advocates universal socialization and communities where members share a common ancestry, it is no wonder that the Jews, as pariahs, are seen negatively by Dühring; within the context of universal socialization they represent for him a racially exclusive sub group of society, and are destined to be a theoretical and political issue. Dühring's poses a "Social Jewish Question" in which the role of the Jews for the Free Society is to be examined in a similar manner to the Social Question analyzed above. Jews embody for him everything that his system is against. He writes from the perspective of the existing *Gewaltstaat* society of his day:

The increasing influence of the Jewish element is in no way to be avoided in today's society and in today's government. A small people, whose early history proclaims ferocity and crass egotism as a future plan of action, was ultimately able to spread its seed throughout the earth and to parasitically lodge themselves on to the flesh of other nations by means of an intrusiveness and toughness which it was already accustomed to before the fall of its own state. Being at home everywhere and nowhere, it played the familiar role among the cultured nations in trade and finance. Especially the higher lines of business which were less restricted by the state [...] went to the Jews. In this way the domination of the daily press by Jewish newspaper owners, editors, correspondents, etc. is not only an often complained about fact in Germany and Austria, but also in France, as on the European continent in general. The

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*Political Science Quarterly* 55 (Sept., 1940): 378-411. Although Friedrich Engels spoke disparagingly of Dühring's anti-Semitism in a brief remark of his "Anti-Dühring", cf. *Herr Eugen Dührings Revolution in Science* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1934), 126, both he and Marx were known to have seen the Jews in a negative light. Cf. Edmund Silberner, "Friedrich Engels and the Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 11 (Oct., 1949): 323-342.

<sup>663</sup> Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 349.

<sup>664</sup> "Die Philosophie im Jahre 1865," *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart* 1 (1866): 579.

<sup>665</sup> KGV, 450.

penetration of Jewish elements into the medical profession is giving the ongoings in this field more and more the stamp of a pure business transaction, if not to say a systematic exploitation. Even government legislation is in some ways helping to make the public pay tributes to the doctors on an ever increasing scale through compulsory vaccinations.<sup>666</sup>

Although one is more likely to associate such tones with “conservative revolutionaries” of the radical Right and precursors of National Socialism, it should be stressed that Dühring’s critique of Jewry stems from the leftist-liberal core of his system.<sup>667</sup> He reproaches Jews for embodying a lack of freedom. They represent for him the ideal of subservience and the mindset of the slave, which for a thinker who strives for complete and utter freedom from coercion and domination is truly a sin. He describes them as having been the slaves not only to their own religion, but also to the powerful leaders who have ruled society through unjust power. They are, he believes, a strong component of the traditional oppressive society that his Free Society wishes to replace. The often cited rebellious or revolutionary spirit of Jewry is explained as the Jews following of their own interests; this behavior subsides, he writes, as soon as the advantages sought have been gained. Aside from a few radical elements, which remain isolated within the religion and often radically opposed by it, the Jews’ most salient characteristic is, according to Dühring, a flattering, sycophantic cuddling up to political authority. This subjugation to authority does not, however, prevent the Jews from exercising domination themselves. He writes, “To be a slave or to make slaves, this is the alternative of nations based on bondage and thus it is this way because the Jews can nearly lay claim to a form of indirect societal sovereignty.”<sup>668</sup> Dühring sees the aggressiveness with which Jews pursue their interests and with which they persecute opponents as an asset of the criminal state, making them a bulwark of the oppressive historical society.<sup>669</sup>

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<sup>666</sup> CP, 390 et seq.

<sup>667</sup> The term “Conservative Revolution” was made known by the Swiss historian and philosopher Armin Mohler. *Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932. Ein Handbuch* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994).

<sup>668</sup> CP, 392.

<sup>669</sup> There seems to be an inherent contradiction in Dühring looking down upon the Jews for their subservience and “slave mentality”, on the one hand, while at the same time reproaching them for their inclination towards undermining the social order. Dühring’s bearing towards the Jews, in many ways, bears the stamp of a subjectivity which at times borders on the infantile. In his autobiography, for example, he irrationally claims that early in his career his manuscripts sent to newspapers and magazines were not returned “by the Jews”; he also called his optician, the famous eye surgeon Albrecht von Graefe a “Jewish half-breed”, although there is no evidence of the doctor having Jewish ancestry. Cf. Ludwig Marcuse, “Der Pioneer Dühring,” 60. Regarding the alleged affinity of Jewish intellectuals for subverting the existing order, see Kevin MacDonald, *The Culture of Critique: an Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth Century Intellectual and Political Movements* (Long Beach, Ca.: 1<sup>st</sup> Books, 1998), as well as the more recent work of the Catholic scholar E. Michael Jones, *The Jewish Revolutionary Spirit and its Impact on World History* (Fidelity Press: Southbend, Indiana, 2008).

Although condemning them as immoral, Dühring is careful to emphasize that the Jews are not the main source of evil, but rather, in his opinion, “the worst element through which the main source of evil receives its strength”.<sup>670</sup> With their, as he sees it, slavish worldview and intimate allegiance to the forces of society which Dühring wants to replace, they are to be excluded from the Free Society. Thus as for Karl Marx and other Left Hegelians, the “emancipation *from* the Jews” is an eminent social problem. Dühring sees socialism as the only power that can fight the conditions of a population with a strong Jewish admixture.<sup>671</sup>

### 5. *Critical Summary*

Plans for social reform serve as a corollary to Dühring’s economic theories. Whereas Carey had believed that a societal harmony would come about as the economy of a nation advanced, Dühring was convinced that this could not happen without conscious political initiative on the side of groupings within the society. His position highlights a fundamental methodological difference between himself and his American mentor: Carey believes that economics can be approached like a natural science, such as physics; for Dühring, cultural factors, institutions, and societal conditions are decisive. Dühring’s acceptance of Laws of Development – a concept established previously by Wilhelm Roscher of the German historical school of economics – which determine the institutional and cultural changes of society, separates him not only from Carey, but also from Adam Smith and the classical school, and places him in the tradition of post-Kantian German Idealism from which modern socialism evolved. Like the Young Hegelians, Dühring believes that society can be shaped through philosophy and science; he follows in the footsteps of Ruge, Bauer, Stirner, Strauss, Marx and Engels, but is young enough to have never been committed to Hegelianism, which, in the eyes of many, had become bankrupt due to its incompatibility with natural science. Also like the Young Hegelians, Dühring wants socialism, but one of realism and of scientificity, as opposed to abstract religious or philosophical-historical constructions. He envisions a form of socialism free of utopian ideas.

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<sup>670</sup> Cf. PE 251 (1910): 2001. See also Jacob, *Eugen Dühring on the Jews*, 61. Five pages later it reads, “it is a false in a world-historical as well as in a particular case to consider the Jews as the sole causers of corruption of peoples. What the Jews create independently of corruption is only a part of that which they, in connection with other corruption, increase through their serviceability and raise to a colossal degree.” Ibid., 66.

<sup>671</sup> “Der Sozialismus ist die einzige Macht, welche Bevölkerungszustände mit stärker jüdischer Untermischung die Spitze bieten kann.” Ibid., 393. Engels points out that this opinion of Dühring’s calls to mind the bigotry of the Middle Ages. However, as Edmund Silberner has shown, there seems to be a certain logical connection between anti-Semitism and communism. Cf. idem, *Kommunisten zur Judenfrage: zur Geschichte von Theorie und Praxis des Kommunismus* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1983).

His plans for social reform evolve out of Carey's opposition to British *laissez-faire* capitalism and its social ethos of a decentralized development of economic activity towards a program of practical-political measures to strengthen the position of the workers. Following Carey's aspiration to view economic activity as a natural science, Dühring makes the original position of trying to explain societal conditions, groupings, and institutional entities similar to "forces of gravity" (*Gravitationskräfte*). He also creatively interprets List's teachings on the development of nations as being applicable for societal groups. Analogous to the ethos of his philosophy, the social imperative of his system involves the independence and self-reliance of societal groupings. With regard to the workers and the Social Question, the first step to be taken is the formation of labor coalitions. He rejects the Marxian call for revolution and proposes concrete, practical, and realistic measures to set reform in motion. These practical suggestions are not without a theoretical underpinning, which is a twist on the Schopenhauerian understanding of morality as based on compassion and Hume's theory of sentiments before that: societal groupings, like individuals follow the moral guidelines of reactive sense of revenge (dealt with in Chapter Four above).

Dühring's understanding of government, which like so many issues he deals with is ambiguous, also seems to bear some similarity to Schopenhauer's views: both thinkers advocate a minimal but important role for the state to play in society as an intermediary serving to protect its citizens and preserve a general order.<sup>672</sup> Like Carey and List, Dühring also believes that government has a role to play in facilitating economic activity, albeit in the negative sense of issuing protective tariffs. This is in line with Dühring's philosophy's inclination towards rationalism, as emphasized in Chapter Three above. His early writings see government in a largely positive light; as we have seen, he was commissioned by the Prussian state to create governmental policies that would help the working class. Dühring's efforts to find solutions for the workers have much in common with the *Kathedersozialisten* ("socialist of the chair"), who founded the Social Policy Association (*Verein für Socialpolitik*) in 1873. However, just as the Philosophy of the Actual downplays the faculty of Reason, Dühring comes to view the role of government in far more critically than did Schopenhauer, List, and Carey – not to mention the "Kathedersozialisten". In his eyes, the state is not an evil in itself (as it is in anarchism), but its power in the form of a centralized government based on force (*Gewaltstaat*), as it has evolved historically, most definitely is. A criminal government is, in fact, perhaps the greatest enemy of mankind.

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<sup>672</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, 342-345.

Dühring's Promethean spirit, as well as his inclination towards the type of the *philosophical scholar*, leads him to conceptualize a futuristic liberal state, which he calls the "Free Society". In the Free Society, all domination and coercion will be removed, and men and women will live together in equality and in freedom. In an attempt to remove the chains that have bound men throughout history, he designs a plan for a system of "economic communes", social units based on a common language and common ancestry, in which labor is the basis of earnings instead of property ownership. In contrast to the utopian models that came before it, Dühring's design is based on real societal entities and institutions; he envisions the pre-condition of a price mechanism and the use of gold similar to how it existed in capitalism. Beyond this, he attempts to improve on previous egalitarian approaches by suggesting that personal qualities, dispositions and capabilities should be taken into consideration. His Free Society, therefore, has room for developmental possibilities that prevent social congealment and stagnation. Dühring understood the meaning of the phrase *natura non facit saltus*, a basic assumption of Greek philosophy and natural science, and knew that world history moves extremely slowly. As Albrecht has shown, the plan for economic communes has substantial weakness.<sup>673</sup> Dühring fails to show how the commune system will be implemented. He correctly demonstrates the importance of competition between individuals and the different communes, but gives no indication as to how specific rankings will be established. The problem of income not based on work is likely to reappear, and if the members of the commune are thrifty, private capital will be created which could presumably be lent, thus making capital rent an issue again as it was in the oppressive society. It is, however, to Dühring's credit that he ultimately gives up the idea as not being a realistic alternative in the present. The Free Society itself, on the other hand, remains an alternative which, Dühring writes, will come into existence through the mechanism of the centralized government based on violence itself. His description of the *Gewaltstaat* and its method of ruling by means of institutionalized thought control anticipated some of what was to come into existence under the totalitarian regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A "universal socialization" of living conditions in the Free Society is to allow for the liberation from all types of social coercion. The ideas of emancipation Dühring advocates generally concur with other forms of leftist political ideals seen throughout modern history (which we will refrain from analyzing further now, as they are to be dealt with in the next chapter). He also focuses on "physiological makeup" of the Free Society, which, to his mind, will play a key role in the functioning of the individual communities. Even on a biological

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<sup>673</sup> Albrecht, ED, 241-242.

level, Dühring is concerned with the danger of coercion and domination; the biological constitution of the society has been harmed by forced marriages, created due to material or monetary concerns or pressures, and not to natural instinct. He vehemently rejects any type of government measures to regulate marriage and reproduction, because only freedom of custom and nature itself should perform this task. His underlining of the benefits of a homogenous population can also be seen as a corollary to his egalitarian ethos. The emancipation of women is to play an important role in improving society. Educational and professional opportunities are to be opened for women so that they can become economically independent and break the chains of the traditional institution of marriage, which Dühring likens to a tyrannical state. The anti-Jewish ethos, inherent in socialism since the days of Fourier and Proudhon, is retained by Dühring in his vision of the Free Society. His condemnation of Jewry escalates, however, beyond the sentiments of socialists before him because, from his perspective, the Jews seem to embody the very ethos of subordination that his philosophy wishes to overcome. Like other anti-Jewish writers, such as Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Dühring reproaches the Jews from a humanitarian point of view.<sup>674</sup> He condemns them for their alleged intolerance and for the slavish superstition of their religion; the subservient structure of their religion, he believes, has been transformed and geared towards the centralized state, making them the agents of powerful suppressors in the machinery of the government.<sup>675</sup> This position stands in contradiction to the fact that there have always been Jews among social reformers and radicals often fighting for the very same causes which Dühring advocates himself. In our opinion, he fails to sufficiently explain the rebellious spirit which has undeniably existed throughout Jewish history.<sup>676</sup>

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<sup>674</sup> Cf. Nolte, *Geschichtsdenken im 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, Frankfurt/Main: Propyläen, 1991), 72.

<sup>675</sup> See the unpublished essay "Über die Entstehung der Judenfrage", Appendices II below.

<sup>676</sup> It is perhaps not a coincidence that some of Dühring's greatest and most influential supporters and admirers were Jewish, e.g. Eduard Bernstein, Benedikt Friedländer, Franz Oppenheimer, and Hermann Schwarzwald.

## CHAPTER NINE

### CONSEQUENCES

#### *1. The Emancipatory Process*

Dühring's system of sociopolitical economics has been analyzed on three levels. First, it was viewed within the context of its basic point of departure: the social grievances brought forth by the industrial revolution, or, as this was called in Germany, the *Soziale Frage*. We dealt with Dühring's initial understanding of the fundamental economic concepts of political economy as he defined them in the 1860s, under the influence of his legal studies and the thought of List and Carey. Next, we turned to the theoretical dimensions of his system in its mature form, which, all philosophical and political considerations aside, involved a matter of fact and realistic interpretation of the management of man's material economic concerns. Here Dühring deals with the material interests that humans have as individuals, as nations, and as members of various social groupings. Political economy analyses the collective social budget determined by economic phenomena that is based on laws which differ from pure laws of nature. We came to know Dühring's understanding of the concepts of production, distribution and value. On a third level – and not completely to be separated from the realm of his theory – we considered the practical plans of his system, which involved an overcoming of utopian socialism, as well realistic suggestions to help the workers help themselves. Equally as significant for his system is its concept of the historically inherited government as an oppressive institution based on force (termed *Gewaltstaat*). This concept was derived through the pessimistic view of institutions and the societal power structure, which we touched on in our treatment of Dühring's philosophy and his view of history in Part Two. Dühring believes that the development of man has been marred by the power of selfish groupings that ruthlessly pursue their own interests at the expense of the weaker classes of society. Finally, we saw his solutions offered in the form of a “universal socialization”, which is to entail a freer and more equal society based on a common language and ancestry in which women are emancipated and in which allegedly belligerent minorities, such as the Jews, are to be excluded.

To further understand Dühring's system and its full implications, his ideas should also be considered within the context of the history of ideas. The dominant fact of the era in which he lived is the development of liberal or bourgeois society as it had come into being following the French Revolution. One of the salient features characterizing the advance of industrial society in Western Europe and North America has been the will towards the undoing of social ties that are seen as limiting man's freedom. The development of bourgeois society represents

a universal process of critique directed at various social entities and institutions, such as class, nation, religion, forms of law, etc.<sup>677</sup> Throughout the course of world history, man has longed for freedom from his mundane situation and has speculated on the essence of existence through philosophy and religion, both of which have presupposed a supramundane world in one form or another. What was new, as the 19<sup>th</sup> century began, was the application of Reason not to negate or rise above the world, as had been done in the past, but towards negating the ties made by man himself *within this world*. Following the French Revolution, Kant, Hegel and Fichte gave a philosophical interpretation to the new era and, with the development of political economy as a science, the time was ripe to discover the *total process* of how society was developing. As Nolte emphasizes, Marx was the first thinker to develop such a collective theory, being of the opinion that the severing of institutional ties must be taken to another level. A second revolution was necessary to fulfill the process: “political emancipation” was to be succeeded by “human emancipation”.<sup>678</sup> Dühring, Marx’s younger rival, engages in a similar effort, but, as we have seen, in a different manner: the liberation which he envisions must be based on the *actual* concrete phenomena, and thus the idea of abstraction is not taken as far as it had been by Marx. Dühring vehemently rejects the idea of revolution and of “miracle solutions”; he offers not a grand vision of an ultimate societal development, but rather a practical model of a system of communities, which functions according to real economic mechanisms, and develops within the given structure of traditional society. Whereas Marx’s vision of emancipation is largely philosophical, Dühring’s is principally political. Proceeding from his studies of Hegel, Marx concerns himself with the concept of alienation and how it affected society; after praising bourgeois society for its great achievements, Marx concludes that it has alienated the proletariat, who in turn, through a dialectical process, will rise to create a classless society. Dühring, who considers the revolution of the bourgeoisie in 1789 to be the one decisive revolution, is interested in fulfilling the values of the Enlightenment through concrete political action involving organized group cooperation to fight the violent state, and to break the chains of traditional society. Although he is one with Marx in affirming the process of man having to sever ties with the confining institutions of the past, the Philosophy of the Actual has an inherent aversion to abstraction not wedded to the concrete. Dühring therefore rejects the idea of revolution as a “*deus ex machina* solution”, believing that change will have to come on the basis of the existing society. In Dühring’s

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<sup>677</sup> Ernst Nolte has labeled this phenomenon “practical transcendence”. Cf. *Three Faces of Fascism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), 429-434.

<sup>678</sup> *Ibid.*, 434.

philosophy, it is not enough to disassociate oneself without offering a positive association to replace it.

Despite the realistic basis of his system, which shuns utopianism and revolutionary solutions, Dühring's thought is clearly embedded in the liberal tradition of the Enlightenment. There is hardly a current of leftist thought which is not to be found in Dühring. Indeed, it could be claimed that in many ways his thought represents a microcosm of the leftist values that have existed since the French Revolution. In his 1874 article "A New Communist", socialist leader August Bebel wrote that Dühring belongs to the left wing of the socialists.<sup>679</sup> Bebel goes on to list Dühring's, as he sees them, communist views: a violent transformation of the state, an abolition of land ownership, decentralization and organization of economic communes with industrial production, nationalization of all means of transport, abolition of differences in pay between "head" and "hand" work, educational opportunity for all, state education and gender rights, and a break with religion.<sup>680</sup>

Even though, as we have seen, Dühring was to alter some of these positions at a later date – some of them quite radically – his leftist credentials remained intact throughout his career. The affinity of his thought with leftist principles can be clearly enumerated. Left-liberal political thought is characterized by the idea of equality in some form; the main principle of Dühring's system is the ruling out of coercion, and the creation of equality (in the form of ethnic homogeneity) in society. The Left has always been known for appeals to the concept of justice utilizing emotion and feelings of outrage; Dühring advocates the value of instinct and emotion in making affirmative moral statements. Liberalism is often eudemonistic and concerned with the prosperity of the masses, and Dühring – at least until the late phase of his career – praises the instinct of the people and optimistically believes that the happiness of mankind lies in the future. The anti-elitism passionately advocated by most liberals was strongly evident in Dühring's attacks on the university professors. The Leftists' discomfort with the power of institutions – as, for example, articulated by the Frankfurt School – is mirrored in Dühring's critique of the university, the state, the church, the military, the traditional structure of marriage, etc.<sup>681</sup> A salient cause of Left Liberalism has traditionally been women's emancipation; as Bebel pointed out, freeing women from the institution of coerced marriage has a prominent place in Dühring's thought. Pacifism is another main

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<sup>679</sup> Bebel, "Ein neuer 'Communist'," *Volksstaat* (12 March 1874).

<sup>680</sup> Ibid., and also "Ein neuer 'Communist (Schluß)," *Volksstaat* (20 March 1874).

<sup>681</sup> One thinks of Theodor W. Adorno's position in his public debates with Arnold Gehlen on the significance of institutions. Adorno was of the opinion that institutions cause people to be immature. Cf. "Soziologisches Streitgespräch. Adorno vs. Gehlen 1965," moderated by Felix von Cube.

element of liberal thought; Dühring is vehemently opposed to war.<sup>682</sup> Liberals are against traditional religion; the Philosophy of the Actual, which advocates a strictly immanent view of the world, is as well. Leftist intellectuals often advocate atheism, as does Dühring. Liberals often advocate science as a means of warding off traditional beliefs; scientism is a main pillar of Dühring's thought. Like many liberals, who often view their ancestors disparagingly, Dühring sees the whole of society as having been in a stage of immaturity before the French Revolution. He is also an advocate of international human rights, having written a special treatise on the Geneva Convention. Dühring's system of sociopolitical economics thus stands out as an embodiment of various currents of modern leftist thought.<sup>683</sup>

## 2. *Equality and the Postulate of Destruction*

Dühring system does not only represent a microcosm of leftist thought: in an essential way, it can be said to have outdone any liberal doctrines that had ever been formed. Although he was one of the first anti-Marxist theoreticians, as Carl-Erich Vollgraf points out, Dühring's attacks against Marxism "came from the left".<sup>684</sup> Dühring's system aims at taking liberalism to the extreme by removing any barriers that will limit man's freedom.<sup>685</sup> Even the concept of the Free Society itself will need to be removed as "you should never count on absolutely permanent entities, indeed never even want them".<sup>686</sup> For Dühring, life and death, creation, and destruction belong unequivocally together. In adding an element of what may be termed "liberating destruction" to his system – that may even be applied to the system itself – he takes the concept of emancipation to a new extreme. To keep his ideas of liberation in perspective, it is again helpful to focus on the historical development of the concept of liberation, which predated the radical solution to the quandary of bondage and liberation which Dühring ultimately provided.

Western Liberalism developed – and is still developing today – as philosophy of history, a secular phenomenon unrestricted by nature or God, offering hope and security for a brighter

<sup>682</sup> Once again we should draw attention to changes in his outlook as his career progresses. In the first phase of his literary production, he does advocate war. Cf. KGV, 454.

<sup>683</sup> Johannes Berg, a contemporary of Dühring's and a proponent of free trade, also pointed out how Dühring unifies various socialist tendencies. Cf. "Die Parteien im Deutschen Reichstag," *Unsere Zeit* (1882): 860.

<sup>684</sup> Carl Erich Vollgraf, *Theoriegeschichtliche Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte des "Anti-Dühring."* Marx Mitarbeit am "Anti-Dühring," 9 and 38.

<sup>685</sup> Although this sounds similar to anarchism, as we have seen, Dühring's background in law, as well as his historical point of departure, prevent him from rejecting government completely. Dühring, in our opinion, is far too much of a rationalist to ever be a true anarchist. E.V. Zenker, however, sees Dühring in the tradition of anarchism, but considers him a "watered down social theorist compared with Proudhon." *Der Anarchismus. Kritische Geschichte der anarchistischen Theorie* (Berlin: Libertad Verlag, 1979 [1895]), 147. On Dühring's relationship to Proudhon, the founder of anarchism, see F. Kreier, *Sozialismus für Kleinbürger. Pierre Joseph Proudhon – Wegbereiter des Dritten Reichs*, 355-369.

<sup>686</sup> CP, 304.

future.<sup>687</sup> As it came to be accepted that man's fate is not formed by nature, but rather through the work of man himself, divine providence was slowly replaced by human progress.<sup>688</sup> The notion of emancipation served as a vehicle of revolution and civil war and as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed moved into the service of industrialization; "liberation" became the battle cry to change world history. The prerequisite for this Liberalism, which did not develop outside of Europe, was the separation of church and state in the Middle Ages and a dualism which may be termed "the necessary condition for the genesis of intellectual and political freedom".<sup>689</sup> Although the phrase "*Ecclesia semper reformanda*" is accurate to describe the dynamics of change within the development of Christianity, a new level of "emancipation" took place with the "abstraction" of Protestantism from the Catholic Church during the Reformation. The atrocities of the confessional wars caused many enlightened thinkers to advocate tolerance among citizens and peace among countries. However, thinkers began to conclude that it would become possible to eradicate the reasons for war and intolerance altogether. The cause of these societal evils was seen to be in the existence of the nobility, the church, or simply in the inequality of men in general.

The idea of liberation advanced to a stage yet unseen through the French Revolution, which unseated the monarchy and the feudal order, but was only possible through executions, killing, and bloodshed unparalleled in European history.<sup>690</sup> 1789 became the starting point towards a "just social order", and the abstract power of emancipation, through the bourgeois public, continued to gain influence over society. Soon the cause of social suffering and inequality was translated into terms of economics. Intellectuals became radicalized, coming to view capital and interest as causing individual slavery. There were strong attacks led by men such as Thomas Paine against the system of state debt, and aristocratic sinecures and many Englishmen began to speak out against the existence of the aristocracy in general, undertones of eradicating or destroying a class of people. The English aristocracy acted promptly and confidently, passing the reform bill in the year of Dühring's birth, 1833; this alleviated the radicalism to a large degree. Philosophical radicals remained, however, and there was a vehement revolt from members on the fringes of the Tory party against child labor. Another reaction towards problems of industrialization, involving a "destruction" of sorts, came from

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<sup>687</sup> Cf. Hanno Kesting, *Geschichtsphilosophie und Weltbürgerkrieg*.

<sup>688</sup> Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) was an early proponent of this line of thinking. Cf. *Ibid.*, 56-57.

<sup>689</sup> Wolfgang Reinhard, "Die lateinische Variante von Religion und ihre Bedeutung für die politische Kultur Europas. Ein versuch in historischer Anthropologie," *op. cit.*, 243.

<sup>690</sup> On this phenomenon see Ernst Nolte's article, "Bürgerliche Gesellschaft und Vernichtungspostulat," in *idem, Was ist bürgerlich? und andere Artikel, Abhandlungen, Auseinandersetzungen* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1979), 222-247.

the Malthus school, which feared that industrial improvements could be destroyed by the biological power of humans and that the increasing population would be putting pressure on society's means of sustenance until people learned to have self-control and reproduce less.<sup>691</sup> Other suggestions, as Nolte points out, were less direct. An article appeared in 1838 entitled "On the Possibility of Limiting Populousness", written by an anonymous author named Marcus, which advocated the painless extermination of surpluses of babies through lethal gas as the only way of preserving the happiness of individuals against the evils of overpopulation. This writing is the first recorded postulate of extermination through gas and, as Nolte points out, is clearly eudemonistic and Benthamian in its character.<sup>692</sup> The principle of destruction of the radical Left thus contained a rational and humanitarian core. However, its main thrust was not a "physical" but rather a "societal" destruction – i.e. the ridding society of a perceived ill. There was the feeling of an irrevocable shift in world history, and it was thought that to fulfill this development certain societal entities would have to meet destruction. Comte, Dühring's paragon, "claimed the irrevocable end of the theological and metaphysical era and the realities which accompanied it; Tocqueville placed a gravestone for the aristocracy on both of his main works".<sup>693</sup> Marxism should be mentioned in this context as well: a new proletarian revolution was to outdo the bourgeois revolution and destroy "all differences". In place of the freedom *of* property there was to be freedom *from* property. In place of commercial freedom, there was to be freedom *from* the egoism of trade; instead of freedom *of* religion there was to be freedom *from* religion. And finally, instead of the emancipation *of* the Jews, there was to be emancipation *from* the Jews, as the young Karl Marx formulated it. The enthusiasm that the classical German philosophers had for philosophical revolution was ultimately surpassed by Marx: a revolutionary theory is converted into a political ideology. To quote Marx on his theory of revolution: "It is not an anatomical knife, it is a weapon. Its object is its enemy, which it does not want to refute, but to destroy".<sup>694</sup>

The concept of "destruction" is also an integral part of Dühring's ontology. In *Cursus of Philosophy* he speaks of destruction in terms of the diverse, constantly new forms that appear and then become obliterated.<sup>695</sup> Annihilation is also present in human affairs through his postulate of the Law of Difference and the idea that antagonism is an element throughout the

<sup>691</sup> An idea which Dühring vehemently rejected, as we have seen above.

<sup>692</sup> Nolte, "Bürgerliche Gesellschaft und Vernichtungspostulat," 227 et seq.

<sup>693</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>694</sup> "Sie ist kein anatomisches Messer, sie ist eine Waffe. Ihr Gegenstand ist ihr Feind, den sie nicht widerlegen, sondern vernichten will." Karl Marx, „Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung,“ in *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels Werke. Band I* (Berlin: Dietz), 380. On the threats of destruction in the works of Marx and Engels, cf. also Nolte, *Marxismus und Industrielle Revolution*, 460 et seq.

<sup>695</sup> CP, 21.

whole of nature. His theory of consciousness is based on the premise that harmful superstition and aberrations of human thought should be eradicated if deceit and ultimately corruption are to be avoided. Dühring also speaks of morally indefensible societal configurations which must be destroyed to further the development of life in general.<sup>696</sup> These abstract thoughts are given extreme expression later in Dühring's career when, beginning in 1900, he began to publish his work on his own. In a fit of what must be seen as unspeakable fanaticism, beginning with the sixth edition of his book the *Jewish Question*, he advocates the physical extermination of the Jews as a therapeutic measure to rid society of "the demagoguery of selfishness".

### 3. *A Revised Framework of Left-Liberalism*

With regard to political economy, Dühring's system is a direct challenge to the *laissez-faire* doctrines of classical liberalism. As we have seen, he follows Carey and List in believing that the doctrines of free trade professed by the British School do not represent valid theoretical premises, i.e. do not have general value for all economies, but are rather far more an expression of the situation of Britain and her empire and the particular interests of Great Britain. As has been pointed out on several occasions, Dühring's system is embedded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century's view that laws of nature determine economies; to deny the existence of laws of nature is, for Dühring, to abandon any form of a scientific approach to political economy. Despite his affinity for the ideas of physiocrats and especially Adam Smith, as we have seen, Dühring shows the influence of his background in the *Staatswissenschaften* and German Idealism by postulating the existence of Laws of Development, which soften the strict determinism of the social and economic world, functioning differently than do laws of nature. Man creates a "world of institutions and facts" towards which we are not bound in the same way as to nature.<sup>697</sup> Despite his discomfort with and his reservations about the use of history, as analyzed in Chapter Five above, Dühring sees man as an historical being, as did both the German Historical School and the Marxist Socialists.<sup>698</sup> Adam Smith and classical political economy's assumption that there is only one realm of law governing economics is for Dühring one-sided and insufficient as it fails to provide for important anthropological differentiations, including the importance of technology as a factor of economic development. Dühring sees the advance of technology as a liberating factor as – regardless as to how the

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<sup>696</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>697</sup> CNS, 66. As mentioned above, this is the distinction would later be developed – albeit with a different application – by the Southwest School of Kantianism (Windelband and Rickert), which spoke of "idiographic" and "nomothetic" laws. On the difference between naturalism and historicism from the point of scientific cognition see Hans Alberts' insightful lecture "Geschichtswissenschaft als hypothetisch-deduktive Disziplin – zur Kritik des methodologischen Historismus," *Mannheimer Vorträge 2* (2000): 5-22.

<sup>698</sup> Binder, SSED, 52.

distribution is carried out – it increases the productivity of economic means, natural resources, and the workforce. The “Age of Coal and Iron” ushered in by the progress of mechanics and technology (man’s “second nature”) has opened up grand possibilities for wealth and prosperity.<sup>699</sup> Dühring thus equates freedom with man separating, or liberating himself from nature. Man must also liberate himself from fabricated entities in the form of monopolies created by unbridled capitalism.<sup>700</sup> His attack on the traditional forms of ruling, as being carried out through immoral political force, presupposes the eradication of these elements to create a truly free society. He gives up his plan for the ultimately Free Society, but the seed had been planted for others, most prominently Oppenheimer and Hertzka, to attempt to carry out this idea, which takes liberalism to its absolute extreme.<sup>701</sup>

Having placed Dühring’s thought in the tradition of leftist liberal thought as it developed since the French Revolution, we have seen that his ideas in many ways represent an attack on various societal entities and institutions in the name of liberation. Along with the sundry of liberal beliefs mentioned above, his system also includes even the most radical tenet of liberalism, the postulate of destruction and the advocacy of the eradication of harmful societal elements in the name of freedom. What separates Dühring from most other leftists, including Marx, is his philosophy’s realistic basis and its *ad hoc* approach to solving concrete practical problems as they present themselves at any given time. Karl Marx wrote that philosophers should not only interpret the world – they should also try to change it.<sup>702</sup> The Philosophy of the Actual must contradict this statement because it aims to focus exclusively on the phenomena of the world as it is, and not how a philosopher *imagines* it should be.<sup>703</sup> Just as Dühring discards the idea of revolution, he must also discard Marx’s thesis on Feuerbach. Man must deal with *this* reality, the *actual* world; what can be changed is the mere human, or the “unnecessarily human”, which leads man astray. The world is to be confronted realistically. To be done away with are those “merely human” creations, or the “merely historical”, seen as false figments of the imagination, amounting to false volition and which,

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<sup>699</sup> CNS, 73.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>701</sup> In his classical treatise on the concept of the political, written in the Weimar Republic and supplemented in the early sixties, Carl Schmitt points out the weaknesses of Oppenheimer’s attempt to rule out alleged political suppression by replacing the State through Society. *Der Begriff des Politischen. Text von 1932 mit einem Vorwort und drei Corollarien* (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 1991), 75-76.

<sup>702</sup> The famous 11th Feuerbach Thesis, which today hangs on the wall of the Humboldt University’s entrance hall.

<sup>703</sup> Dühring’s role model Schopenhauer was also opposed to the idea of revolution. He left a substantial portion of his wealth to the families of the Prussian soldiers who died in the 1848 Revolution. Cf. Olaf Briese, “Querdenker Schopenhauer. Wechselhafte Wirkungen einer pessimistischen Philosophie,” in Helmut Bock and Renate Plöse, eds. *Aufbruch in die Bürgerwelt. Lebensbilder aus Vormärz und Biedermeier* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 1994), 509.

as he sees it, bring forth false action detrimental to man's freedom and to the whole of society. Dühring's canons are aimed, so to speak, at the, as he views them, oppressive elements of various societal entities – e.g. religion, education, law, customs, etc. – which make up what Hegel termed the “objective mind”. The polemic against institutions as restrictive fabricated creations is a general characteristic of the Enlightenment, which has been a component of Left Liberalism since the French Revolution and until the present.

The attack on establishments deeply entrenched in society, as advocated on a theoretical and practical level by Dühring, is an effort that is not likely to be rewarded on a practical level. We now turn to the second half of Dühring's career to examine the trials and tribulations he faced as he fought for the ideals of his system. His cause and his enemies were soon to collide in a prolonged struggle which would continue until his death in 1921.

PART FOUR:

THE DESCENT INTO ISOLATION AND OBSCURITY

1877-1921

THE SYSTEM of socio-political economics just described was not conceived in a vacuum and must be viewed and understood within the context in which it developed. Dühring's brand of socialism, as we have shown, grew out of the leftist-liberal current of thought that originated from the philosophy of Hegel, and it was heavily influenced by the turbulent years of the early 1870s, which were plagued by financial crisis and general economic instability. August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht had officially founded the Social Democratic German Labor Party - the precursor of the Social Democratic Party of Germany today - in Eisenach in 1869, but there was little ideological cohesion to the labor movement. At the time there was a demand for a system of thought which could give guidance to leftist intellectuals and could offer scientific legitimacy for the cause of the workers, but no one was able to come up with a coherent theory that could unite the disparate elements of socialist thinking. At this stage, even Friedrich Engels himself had doubts as to whether Marxism could be termed "scientific socialism".<sup>704</sup> Dühring's system of social economics offered elaborate views on the complex quandaries of political economy and also contained a political *Weltanschauung* supported by economic principles, a philosophy, and a critical perspective of history. Beyond that, his system possessed a scholarly character while at the same time lashing out at the academic elite of the Prussian state apparatus, for whom Dühring was increasingly becoming an anathema. Dühring's thorough and complex teachings on the political economic theory, dealt with in Chapter Seven, provided a wealth of material and ideas, which could be applied towards creating solutions for the Social Question. Influential leftist intellectuals, such as Most, Liebknecht, and even Bebel gravitated towards Dühring, and he became perhaps an even greater anathema for "Gods" of socialism, Marx and Engels. Dühring possessed an almost diabolical pugnacity which fit the turbulent years of the 1870s. He soon became involved in a two-front war between the Prussian professors and the Marxists which would break out into intellectual battles on all sides against various societal groupings.<sup>705</sup>

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<sup>704</sup> Cf. "Sozialismus," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: histor. Lexikon zur polit.-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1974), 985.

<sup>705</sup> It should be noticed that while Marxism postulated a universal historical battle with religious or pseudo-religious undertones in the name of philosophy, Dühring's struggles were largely directed towards the present and involved his cause and him personally. Marx, as a disciple of Hegel, had loftier visions of a future of world revolution led by the "image of the spirit" in struggle with an alien world to transform this world by revolution. Cf. Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, 79. The philosopher Ludwig Marcuse, as we have mentioned above, reproached Dühring's philosophy for its "lack of a will towards a trans-personal goal" (*Mangel eines Willens zum überpersönlichen Ziel*). "Der Pionier Dühring," op. cit., 57.

## CHAPTER TEN

### FIGHTING ON ALL FRONTS (1877-1899)

#### *1. Remotion and the Student Protest Movement*

Since his fight with Adolf Wagner, which had resulted in a warning from the faculty for both scholars, Dühring was walking on thin ice at the university. He believed that it was only a matter of time before the professors would have him removed from his position as lecturer for good. The incident did not, however, cause him to tone down his polemics against the university and its professors. If anything, he increased them. He was proud of his stance against the university elite, and took inspiration, in this respect, not only from Schopenhauer, but also, according to his autobiography, from Adam Smith.<sup>706</sup> Echoing the ideals of the Enlightenment, but also with a tinge of the self-righteous polemicism that anticipated the 1968 revolution nearly a century later, he expressed the opinion that the modern university had a medieval character and was dominated by exclusive guilds with special privileges. He wrote that nepotism reigned supreme and that professors chose subservient successors to serve in vacant chairs. The professoriate was a kind of caste procreating through inbreeding, immune to competition from outside: in essence, a monopoly.<sup>707</sup>

In May of 1877, Dühring was notified by the university that parts of his books *Women's Path to Higher Education* and the second edition of his prize-winning *Critical History of the General Principles of Mechanics* were considered irreconcilable with his position as a university lecturer.<sup>708</sup> There were no concrete charges as there had been in the controversy with Adolf Wagner two years earlier. Dühring's main offence, it seems, was to have broken the unwritten rules of academic etiquette. His greatest infraction was his insinuation that

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<sup>706</sup> Cf. SLF, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 187.

<sup>707</sup> WBF, 36-37. Following his dismissal he collected his thoughts on university life into an article entitled "The University Question in Modern Society". Dühring, "Die Universitätsfrage der moderenen Gesellschaft," *Mehr Licht* 49 and 52 (Sept.: 1879): 776-779, 826-830. Had he known of Dühring, H.L. Mencken would have agreed with him wholeheartedly regarding the negative influence of the university on science. Mencken wrote: "Political economy, in so far as it is a science at all, was pumped up and embellished by any such academic clients and ticket-of-leave men. It was put on its legs by inquirers who were not only safe from all sousing in the campus pump, but who were also free from the mental timorousness and conformity which go inevitably with school teaching – in brief, by men of the world, accustomed to its free air, its hospitality to originality and plain speaking." "The Dismal Science," in *Prejudices: Third Series* (New York: Cosimo Books, 2009), 284.

<sup>708</sup> Cf. *Aktenstücke in der Angelegenheit des Privatdozenten Dr. Dühring. Veröffentlicht durch die Philosophische Fakultät der königlichen Universität zu Berlin* (Berlin: Druck und Verlag von G.Reimer), 10-11. Also, SLF, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 182. On the background of the events leading up to the remotion from the perspective of a Dühringian during the Weimar Republic, see Gustav Michaelis, "Beiträge zur Vorgeschichte der Remotion Eugen Dührings," *Propagandablätter zur Dühringsche Geisteshaltung und Lebensgestaltung. Zittauer (Memento-) Sendbogen* (Juli 1927): 1-19. For a perspective critical of Dühring see Wolfgang Drechsler, "Herr Dühring's Remotion," *Eugen Dühring (1833-1921) and the Freedom of Teaching and Research*, Journal of Economic Studies, ed. Jürgen Backhaus (2002), 262-293.

Professor Hermann Helmholtz had plagiarized Robert Mayer by publishing his own theory of energy equivalence five years after Mayer published his, saying that he had no knowledge of Mayer's discovery.<sup>709</sup> It became apparent to Dühring that he had little chance of defending himself successfully this time around.

Help did come, however, from public opinion: soon after the charges were officially made, the first newspapers began to report on the affair. Throughout Germany, there came a wave of outrage against the university. The public was clearly behind the erudite blind lecturer. When it became known that the critique of Prof. Helmholtz was the reason for his dismissal, the newspapers asked the University of Berlin what they thought of Schopenhauer's description of Helmholtz as someone who "related to true greatness as a molehill to Mont Blanc". The people clearly sided with Dühring against the university and its elite professors. At the same time, the university students began to speak out for Dühring, as did members of the Social Democratic Party (at the time called Social Democratic Labor Party). When the official decree from the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs was released on 6 June, banning Dühring from any further lecturing at the Berlin University in the middle of the semester, there was a storm of protest building on the horizon.

Loyal participants of his lectures were outraged and began to take action: soon there was an organized protest movement throughout the country. Dühring received a petition against his remotion signed by 250 students from the Berlin University. It read:

Dear Dr. Dühring,

A rumor has been spreading that there is a proceeding directed by the philosophy faculty against your teaching at our university. With this letter, those who have signed this petition feel called upon to give testimony to the amount of respect that they owe a man, who, free from any selfish intentions, fearing no obstacle in the fight for what he held to be right and true, always courageously expressed and defended his opinion under the most difficult conditions. We aim to prove that there is still a feeling of justice and freedom among the local student body and respect for every opinion based on inner conviction.

Berlin, 19 June 1877.

Dühring's answer followed one day later:

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<sup>709</sup> Dühring cast doubt on Helmholtz's claim to have also discovered the Law of Conservation of Energy independently of Robert Mayer. While giving Mayer credit for having first discovered the law, Helmholtz claims to have come to the same conclusion without having read Mayer's article, which was published in the well-known *Annalen der Chemie und Pharmacie von Wöhler und Liebig* in 1842. Helmholtz defended himself against Dühring's charge, writing, that at the time, as a military doctor in Potsdam, he had no time to do "extensive literature research". Cf. *Aktenstücke in der Angelegenheit des Privatdozenten Dr. Dühring durch die philosophische Fakultät der Kgl. Universität zu Berlin* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1877).

Dear Students,

The sentiments that you have documented for me are not only a testimony to my way of thinking, but also to yours. The second edition of my *History of the Principles of Mechanics*, which has been incriminated by the University of Berlin, shows the difficulties presented for any scientific effort striving for honor and truth. In my book I have written that anyone who writes critically of the recent history and present state of mathematics inevitably upsets the powers that be to such an extent that his career in science is in jeopardy. Although I have only portrayed part of this historically, and only a single branch of applied mathematics, condemning the conditions of today as they relate to education, this has sufficed to get a taste of the tenuousness of a scientific career. By sincerely thanking you for the sympathy you have shown my position towards science and life, and in full appreciation of the value of the steps you have taken, I hope that you will experience a day where freedom and truth in science have more standing than at the moment.

Berlin, 20 June 1877

On 12 July, there was a large public gathering at the *Berliner Handwerkerverein* (Berlin Trade Union Society). Approximately 2,500 people showed up, of which 1,500 were students, the rest middle class citizens. At the gathering, according to Dühring, resolutions were made in protest of his dismissal and against the deplorable conditions at the universities.<sup>710</sup> A corporative association for the freedom of science was founded for the purpose of monitoring unlawful actions by the university guild and facilitating discussion on freedom in academia. The press coverage of the event was mixed, depending on whether the newspaper was for or against the Social Democratic movement.<sup>711</sup> The Social Democrats themselves, who had held a special event on the same day to protest the dismissal, issued an official resolution to be delivered to the assembly by five of their members, among them Johann Most, a radical but politically influential socialist, who had discovered Dühring's works while in Plötzensee prison.<sup>712</sup> The students accepted the Berlin workers' deputation with great enthusiasm – an occurrence, as Rudolf Rocker (writing in 1924), Most's biographer, noticed, “one never saw

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<sup>710</sup> SFL, 2nd edition, 206.

<sup>711</sup> Cf. Brigitte Mogge, *Rhetorik des Hasses* (Neuss: Verlag: Gesellschaft für Buchdruckerei AG, 1977), 34.

<sup>712</sup> Most wrote Dühring immediately following his release from prison to thank him for the pleasure that reading *Cursus der National- und Sozialökonomie and Cursus der Philosophie* had given him during his two years in prison. He regrets the lack of a unified system of socialism at the time and tries to encourage Dühring to write a “system of modern socialism”. Cf. Most to Dühring, 18 June 1876, HA/SBB. Dühring's change of course, away from the workers movement and towards gaining influence among the middle class hindered any further cooperation with Most. Cf. Reinhardt's article “Eugen Dühring und Johann Most,” *Sendbogen für Dühringische Geisteshaltung und Lebensgestaltung* 38 (January 1933): 8-10.

again in Germany”.<sup>713</sup> Less than one year later, following the attempted assassination of the Kaiser, the students rallied around the throne, and were to remain largely anti-Marxist in their bearing.<sup>714</sup>

The question has been posed as to whether Dühring’s dismissal from the University of Berlin was just or not. The charges were imprecise, but, as mentioned, the insinuations of plagiarism Dühring made against Prof. Helmholtz seem to have been the main factor.<sup>715</sup> At the time, the consensus among intellectuals – even those who were vehemently opposed to Dühring – was that the firing was unjust. A recent investigation of the incident by Wolfgang Drechsler has, however, has judged that the dismissal was legal, legitimate, and would also be upheld today.<sup>716</sup> Drechsler’s conclusions, in our opinion, fail to grasp the main point, however, which does not center on any grave infractions committed by Dühring, but rather on conflicts of interest between the professoriate and Dühring. Much like the controversial case of the American scholar Dr. Scott Nearing, who was dismissed from the University of Pennsylvania in the 1920s for professing socialist views of political economy, Dühring was dismissed not for his deportment as a lecturer, but rather because the leftist ethos his scholarship represented disturbed the security and equanimity of the tenured professors who controlled the university.<sup>717</sup> Although he was only a *Privatdozent* ( untenured lecturer), Dühring and his ideas of scientific and social reform had generated a large following among the Berlin students, who swarmed to his lectures and supported his views. The professoriate, taken aback by the allegedly dangerous critique that Dühring issued, had an interest in crushing what they saw as a danger to the apparatus of the university which they represented.<sup>718</sup>

Perhaps the most significant consideration regarding the incident – untouched upon by Drechsler – is that, through the scandal and uproar surrounding the remotion, the content of the book for which Dühring was dismissed, which had amounted to a bold and original

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<sup>713</sup> Rudolf Rocker, *Johann Most. Das Leben eines Rebellen*, 56. It would not be until the 1960s that there would an uproar among the students on the scale of the protest against Dühring’s dismissal.

<sup>714</sup> Konrad Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics. The Rise of Academic Illiberalism* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 264.

<sup>715</sup> Although Mayer’s article was published in a well-known journal at the time, it has generally been accepted that Helmholtz did not have access to Mayer’s work; Helmholtz was quick to credit Mayer once he was confronted with his theory. To this day, Helmholtz enjoys an esteemed position in the history of German thought, and is a revered figure in today’s Germany as witnessed by the *Helmholtz Gemeinschaft*, an association of German research centers named in his honor; his statue stands in front of the main building of Berlin’s Humboldt University. Cf. *Universalgenie Helmholtz. Rückblick nach 100 Jahren*, ed. Lorenz Krüger (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994).

<sup>716</sup> Drechsler, “Herr Dühring’s Remotion,” op. cit.

<sup>717</sup> Cf. H. L. Mencken’s remarks of Nearing in his article “The Dismal Science,” op. cit., 463-465.

<sup>718</sup> Another consideration was the pecuniary factor. Lectures of both the professors and the unsalaried lecturers were remunerated according to the amount of students who attended. There may have been a financial factor as well connected with petty jealousies towards a successful teacher like Dühring.

attempt to find a way to improve the professional chances of women, was completely ignored and removed from public discussion. As Maria Reményi has asserted, the manner in which a society deals with radical critics is also a measure of its stability and system of values; Dühring's case showed the existence of concealed fractures in the economic and scientific aspiring society of industrial Germany.<sup>719</sup> The decision of the faculty to dismiss Dühring was a conservative measure which, ironically, may have in the long term done a disservice to the institutions that the Berlin professors sought to protect. The stifling of Dühring's critique ensured that an important social issue, such as the improvement of the educational opportunities of women, was not addressed, much less solved. The professors' actions increased the growing alienation among certain sectors of the German population and, in our opinion, indirectly sowed the seeds of radicalism to come.<sup>720</sup>

## 2. *From Friend to Foe of the Social Democrats*

Dühring's growing popularity within the Social Democratic movement has been touched upon already. Since the publication of his *Cursus of National and Social Economy* in 1873 and the near completion of his system of social economics (his treatise on philosophy was to follow in 1875), he had become a noticeable figure among Social Democratic intellectuals. Looking back on the development of the Social Democratic movement in its early days, Eduard Bernstein emphasized Dühring's key role as a catalyst for bringing students and Social Democratic activists together.<sup>721</sup> Students from different Berlin colleges, inspired by Dühring, began to meet to discuss possibilities of socialist cooperation, and out of these gatherings the famous "Mohren Club" was founded by Louis Viereck.<sup>722</sup> What particularly interested Bernstein and others in Dühring's theories was the economically liberal element in his socialism, a factor which they believed had been neglected by Marxism.<sup>723</sup>

In the rivalry between the Marxists and the Lassalleists, Dühring had come closer to taking sides with the latter. He saw the advocacy of general suffrage as a precondition for the workers attaining political power as "one of the most successful elements of Lassalle's

<sup>719</sup> Reményi, "Der Fall Eugen Dühring und die Diskussion um das Frauenstudium in Berlin," 278.

<sup>720</sup> It is indeed true, as Bona Meyer, suggested, that Dühring's charges of nepotism and corruption were vague; the veracity of such claims would have needed documentation which Dühring failed to provide. Mayer, "Zur Philosophie der Gegenwart," 54-55. However, we believe that an intellectual rebuttal of the charges would have been more effective than dismissing Dühring from the university, which created a bad impression of the tenured professors in the public.

<sup>721</sup> Eduard Bernstein, *Sozialdemokratische Lehrjahre* (Berlin: Der Bücherkeis, 1928), 55. See also Sudermann, *Das Bilderbuch meiner Jugend*, 231.

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>723</sup> Bernstein, *Entwicklungsgang eines Sozialisten* (Leipzig:1930), 11-12. Bernstein thought at the time that Marx advocated a strong state, but later after having read his work on the Paris Commune thought otherwise. Cf. Richard Adamiak, "Marx, Engels, and Dühring," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35 (1974): 105.

program”.<sup>724</sup> Upon his dismissal from the university, however, even his opponents in the Marxist camp showed solidarity with him in his fight against the university. The Berlin Social Democratic representative Wilhelm Hasenclever wrote several articles in support of Dühring, whom he saw as a martyr for science. The events surrounding his dismissal were followed intensely in the national paper *Berlin Freie Presse*.<sup>725</sup>

Dühring’s popularity among Social Democrats had become the cause of concern for Marx and Engels some time before his dismissal from the university. Although Dühring rated Marx much higher than the *Kathedersozialisten*, the “socialists of the chair”, as we have seen, he did not think particularly highly of him as a theorist, a fact of which Marx found out indirectly as early as 1868.<sup>726</sup> It should be remembered that as Dühring’s works won influence in the 1870s, Marxism was far from an established entity in Germany. Even among the leaders of the workers movement, the intricacies of Marx’s theories remained little understood. Karl Liebknecht, for example, who stood in close personal contact to Marx, claimed that Buckle (praised by Dühring - cf. Chapter Four) – whom Marx and Engels saw as the historian of laissez-faire capitalism – was the greatest innovator in the field of history and had achieved as much as Darwin in the area of natural science and Marx in social science.<sup>727</sup> Bebel’s book *Woman and Socialism* was based much more on the theories of Fourier than on Marx, and Proudhon was, at the beginning of the 1870s, far more widely known than Marx.<sup>728</sup>

The danger for Marxism at this stage lay in the abstractness of its teachings, which hindered it from becoming accepted by the leftist avante garde. Although there were educated and intelligent people in their numbers, Social Democratic activist seemed to be wary of excessively abstract concepts. The views of the masses of workers tended to focus around the basic idea that they had to stick together in the fight against capital in order to finally give the workers what they rightfully deserved. As Tenefelde and Dowe have written, there was “a

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<sup>724</sup> KSN, 2nd edition, 523.

<sup>725</sup> Cf. Dieter Dowe and Klaus Tenefelde, “Zur Rezeption Eugen Dührings in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung in den 70er Jahren,” 45 et seq.

<sup>726</sup> Marx gave Dühring credit for being the only academic to write a review of *Das Kapital*, but later found out from Sigfrid Mayer, an acquaintance living in the U.S. who had corresponded with Dühring, that Dühring had told him that Marx’s dialectic was “unscientific, unsolid, and dishonest”. Carl-Erich Vollgraf, Marx’ “*Randnoten zu Dührings ‘Kritische Geschichte der Nationalökonomie,’*” 236.

<sup>727</sup> Quoted from Rudolf Rocker, *Johan Most. Das Leben eines Rebellen*, 52-53.

<sup>728</sup> Marx apparently had the reputation among insiders as being a bit scattered and disorganized. The well-known neo-Kantian Philosopher Friedrich Albert Lange once asked Wilhelm Liebknecht why Marx to date (end of the 1860s) has only published fragments and brochures. Cf. Carl-Erich Vollgraf, “Marx’ erstmals veröffentlichte Manuskripte zum 2. Und 3. Buch des Kapitals von 1867/68 im MEGA – Band II/ 4.3. Zu neuralgischen Punkten in der Ausarbeitung des Kapitals,” *Beiträge zur Marx-Engels-Forschung. Neue Folge* (2010): 77.

partly latent, partly manifest proletarian anti-intellectualism” in the movement.<sup>729</sup> This worked for Dühring, whose popularity lay far less in the theoretical subtleties of his social economic system as in the *Anschaulichkeit*, or the intuitive clarity, of his thought. As mentioned above, Gustav Landauer commented that Dühring's writings were in many ways superior to Marx's: more universal, more modern and scientific, less dogmatic, and more understandable.<sup>730</sup> Engel's “anti-Dühring” articles, which began to be published in *Vorwärts* magazine shortly before Dühring's dismissal, can be seen in part as an attempt to make up for this deficit of Marxism in this respect.<sup>731</sup>

Despite the grandiose effort that Engels exerted to fight Dühring, his attack did not diminish Dühring's influence among the Social Democrats – at first. Many party members vehemently disapproved of the mocking tone of Engel's articles. At an assembly in Gotha from 27-30 May 1877, which was the party's last before the socialist laws were instituted in 1878, a compromise resolution, initiated by Bebel, was passed that would prohibit the “anti-Dühring” articles from being printed in the party's main organ. The articles were to be published as a separate scientific supplement to which Dühring would have the right to reply to.<sup>732</sup> There was even a poem by Eduard Bertz dedicated to Dühring published in the SPD (or Socialist Labor Party of Germany, *Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands*, as the party was named after the unification congress in Gotha in 1875) central organ.<sup>733</sup> Abraham Enß, who would later edit the Dühringian paper “*Der Antikrat*”, before eventually falling out with Dühring in the 1890s, countered Engels with a polemical pamphlet titled “*Engels Assassination of Common Sense or the Scientific Bankruptcy of Marxist Socialism*”.<sup>734</sup> Hermann Döll helped mobilize the students throughout Germany and a “Dühring Comité” was founded which

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<sup>729</sup> Dieter Dowe and Klaus Tenefelde, “Zur Rezeption Eugen Dührings in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung in den 1870er Jahren,” 37.

<sup>730</sup> Gustav Landauer, “Referat über Dühring's Kursus der National- und Sozialökonomie,” op. cit.

<sup>731</sup> Wilhelm Bracke correctly made the point, however, that “anti-Dühring” would not influence change the minds of the Dühringians and would also not influence the masses of Social Democrats. Its purpose, he believed, was to influence a small group of intellectuals who would in turn influence the masses. Cf. Dowe and Tenefelde, “Zur Rezeption Eugen Dührings,” 36.

<sup>732</sup> *Dokumente und Materialien zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, eds. Marga Beyer, Ursula Hermann, Anneliese Beska, Gerhard Winkler, Band III, März 1871-April 1878 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1974) 106-107. Cf. also SLF, 201; Mogge, *Rhetorik*, 148; Richard Adamiak, *Marx, Engels, and Dühring*, 108; Dowe and Tenefelde, 52; Rjazanov, 472 et seq.; also Dieter Fricke, *Handbuch zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung 1869 bis 1917* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1987), 519.

<sup>733</sup> Dowe and Tenefelde, op. cit., 52-53. Rjazanov, op. cit., 475.

<sup>734</sup> Enß it seems turned on Dühring at some point. Dühring had thought highly of Enß and in a letter to Jünemann expressed disbelief in the latter's report that Enß had spoken disparagingly of him, Dühring to Jünemann, 20 July 1890, Dühring Papers, Box 7, HA/SBB.

contained students who would later be prominent Social Democratic members such as Emanuel Wurm, Max Schippel, and the party poet Wittich.<sup>735</sup>

Following his three month summer vacation at a cure in southern Germany, Dühring set out on a series of lectures on the subject of the freedom of science, which according to Dühring were successful, but according to a university newspaper *Alma Mater* were not.<sup>736</sup> He was soon asked to work with a new Social Democratic newspaper, “*Die Zukunft*”, and, according to his autobiography, to be a key intellectual figure in the founding of a “Free University” bankrolled by the millionaire social philanthropist Karl Höchberg.<sup>737</sup> At a meeting on 9 November 1877, Dühring made public a plan for the founding of this new scientific association, introducing a series of statutes with the intent of securing that the organization have a scientific goal and that party interests be excluded. *Berlin Freie Presse*, which had up to that point been in support of him, published articles criticizing Dühring as wanting to control the Free University “like an infallible pope”.<sup>738</sup> In November, Dühring made an official statement distancing himself from the Social Democrats, claiming he was in no party and that he would remain independent of “church, state, and scholarly guild”. He alleged that the Social Democrats were using him and his name to gain influence among the students. This statement was answered by the central committee of the Socialist Democratic Labor Party on 17 November in a report which disclaimed the party’s involvement in the founding of the “Free University” and refuted, among other things, Dühring’s claims of being used by the party.<sup>739</sup>

Despite the extremely favorable conditions and the great sympathy that he received for having been unjustly fired due to his own personal convictions, Dühring was not able to utilize the situation to further his cause. What were the reasons for his failure? It seems that many people disapproved of the increasingly coarse tone of his lectures and the way in which he dealt with his opponents, some of whom were popular among Social Democrats. His aggressively combative manner turned off intellectuals. At the same time, there were students who rose to speak out against Dühring and the influence of the Social Democrats in general on the students. Students at the University of Berlin and other universities, as well as student

<sup>735</sup> Emil Döll, Eugen Dühring, *Etwas von dessen Character, Leistungen und reformatorischen Beruf* (Leipzig: C.G. Naumann, 1893), 7. Dowe and Tenefelde, op. cit., 46.

<sup>736</sup> SLF, 2nd edition, 217. Mogge, *Die Rhetorik des Hasses*, 34. Bernstein reported that a substantial number of Social Democrats attended. Eduard Bernstein, *Die Geschichte der Berliner Arbeiter-Bewegung* (Berlin: Buchhandlung Vorwärts, 1907), 343.

<sup>737</sup> Mogge, op. cit., 34. Bernstein, *Sozialdemokratische Lehrjahre*, 56; Rjazanov, op. cit., 475.

<sup>738</sup> *Berlin Freie Presse* (14 November 1877). Bernstein, *Geschichte der Berliner Arbeiter-Bewegung*, 344.

<sup>739</sup> Published in: *Vorwärts*, No. 137, 21 November 1877. Reprinted in *Dokumente und Materialien zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, 107-108.

associations and fraternities, condemned the bond between the students and social democracy. Dühring soon found himself not only excluded from the university, but also having lost the sympathies of the Social Democrats. He never was to write for the Social Democratic journal financed by Höchberg, and the “Free University”, which he had envisioned, did not come to fruition, although an educational institute of the Socialist Labor Party did evolve from the original plans that Dühring set in motion.<sup>740</sup>

Dühring’s failure to politically utilize the sympathy and support he had following his dismissal from the university has been largely attributed to his narrow-minded and authoritarian character. Mauthner writes that Dühring is an example of a principle of aesthetics that holds “dass nicht zum Helden einer Tragödie taugt, wer bei allen heroischen Eigenschaften ein unangenehmer Mensch ist”.<sup>741</sup> Dühring’s difficult personality certainly played a role in his problems, but it should be pointed out that the difficulties facing him at attempting to turn complex theoretical positions into concrete political action, which would be accepted by the Social Democrats and students alike, were tremendous, regardless of his appeal as a person. In trying to bridge the gap between the interests of the workers and the German public at large, Dühring was treading on virgin soil. The ambitious path he took contained what were in all likelihood insurmountable obstacles, and the only way to move forward was through controversy.

The failure that his efforts ultimately met may be in part attributed to his personality, but the misadventure he faced is also a common, if not usual, result of the struggles of the ideal type of the *controversial scholar* which Dühring embodied. When all was said and done, Dühring’s role as the controversial scholar had gone full circle. This type of scholar gains the attention of the public due to actions he takes and or opinions he raises. Once the limelight is focused on him, he is able to defend himself through the media, but is accordingly “refuted” by pundits of the establishment. As the controversial scholar nearly always breaches some sort of taboo or forbidden question, when the discussion of the matter intensifies he becomes increasingly isolated due to the strength of the mass media, which tends to represent the mainstream opinion that the controversial scholar is usually against. Ultimately, the controversial scholar, assuming he holds to his positions, disappears from public view, often having a certain degree of notoriety for what has occurred to him. Some of these scholars

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<sup>740</sup> Bernstein, *Sozialdemokratische Lehrjahre*, 57.

<sup>741</sup> “Despite all of the heroic characteristics he may have, an unpleasant man will never be the hero of a tragedy.” Fritz Mauthner, *Der Atheismus und seine Geschichte im Abendlande* (Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1923), 316.

become resigned and give up. Still others turn to more radical means for their cause. Dühring chose the latter.

### 3. *New Phase of Productivity amid Trials and Tribulations*

Within a relatively short period, Dühring had lost his positions at Victoria Lyceum and the university, and the prospect of gaining employment at a newly founded free university had vanished. Faced with the problem of having to make a living to support his family, he continued doing what he did best: writing and lecturing. He worked intensely to finish the book, which he saw as the final piece of his system, entitled *Logic and Scientific Theory*, a new version of his early work *Natural Dialectic*.<sup>742</sup> A second nearly completely rewritten edition of *The Worth of Life*, which was to become his most popular book, was released in early 1877, and now a third edition to his *Critical History of Philosophy*, as well as a new book, *New Basic Laws of Rational Physics and Chemistry*, were published. A third, updated version of *Critical History of National Economy and Socialism* was introduced in January of 1879, which included a sharper, even more polemical critique of social democracy and Marxism. During his vacation in Wildbad following his dismissal, he happened to run into the scientist Robert Mayer, whose scientific honor he had been fighting for and for whom, ultimately, he had lost his job for. In October of 1879, he published the first of his two books on Mayer titled *Robert Mayer: The Galilei of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, which lashed out at the academic community who had shunned him two years before.<sup>743</sup>

It was falsely reported in a Berlin newspaper paper at about the same time that Dühring had died of a heart attack on a journey to Cologne.<sup>744</sup> The news spread like wildfire throughout Germany and the Dührings soon had strangers knocking at their door wanting to speak with the lonely widow of the family. His follower Abraham Enß, living in Geneva at the time, collected various newspaper reports containing uncomplimentary eulogies to Dühring, which Dühring saw as evidence that his foes would go to any lengths to defame him. Dühring's great admirer (and Nietzsche's close friend) Heinrich von Stein was deeply saddened by the report and wrote an effusive letter to Frau Dühring to convey his condolences as well as an obituary:

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<sup>742</sup> SLF, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 229.

<sup>743</sup> Ibid., 215. Although his book on Mayer seems to have been read avidly in radical political circles, his attack on Helmholtz was looked down upon by many intellectuals. Egon Friedell, author of the popular *Cultural History of Modernity*, is full of effusive praise for Helmholtz and writes, "Eugen Dühring hat in zwei leeren Bänden in seiner rohen echolalischen Manier Robert Mayer als Märtyrer und 'Galilei des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts' hingestellt." *Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit*, 1079.

<sup>744</sup> SLF, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 235-236.

A decisive pessimism outwardly characterized his school of thought. He approved of indignation towards the bad, revenge, as the principle of justice. However, as he felt goodness within himself, his comprehensive perception of passionate intellectual strength led to an elevated and, in his own words, transcendental optimism. Building something like this from the flesh and blood of our people, like the Hellenes succeeded in doing with their marble pictures, is something that goes beyond today and tomorrow.<sup>745</sup>

Due to his negative experience with the events surrounding his dismissal, Dühring's works began now to take on the increasingly polemical and pugnacious tone that would characterize his work until his death. His books were also now being written to a different audience. The dismissal from the university and his tribulations with the Social Democrats led him, it seems, to change the strategy of his publishing and activism. He now no longer gave practical and theoretical suggestions to help the workers, but took up arms against what he saw as a common denominator amongst his enemies: the Jews. His position on the Jews, as we have seen, was anchored in his system of sociopolitical economics, but were, up to now, only a peripheral issue.<sup>746</sup> With the door to the labor movement slammed in his face, and with his access to the student movement impeded by the discontinuation of his lectures, he turned to a new, predominantly middle class audience which had become increasingly opposed to the influence of the Jews in German society since Richard Wagner's public critique of the Jews in the 1850s.<sup>747</sup>

In November of 1879, shortly after affirming that the reports of his death were false, he gave a talk titled "The Origins of the Jewish Question in Europe".<sup>748</sup> Dühring's thoughts on the Jews have been highlighted in Chapter Eight. Seen in their historical context, it can be said that the deliberations in this lecture were symptomatic for how Europeans perceived the "Jewish Question". There had been hostility towards the Jews for centuries, but the enmity towards them up to that point had been legitimized predominantly on religious grounds. From the

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<sup>745</sup> Heinrich von Stein to Emilie Dühring, 25 October, 1879, Dühring Papers, Box 6, HA/SBB. Obituary quoted from Markus Bernauer, *Heinrich von Stein* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 75. Dühring's publisher, Ernst Schmeitzer, was of the opinion that the Dührings created the story themselves, writing in a letter to Friedrich Nietzsche that Frau Dühring is "capable of anything" (*zu Vielem fähig*). *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, vol. 28 Malcom B. Brown, *Friedrich Nietzsche und sein Verleger Ernst Schmeitzer*, in eds. Monika Estermann, Reinhard Wittmann, Marietta Kleiss (Frankfurt am Main: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1987), 235.

<sup>746</sup> Unlike many of the anti-Jewish writers of the day, whose entire intellectual efforts focus on or revolved exclusively around Jews or Jewish issues, it should be noted that Dühring was by no means primarily fixated on the Jews. His basic point of departure and his main concern was science and the progressive liberal ideas of justice. In the battle with Marx and Engels to gain command of the workers movement, Dühring's anti-Semitism was not a major issue.

<sup>747</sup> On Wagner as a precursor of Dühring's anti-Semitism see Manfred Eger, *Wagner und die Juden: Fakten und Hintergründe* (Bayreuth: Druckhaus, 1985).

<sup>748</sup> "Die Entstehung der Judenfrage in Europe," unpublished paper, Dühring Papers, HA/SBB (cf. below Appendices II).

Christian perspective, it was the religion of the murderers of Christ that was to be deplored. As Dühring presented his first anti-Semitic lecture in 1879, the opposition to the Jews was no longer religious. Judaism through its own peculiarity was now seen as a threat to the modern peoples of Europe as a “nation within other nations”. For Dühring, the Jewish question became “a question of nations and humanity seen from a liberal point of view”.<sup>749</sup> He disparages the Jews for what he sees as their inhumane egoism. With the ethos of his system of sociopolitical economics in mind, he writes: “The higher goal is the liberation of the spirit of nations (*Völkergeist*) from the crass selfishness, the pursuit of the better characteristics of nations, and a better humanity with general human rights in general”. For the atheist Dühring, as for the leftist revolutionary of 1848 Wilhelm Marr, religion itself does not serve as an explanation of the phenomenon; the problem is in the constitution of the Jewish nation, which he condemns on humanitarian grounds.<sup>750</sup> Dühring published his book *The Jewish Question: A Racial, Moral and Cultural Question with a World Historical Answer* soon thereafter.<sup>751</sup> As the title indicates, the Jewish Question is seen as being primarily as a question of “race”, although this assertion needs to be clarified somewhat. Dühring does not consider “race” from a strict biological stand point, an area he knew relatively little about; perhaps the term “ethnicity” comes closer to conveying what Dühring intended.<sup>752</sup> His book on the Jews became one of his best-selling works, appearing altogether in six editions. It is certainly possible, if not likely, that financial considerations played a role in Dühring choosing to write about the Jews, as it was not until his dismissal from the university that he singled out the “Jewish Question” as a monographic publication, which was a topic likely to find more interests than his scientific areas of specialty. Dühring had, however, always been conscious of finding readers.<sup>753</sup>

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<sup>749</sup> Ibid.

<sup>750</sup> It is telling that two of the most prominent figures in the history of anti-Semitism came ideologically from the Left. According to Mosche Zimmermann, it is likely that Marr even initiated the term. Cf. Zimmermann, Wilhelm Marr, *The Patriarch of Anti-Semitism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 112.

<sup>751</sup> Although the book sold well, the measures that it advocated were rejected by the Deutsche Reform Partei as being too doctrinarian and impractical. Kurt Wawrzinek, *Die Entstehung der deutschen Antisemitenparteien 1873-1890* (Berlin: Ebering, 1927), 53.

<sup>752</sup> Holleck-Weithmann claims that Dühring was far ahead of his times in recognizing biological laws. Referring to Dühring’s book *Der Ersatz der Religion durch Vollkommeneres*, he cites Dühring’s epistemological concept of original configurations, which create different unchangeable offshoots, as anticipating Gregor Mendel’s studies of genetics. “Eugen Dühring und die nordische Weltanschauung,” *Schriften des Dühringbundes* 1 (12 January 1933): 4. Houston Stewart Chamberlain saw this more accurately, in our opinion, when he emphasizes Dühring’s affinity towards the descriptive as opposed to the biological sciences. He wrote, “Will er [Dühring] die grossen Namen der Wissenschaft anrufen, so nennt er Kepler, Galilei, Huygens, Lagrange – niemals Boerhaave, Harvey, Jeussieu, Cuvier, Lyell; denn ihm gelten die beschreibenden und biologischen Wissenschaften als untergeordnet.” *Heinrich von Stein und seine Weltanschauung*, op. cit., 24.

<sup>753</sup> From the beginning of his career as a scholar onwards Dühring sought what he called the “lively participation of the audience” and writes proudly in his autobiography that he purposefully wrote his books to be bought on a

As fate would have it, financial assistance came his way from across the ocean. On 13 October 1879 Dühring's longtime mentor and correspondent Henry C. Carey passed away. In his last years, Carey had followed Dühring's tribulations with interest from the United States and felt deep sorrow for the fate of his erudite blind friend who had helped propagate his works more than anyone else in Europe.<sup>754</sup> Carey's last book, *The Unity of Law* from 1873, was dedicated to Dühring with the inscription:

To Professor Eugene Dühring –

Worthy successor of Friedrich List in the great work of proving to the Germanic Nation that domestic independence, national independence, public peace and private happiness, tend always to march hand in hand together. This volume is dedicated in token of its author's high respect."<sup>755</sup>

Carey left Dühring the sales revenue from the bonds of a Pennsylvania coal company amounting to about \$1,500, which was a substantial help for Dühring's sustenance.<sup>756</sup>

Aside from his book on the Jews, Dühring gave presentations on Lessing, which were characteristic of the increasingly negative and pessimistic tone of his latest work, portraying the classical German poet and literary critic in an extremely unfavorable light. True to the non-historical and anti-classical penchant for “historical revisionism” (dealt with in Chapter Five above), he scorned the reverence given to popular icons of German literary history. He saw, in the case of Lessing, the opportunity to apply his “new method” of, as he saw it, setting the record straight with regard to the poet's undeservedly good reputation.<sup>757</sup> He and his growing readership appear to take great pleasure in the bold, iconoclastic accents of his writing. This tendency of lashing out at beloved icons would become increasingly stronger as Dühring grew older, as we will see in the next chapter.

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large-scale: “Wenn ich Bücher schrieb, so geschah dies nicht in der Weise eines Professors oder eines sonst anderweitig unterhaltenden Gelehrten. Meine Bücher mussten neben den höheren Zwecken, denen sie dienten, auch praktisch und dazu geeignet sein, in grösserem Umfange gekauft zu werden.” SLF, 412.

<sup>754</sup> As mentioned above, Dühring wrote several articles as well as two books, *Carey's Revolution of Political Economy* (1865) and *Carey's Belittlers and the Crisis of Political Economy* (1867). Carey's plan to have the former translated into English never came to fruition. In a letter to Dühring from 1865, he writes: “My publisher is having your “Umwältzung” translated and I shall therefore probably have occasion to send you an English version of it.” Dühring Papers, Box 7, HA/SBB.

<sup>755</sup> Carey, *The Unity of Law*, III-IV. Carey had been sending the chapters of the book separately to Dühring for him to read before it was published. Apparently there had been some sort of discord between the two men. With reference to his dedication to Dühring, Carey writes, “When you read what is there said, you will be less displeased than you are at the present moment.” Draft letter Carey to Dühring 23 June 1872, *Edward Carey Gardiner Collection* (227A), HSP, Box 20, Folder 3.

<sup>756</sup> SLF, 231-232.

<sup>757</sup> SLF, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 247-248.

Dühring was struck by a great personal tragedy in 1880: his youngest son Ernst, with whom he shared a strong likeness in terms of appearance and disposition, died of an abdominal illness at the age of 16. The Dührings were an extremely close-knit family, largely isolated from the outside world. Dühring writes in his autobiography, “For us the outer world consisted of my activity as a lecturer.” From the time he was a young boy until his father’s dismissal, Ernst had led his blind father to his university lectures. Dühring refers to his son as his “attentive leader” (*aufmerksamer Führer*) and writes that, through all of the time they spent together, they had become even closer than is usually the case between a father and son. Dühring’s personal talent for language and natural science were divided between his sons. Young Ernst possessed an aptitude in the areas of language and literature and his older brother Ulrich in mathematics and natural science. Both children received home education and never attended school. All of the adversity which Dühring had faced, including his blindness, he writes, were nothing compared to the loss of his son. This family tragedy, which “at least came from nature and not from his enemies”, brought the rest of the already close family even closer together.<sup>758</sup>

In the coming years, which were financially secured not only through the Carey inheritance, but also through the thriftiness that Dühring had developed throughout his life, his literary productivity continued at an amazing pace. The family moved from their apartment in Zehlendorf to a village near Potsdam called Neuendorf (Novawes), where they would remain for the rest of their lives. With the fame that he had earned during his career as a lecturer, publishing houses sought him and not the other way around. With the major works of his system having been completed by the end of the 1870s, he now decided to write an autobiography which would not only tell of his life but which would serve as a “key to his system”. *My Cause, My Life, My Enemies*, as the book was titled, appeared in 1882.<sup>759</sup> With the great success of his book on the Jews, he decided to write another book on religion which he titled *The Replacement of Religion through Something More Substantial*, published in 1883 (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> editions in 1897 and 1906). In the years that followed, Dühring concentrated on two works, written together with his son Ulrich, in the areas of mathematics and chemistry.<sup>760</sup> The third edition of *Cursus of National and Political Economy* was released in 1892, containing a significant change in theory in which his concept of the economic communes –

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<sup>758</sup> SLF, 424-425.

<sup>759</sup> The title is catchy and emphasizes the inevitable antagonism involved in idealistic action, such as Dühring pursued; the “cause” brings forth “enemies” and “life” thus finds itself wedged between cause and enemies. Heinrich von Stein wrote a review of the book. Cf. Heinrich von Stein, “Eugen Dühring und sein neuestes Buch: Sache, Leben und Feinde,” *Schmeitzner’s Internationale Monatschrift (Chemnitz)* 1 (1882): 262-267.

<sup>760</sup> SLF, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 256-275.

cf. Chapter Eight – were given up, and a more fiscally conservative approach to political economy was advocated. After releasing new editions of *Critical History of the General Principles of Mechanics*, *The Worth of Life*, *Cursus of National and Social Economy*, and the *Jewish Question*, he published *The Greats of Modern Literature*, which had developed from his lectures at Victoria Lyceum, and utilized his iconoclastic approach to handling Europe’s classical literature. The fourth edition of his history of philosophy came out in 1894 and the next year, after a prolonged battle with the publisher of the original book, an updated version of his *Cursus of Philosophy* from 1875, which he titled *Philosophy of the Actual*. In the same year, Dühring published the second volume of his Robert Mayer book, which renewed the charges of plagiarism against Hermann Helmholtz.

At the end of the 1880s, Dühring received, for the second time, a substantial inheritance from one of his admirers, the industrialist Friedrich Rogler from Asch in Bohemia, which further secured his financial situation as a freelance writer and activist.<sup>761</sup> Rogler left Dühring 20,000 Gilds in his will, citing Dühring as the writer of the book “*Sache, Leben und Feinde*”. Although initially challenged by Rogler’s family, there was a quick settlement, which left Dühring with 17,000 Marks, a substantial amount, although, according to Döll, it amounted to less than the yearly income of a salaried scholar.<sup>762</sup>

Although things seemed generally quiet on the political front, in the decade following his dismissal, “Dühringianism” had not vanished. Bismarck’s Anti-Socialist Laws had generally cooled down the feverish activity of the labor movement that had gone on in the 70s, but Dühringians continued to grow in number. His books were still being read and his “societarian” ideals, seen as an alternative to Marxism, were still alive, albeit in a latent form. Abraham Enß, who had virulently defended Dühring from Engels attack in 1877, began to publish a newspaper based on Dühring’s ideals titled *Der Antikrat*. In 1886 Emil Döll organized the collecting of addresses of Dühring supporters to celebrate the author’s twenty-fifth anniversary as a writer (beginning with his dissertation from 1861).<sup>763</sup> The “address movement”, as it was called, attempted to “break the attempt of the establishment to act as if Eugen Dühring never existed”. Döll coined the term “*Dühringsperre*” (the ban on Dühring) for how he was ignored by the establishment. A proclamation stating that in the last ten years over forty thousand of Dühring’s books had been bought by supporters scattered throughout

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<sup>761</sup> SLF, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 276.

<sup>762</sup> Cf., Döll, *Eugen Dühring. Etwas von dessen Character, Leistung und reformatorischen Beruf* (Leipzig: C.G. Naumann, 1893), 29.

<sup>763</sup> Emil Döll, *Eugen Dühring*, 25 et seq.

Germany, and was sent out and placed as an advertisement in several large newspapers. The goal of collecting the addresses was to try to bring the scattered Dühring supporters together. Most of the 20,000 addresses came from people in Germany, but there were also supporters listed from Austria, Switzerland, France, Spain, Russia, Serbia, and even the United States.<sup>764</sup> Dühring wrote a response thanking his supporters in May of 1887, listing the main viewpoints of his cause: the refinement of public and private life through leadership, “improvement of knowledge and science, desire and character, as well as the self-initiative of the intellect towards a general emancipation of the mind from suppression”.<sup>765</sup> The Dühring movement soon gained momentum that became anchored in a newly founded institution.

#### 4. *The Dühring Movement of the 1890s: “Sozialitärer Bund“ and “Der Moderne Völkergeist“*

The strong sales of his books and the widespread support of the address movement seemed to indicate potential for the Dühring cause. Supporters founded the *Sozialitärer Bund* in November of 1893. The Members of this association aimed to advance the Dühring movement and saw in the master’s teaching and personality “the beginning of a new foundation of thought with its roots in reality” which offered a “wise teachings for public and private life”. The organization aimed to inspire its members and anyone else it could influence morally and intellectually. True to the tenets of the Dühring’s Philosophy of the Actual, the group aimed to free the intellect from all types of deception, be it “so-called science or nebulous concoctions of the imagination”. On the positive side, the association aimed at concentrating on scientific works and organized lectures by members and friends who were competent to teach. The thrust of its effort was rooted in the position of Natural Law and involved “enlightenment concerning the basic nature of morality, whose laws do not owe their existence and validity to historically wavering positions, but rather are rooted in the collective system of things”.<sup>766</sup> The charter members also aim to treat one another “truthfully, faithfully, and justly”. The charter proclaims: “The connection between the concept of freedom and the idea of justice is the basic principle of societarianism. It separates this association substantially, on the one hand, from the groups that suffocate under authoritarian demands of freedom and, on the other, from those who let freedom become arbitrary to the detriment of

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<sup>764</sup> Ibid., 27. The hundreds of signed proclamations sent back to Emil Döll, which can be found in the Berlin state library, give testimony to the powerful trajectory that Dühring had in the 1890s. Cf. Dühring Papers, HA/SBB.

<sup>765</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>766</sup> The statutes of the association are listed in the first issue its journal, *The Modern Spirit of Nations*. Cf. “Socialitärer Bund,” *Der Moderne Völkergeist* 1 (1894): 7.

freedom and the organization of positive cooperation”.<sup>767</sup> The association considered itself German and against ethnic groups opposed to the spirit of the modern European nations, particularly the Jews. Due to its demands of truthfulness, faithfulness, justice, and freedom, it proclaims its opposition to the elements of communist socialism which were held to be destructive of freedom and justice, as well as to the arbitrary freedom of every kind of anarchism. The association supports Dühring’s societarianism, which makes better people the basis of creating a “free society”. The ancient and new Hebrew means of education were to be removed from German institutions. A person can only become a member by registering and attending several official association meetings.

Just weeks after the founding of the Societarian Association (*Sozialitärer Bund*) in January of 1894, the organization began publishing a monthly magazine titled *The Modern Spirit of Nations* (“*Der moderne Völkergeist*”), a name taken from Dühring’s book on the replacement of religion. Its motto, printed under the magazine’s letterhead, read on the one side: “For freedom, justice, faithfulness, trust, and truth”. On the other: “Against religious, political and economic slavery, as well as Hebrew domination”. The contributors to the magazine were mostly anonymous, with the authorship given as initials. One of the driving forces behind the paper, listed as “-t -n”, was Ernst Jünemann, who wrote the mission statement in the journal’s first issue, and who contributed to every issue until his untimely death in 1898.<sup>768</sup> Another contributor was Georg Himmelserb, who would later fall out with Dühring and publish a pamphlet against him entitled “*A Look Behind the Curtains of the Societarian Movement. Open Letter to Dr. Eugen Dühring*”.

Topics in the magazine ranged from aspects of Dühring’s work and matters of the *Sozialitärer Bund* to issues of culture and ethnicity, societal reform, the anti-Semitic movement, religion, political economy, anarchism. The Societarian Association held regular public meetings, with the purpose of fighting against scientific falsification, false scholasticism (“*Verlehrtentum*”), and the crimes of scholars (“*Gelehrtenverbrechen*”), while advocating science and independent mind leadership (“*Geistesführung*”).<sup>769</sup> The meetings concentrated at first on Dühring’s *Critical History of Philosophy*, and then on his second book on Robert Mayer upon its publication in 1894. The organization sought to avoid the image of being “a philosophical sect” and changed its direction, devoting itself more to current political interests such as the

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<sup>767</sup> Ibid.

<sup>768</sup> The Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin has letters from Dühring to Jünemann beginning in 1890 and ending shortly before Jünemann’s death in 1898. There are references to Jünemann’s letters addressed to Dühring in nearly every letter, but unfortunately, aside from one letter, they seem to have been lost.

<sup>769</sup> MV 1 (Jan. 1896): 2 et seq.

anti-Socialist Laws, the Heinrich Heine monument and *Freilandbewegung* set in motion by Franz Oppenheimer.

The journal held an ambivalent, if not to say disparaging, view of the anti-Semitic movement, which was certainly a reflection of Dühring's opinion. For Dühring, "just as an honest communist does not approve of the Social Democrats, an honest anti-Hebrew does not have to support anti-Semitism".<sup>770</sup> He was critical of what he called "reactionary anti-Semitism" which was conservative and placed strong emphasis on religion instead of ethnic origin. However, in a letter to Jünemann, he opines that even the worst form of anti-Semitism may help to shake the status quo.<sup>771</sup> Of the political anti-Semites, it was Otto Böckel and especially Hermann Ahlwardt who combined a racially based anti-Semitism with socialist slogans, attacking "Jews and Junkers". Ahlwardt, a former school headmaster turned politician, who was fired for embezzlement from the school he led, can be seen as an authentic Dühringian. In the preface to his book *Bundschuh* from 1894, he pays an effusive tribute to Dühring, writing, "In Dr. Eugen Dühring the beams of science become explosive. He is the most beautiful blossom which Germany has yet to produce. He has scattered the clouds which have kept out air and light for thousands of years; he has turned back superstition in a form that it takes and led the Germanic people back to themselves".<sup>772</sup> Relying heavily on Dühring and Carey's economic theories, Ahlwardt developed a populist policy containing elements which Dühring could not approve of, such as the glorification of "Germanic Christianity". Similar to Böckel, Ahlwardt's popularity would soon wane and at the end of the 90s, despite the support that he had given him just a short time before, Dühring labeled him a "pseudo anti-Semite".<sup>773</sup>

Dühring downplays his own role in *Der Moderne Völkergeist*, but his correspondence leaves little doubt that he was intimately involved in the efforts of the journal, although he had little to nothing to do with its practical financial matters. His letters to Jünemann are filled with references to the journal, and convey a strong will to reach the people and spread his cause. Dühring had recently passed the age of sixty, but still possessed great vigor and energy; his strong ideals and will to reform society had apparently not subsided in the least. He writes to Jünemann that it is not a question now of "changing the configuration of the institutions" or of "poor reformism" (*armseliger Reformismus*); religion cannot simply be reformed or negated,

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<sup>770</sup> Dühring to Jünemann. 7 June 1894, in Dühring Papers, Box 7, HA/SBB.

<sup>771</sup> Ibid.

<sup>772</sup> Hermann Ahlwardt, *Bundschuh* (Dresden: Glöb, 1894), IV.

<sup>773</sup> Brigitte Mogge, *Rhetorik des Hasses*, 54. A few years later Dühring also goes on to attack the anti-Semites in his autobiography. He writes, "Along with the categories of the professors, Jews, and the Social Democrats I have a fourth rubric [...] the anti-Semites." Cf. SLF, 2nd edition, 496.

something positive must replace it. He speaks of the necessity of “waking a spiritual power”, which will “do the bulk of the work”, without which “nothing will happen” to change the corrupt modern circumstances.<sup>774</sup> His good intentions could not, however, be put into action the way he envisioned it. Inevitably, there was conflict within the ranks of the journal, and key writers left. The biggest blow to the *Der Moderne Völkergeist* movement was Ernst Jünemann’s illness and subsequent untimely death in 1898. Ulrich Dühring became involved with the editing and contributed several poems and articles. Dühring lost the faith of several loyal followers who would go on to publically denounce him.<sup>775</sup> The *Sozialitärer Bund* was disbanded in July of 1898.

Here again we witness the outer limits of the “controversial scholar”, who, having been isolated through public controversy, turns to political organization and activism. Dühring, as we have seen, originally had the strong affinity to the “philosophical scholar”, but now crossed the border from theory to practice (as the tenets of his philosophy require), and was out of his element as it were. Nietzsche’s remark that the philosopher who gets involved in politics is destined to play a comic role comes to mind. Dühring’s activism was, however, the logical consequence of a philosophy in which the conscious mind is supreme and which strives to find direct influence unencumbered by abstraction. As we emphasized above, the Philosophy of the Actual downplays abstraction and theory “for the sake of theory”. Had Dühring been a “philosophical scholar” by nature, he may have been content to live a life of detached philosophical contemplation with the money he inherited and his book earnings. This, however, would have gone against his disposition and his inner convictions. Particularly with the fame and notoriety which his work had achieved, he was by no means ready to give in and quit. His unyielding spirit led him to keep up the fight to the end. Following the failure of *Der Moderne Völkergeist*, Dühring founded his own paper, which he would write in and edit until his death over two decades later.

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<sup>774</sup> Dühring to Jünemann, 10 April 1886, in Dühring Papers, Box 7, HA/SBB.

<sup>775</sup> Cf. George Himmelsberg, *Hinter den Kulissen der sozialitären Bewegung. Ein offener Brief an Dr. Eugen Dühring* (Berlin: C. Regenhardt, 1898).

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### BEYOND CONTROVERSY 1899-1921

#### *1. Personalist und Emancipator*

As the title of his new journal, *Personalist und Emancipator*, indicates, the final phase of Dühring's life is characterized by an increased sense of individualism. The writings' radical tone served to damage his reputation and harm his intellectual legacy.<sup>776</sup> It can be said that Dühring's intellectual inheritance from the left-wing Hegelians had come full circle; the longing to emancipate society, the will to attain a social justice for the workers through united group action was now replaced by a more negative and combative individualism, reminiscent of Max Stirner, the author of *The Ego and His Own*.<sup>777</sup> Stirner had taken the consequences of Kant's categorical imperative and given it a Hegelian twist, coming to the conclusion that all that mattered in life was the self; life should be led by egoism and the ruthless pursuit of one's own interests. Dühring strongly detested egoism and presumably did not approve of Stirner and his philosophy; and yet there is an undeniable tendency towards extreme individualism in the last phase of his life. As a realist who had once prided himself on suggesting *ad hoc* measures for fields of activity to help society, he now turns towards more subjective radical means of activism. His intent had been – and still was – to make a difference, and although he changes positions on several issues, he does not abandon the tenets of his worldview. If his influence had waned in the large scheme of things, he would continue his fight through other means. In 1896, he had spoken of the need to begin a third phase of his productivity, in which he would turn to “very small cheap writings” as part of a program to attack the scientific community, capitalism in the name of a “struggle for the life of goodness”.<sup>778</sup> A conscious disregard for objective standards of academic deportment and etiquette, this remark is indicative of a tactic of Dühring, as he saw it, lowering himself to the level of the conditions around him. When seen in perspective, it appears not only to be a tactic, but also a part of a general strategy that materializes in the second half of his career: Dühring turns to the intentional use of base, polemical language to repel his hated opponents. He even comes up with a name for this form of resistance: “reagent pessimism” or “reagent anti-Semitism”. Through his aggressive style, he hopes to provoke his enemies and to bring them out of their

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<sup>776</sup> Cf. Albrecht, ED 18; Theodor Lessing, *Dührings Haß* (Hannover: Wolf Albrecht Adam Verlag, 1922), 28.

<sup>777</sup> Although Dühring does not seem to have referred to Max Stirner directly, he certainly knew his work. Jünemann, Dühring's young disciple, wrote at length on Stirner in *Der Moderne Völkergeist*. Dühring would likely have labeled Stirner's work a decadent literary phenomenon. Zenker also compares Dühring with Stirner. *Der Anarchismus*, op. cit., 149.

<sup>778</sup> Cf. Dühring to Jünemann, 21 July 1896, in Dühring Papers, Box 7, HA/SBB.

cover, and force them to show their true colors. He ultimately becomes so entrenched in this method of “intellectual warfare” – Albrecht speaks of an “addiction to polemic” – that he is no longer only fighting the enemies that he has before him, but also the enemies of the past and the especially the future. Dühring erects a monument which, in many ways, would stand as a repellant to modern liberal society.

*Personalist und Emancipator* was an efficient means of carrying out this general strategy of the final phase of his literary production. As badly as the *Sozialitärer Bund* and *Der Moderne Völkergeist* had ended, as Mogge points out, Dühring could be satisfied with being able to take over a journal which had a substantial readership in anti-Semitic circles.<sup>779</sup> The coals of the Dühring fire were stoked once more. This time around there would be no influence from outside, and he would have complete control of the paper. The first issues appeared under the editorship of the old journal, but in April of 1900 Dühring’s son Ulrich became editor and took over the paper’s distribution from Emil Keil, who had been up to that point in charge of the finances of *Der Moderne Völkergeist*. Ulrich also took on the publishing of the next edition of *The Jewish Question* and soon the whole operation of the cause was in the hands of the Dührings.<sup>780</sup>

In the second edition of *My Cause, My Life, My Enemies* Dühring explains the title of the journal. “Personalism” was chosen to represent his basic point of view, and to distinguish his new “movement” from socialism and anarchism. Years before he had used “societary” and “anti-cratic”, but now saw these terms as having been discredited through “alleged supporters”. With the new term, which he believes was new, he would not be able to be unfairly grouped with some other group whom he did not want to be associated with.<sup>781</sup> The word “emancipation” has a concrete legal, social and political sense for him, although he sees it as having also been discredited by the “Jewish emancipation” and “Catholic emancipation”, because, “if intellectual slaves become enslaved, they are merely falling prey to their own principle. A true emancipation worthy of the name only comes into effect where personal freedom and integrity are secure”.<sup>782</sup>

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<sup>779</sup> Mogge, *Rhetorik des Hasses*, 55.

<sup>780</sup> *Ibid.*, 56. The history of the *Dühring Bund* and *Der Moderne Völkergeist* has yet to be written. There is a wealth of material in the Dühring Papers of the manuscript department of the Berlin State Library, which unfortunately could not be considered for this dissertation.

<sup>781</sup> SLF, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 507.

<sup>782</sup> *Ibid.*, 508. Dühring gives further explanation of the terms “emancipator” and “personalist” in his journal. Cf. “Emancipation vom Teufel statt – des Teufels,” in PE 263 (September 1910): 2097-2098. Here he refers to the history of the word “emancipation” from ancient Rome and emphasizes that the term was then not to be equated with “becoming free” in general, but rather more with “coming of age”, as when a son reaches maturity and

Having long been in the role of the “controversial scholar”, Dühring moved beyond the realm of controversy, doing whatever he wanted, however he wanted to do it. The final twenty years of his life, like the final chapter of the Greek play *Prometheus*, would be relatively uneventful. If uneventful in terms of public attention and effective group activism, it was not stagnant intellectually. *Personalist und Emancipator* dealt not only with the thought and theories stemming from Dühring’s own system; every issue contains topics dealing with current events. A wide variety of issues are touched upon, and Dühring’s proclivity for “poly-typical” scholarship, seen in his early work with the *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart*, is put to use. Articles, most of which were authored by Dühring himself, cover topics such as money matters, philosophy, music, literature, crime and punishment, monetary theory, also home economics, marital behavior, health, diet and general happiness, and, of course, the ubiquitous topic of the Jews. Regarding the latter, Dühring’s already ethnically based position, which involved the expropriation of Jewish bankers’ money, becomes so radical that he can only create enemies for himself and for his cause among influential people. Nolte aptly points out that Dühring’s anti-Semitism becomes something that “not a single Jew can sympathize with, because as a Jew, i.e. due to an inalienable biological quality, he is declared an enemy, a world enemy”.<sup>783</sup>

This aggressively repellant “reagent” tactic, as Dühring would term it, is also aimed at other social groups and is especially virulently directed at the famous figures of German culture. Having once referred to Goethe back in the 1860s as “our national poet”, he now mocks the poet, calling him “Köthchen” (“little shit”); Kant becomes “Prof. Cant”, Bismarck “Bisquark” (“quark” meaning curd cheese), Nietzsche “Nichtske” (nichts being nothing), Marx simply “a criminal” or a “fraud”. As Theodor Lessing writes, anything which had gained or was gaining fame or influence becomes suspicious to Dühring and must be knocked down to size in a childish manner; Tolstoi becomes “Toll-kraut”(crazy cabbage), Ibsen second-rate “Ibse” (child); Plato and Buddha are “religious fanatics”, “scatterbrains”, and “fog-wrights” (*Nebelmacher*).<sup>784</sup> It can justifiably be pointed out that Dühring was a proud Berliner who took pride in the destructive humor known in the city’s capital, but such childish scoffing and jibing, coming from one of the great minds of his generation, was so incongruous that it

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leaves the custody of his father’s family. It is a negative term and involves being liberated from a bond from which there are no further prospects. “Personalist” is a positive term which signifies that a person is a representative of law and rights.

<sup>783</sup> Ernst Nolte, *Nietzsche und der Nietzscheanismus*, 123.

<sup>784</sup> Theodor Lessing, op. cit., 15-16.

became absurd. It was not without good reason that Paul Ernst spoke of Dühring as a “tragic-comical” figure.<sup>785</sup>

Although one can rightfully say that his anti-Semitism had been peripheral to his philosophy, he now mentions the Jews in nearly every article. Dühring, like the mayor of Vienna Karl Lueger (and later Hermann Göring), apparently believes he has the authority to decide who is Jewish and who is not. He turns Gentiles such as Lessing, Richard Wagner, Rudolf Virchow, and Henry George, and many others, into Jews without any evidence for his case. In 1908, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt is referred to as a “Jew scion”.<sup>786</sup> His writings sink to such a low level that it is more than questionable as to whether Henry C. Carey would have left him an inheritance had he known the form Dühring’s work and career would take in his later years.

The sense of charm, without which, as H.L. Mencken once wrote, all reformers will fail, was now lacking in Dühring, and one can understand Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s remark that, although Dühring was a thinker of undeniable significance, he lacked a certain open-mindedness (“*Seelenweite*”) to make him truly great personality.<sup>787</sup> Modesty, constraint, and a sense of impartiality, characteristics without which a journal has little broad appeal, are missing in the pages *Personalist und Emancipator*. It is, however, apparent that Dühring is not interested in new readership; he is writing to a small group of faithful supporters who appreciate an authoritarian style.<sup>788</sup> His once influential and realistic visions of reform have now regressed into rebarbative polemics. With bitter cynicism and provocative mockery, Dühring seems to intentionally run amok. He reaches the end of the line, and, to use an image of Nietzsche’s, begins behaving like a beaten watch dog, protecting his work and ready to bite anyone who approaches.

Despite the childish polemics which characterize the journal, there were educated and influential people who read *Personalist und Emancipator*, as the Dühring Papers indicate. The diplomat Otto Wiedtfeldt, for example, who was the German ambassador in Washington from 1922-25, was an avid reader and sent Ulrich Dühring letters from all over the globe from the

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<sup>785</sup> Paul Ernst’s reference to Dühring is in his article, “Eine positive Überwindung des Communismus,” *Neuland* 1 (October 1896): 16. Schopenhauer defined laughter as a sudden perception of incongruity between a concept and real objects which has been thought to be in a certain relationship and his not. The discrepancy causes laughter. *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. one, 59.

<sup>786</sup> Cf. Mogge, *Rhetorik des Hasses*, 105.

<sup>787</sup> *Heinrich von Stein und seine Weltanschauung*, op. cit., 22.

<sup>788</sup> One might csee Dühring as an early twentieth century precursor of the “Internet blogger”. The phenomenon of podcasts and streamed webcasts lends itself to political, or perhaps better termed “armchair” activism similar to the kind Dühring carried out with his magazine.

period dating from 1900-1923.<sup>789</sup> Some of the *Personalist* articles, especially those dealing with political economic issues, are critical and exhibit an application of the Dühringian system.<sup>790</sup> Dühring had become acquainted with the Jewish-Austrian bank director Hermann Schwarzwald (1871-1939), who became a passionate disciple of the Dühringian views on money, publishing articles dealing with Dühring's monetary theories in prominent journals.<sup>791</sup>

Albrecht labels Dühring's development from a brilliant scholar and social reformer to an aggressive writer given to polemics as "tragic", and speaks of the final phase of his career as a "ruinous period".<sup>792</sup> It might, however, be argued that Dühring's behavior at the end of his career was to a degree consistent with the tenets of a philosophy rooted in *Anschaulichkeit*, i.e. in an intuitive perception of the moment, as it were, the will to action at any cost. In the last phase of his career, time and circumstance have narrowed the possible fields of action Dühring has before him, but his will to action remains ferociously strong. As much as the final phase may have hurt his reputation, when the gloss of the polemic and vitriol are removed, there is surprisingly still a keen and original mind at work, as we will see now.

## 2. *The Turn to Extreme Individualism*

The last twenty years of Dühring's career signify a shift in his outlook from a general focus on the concerns of society as a whole towards the rights and responsibilities of the individual. Although individualism had been one of the basic tenets of his thought from the beginning of his career onwards, it was kept in check by his strong sense of social justice and his political orientation towards the German labor movement, following his unsuccessful bids for professorship. Once his influence with the workers had waned after his break with the Social Democrats, Dühring had turned towards a new group of readers: the educated middle-class. Despite his publishing success and the strong trajectory that his views enjoyed for nearly two decades, with the demise of the *Dühring Bund* and *Der Moderne Völkergeist* at the end of the 90s, as we have just seen, he begins concentrating on influencing a select few of loyal followers. Henceforth he propagates a more personal message, based on individual willpower

<sup>789</sup> Cf. Wiedtfeldt to Ulrich Dühring, Dühring Papers, Box 6, HA/SBB.

<sup>790</sup> When it comes to basic theoretical positions on monetary policy and causes of inflation Dühring's work should not be underestimated, as the writings of a leading expert in the field such as Hermann Schwarzwald indicate. See the following articles: "Zur Wischwährung noch gar Nullwährung," PE 283 (July 1911); "Geldtheorie wichtiger als Werttheorie," PE 296 (1912); "Theuerung warum?" PE 301 (May 1912); "Geld, Warenhandel, Banken I, II. III. IV, V." PE 330, 332, 333, 334 (1914); "Stand der Wirtschaftslehre," PE 358 (1916).

<sup>791</sup> Schwarzwald, an Austrian Jew, would have to be considered the most prominent Dühringian of the later years. See "Kopernikanische Wahrheiten über das Geld," *Neue Wiener Tagblatt* (23 December 1926). "Das Silber und das Dühringsche Gewichtsgeld," *Sendbogen* 33 (1937): 1-24.

<sup>792</sup> ED, 249.

and personal conviction. With this change of direction, he either alters or slightly modifies various positions of his system, in some cases reverting to stances which he had held at the beginning of his career. In general, now more than ever, he emphasizes the primacy of the “political” above the mere “economical”. In addition to the third edition of *Cursus of National and Political Economy*, two new works, *Weapons, Capital and Labor* (1906) and *Social Rescue* (1907), are published and serve to unite Dühring’s positions in this third and final phase of his career.<sup>793</sup>

Perhaps the most noticeable change was his view on private property. Dühring’s definition of property had already undergone a change in the 1870s. His earliest writings, although social in their tendency, emphasized the right of property, but in the early 1870s this position was changed as he came to reject private property, albeit without advocating public ownership. At this stage in his system of social economics, as we saw above, property should be replaced through public laws which allow equal usage. He had seen property as having been ruined through a societal development that favored those who pursued their interest with unlawful force, and he sought to replace it through a new concept. This concept gained its most salient form in the idea of the economic communes formulated in the second edition of *Cursus of National and Social Economics* from 1876. The system of economic communes was retracted in the third edition of the same book in 1892, and in the final phase of his career he drifts away from this vision and goes back to the acceptance of private property as a necessary basic form of a person having power over an object. He now writes, “To do away with the individual’s power over objects means not only to confiscate freedom, but also to confuse the whole relationship of the world of objects. Where is the will if it cannot get involved in the matters of nature?”<sup>794</sup> If property is not an evil to be overcome, then the current government, which is abusing property, is the problem. Rather than seek a theoretical solution to the concept of property, as he had done in the past, the focus is now on the “evil of the moment”, which is historically anchored “property based on violence” (*Gewalteeigentum*). He now calls this “predatory property” (*Raubeigentum*) and writes, “Whereas legitimate property is a configuration that stems from the individual free will, predator property is characterized by group violence”. However, he is opposed to the idea of the government or another societal power moving in and taking away such “predator property”; this would create the harmful and false impression that the state, or merely power, creates property. The answer for Dühring is to find a means which can get the root of the problems, even if only indirectly and at a slower

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<sup>793</sup> Albrecht, ED, 250.

<sup>794</sup> WCA, 100.

pace.<sup>795</sup> The problem with such false ownership is that it is based on exploitation of manpower; the solution must be to set the manpower free. Workers can be emancipated by moving on to find work elsewhere, and those workers who remain can increase their salaries, thus making it very difficult for large property owners to exist.<sup>796</sup> Pure individual ownership is always the ideal, and Dühring adamantly fights against expropriation of any kind. With regard to capital and capital interest, his position also takes on an individualist tone. In his system of sociopolitical economics, interest was understood as being based on force, and thus unjust. Now he sees capital interest as not only a precondition of production, but also as being a just earning from it.<sup>797</sup>

As we see, his objectives of social reform are now primarily individualistic. Whereas he formerly saw social reform primarily in terms of eradicating force, in his book *Weapons, Capital, and Labor*, which he calls the second edition of his book from 1865 *Capital and Labor* (but which is really a completely new book), he now defines it as “the complete striving for independence, which looks towards economic and political independence in the same fashion”.<sup>798</sup> The largely negative concentration on the evils of the “criminal state” and on “property based on force”, etc. is shifted into a virulent “personalism” characterized by independence and freedom of the individual. The workers are to become “deproletarianized” and transformed into truly independent people. In order to foster individual autonomy, he recommends an almost puritanical form of political economy where production is to be concentrated on only the bare necessities needed for the population, and diligence and thriftiness are required by the people.<sup>799</sup> Economic independence is to be fostered by supporting small and mid-sized instead of large scale farms. The farmers are to remain independent of the state and to avoid debt. A surprising turn, considering Dühring’s former critique of Malthus, is his suggestion now to adjust births to the state of the economy. He writes: “Only with this in mind can individualism and life in general be taken seriously at the same time”.<sup>800</sup> We see a turn towards an extreme individualism that abhors the collective.

Dühring also returns to the favorite idea of his early years: the workers’ coalitions. Having become skeptical of the instinct of the masses, which had praised early in his career (cf. Chapter Six), he now makes a plea for common sense. Seeing sound instincts among the

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<sup>795</sup> SR, 175.

<sup>796</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>797</sup> This was his original position back in the 1860s. Cf. KG, 401-405.

<sup>798</sup> WCA, 124.

<sup>799</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>800</sup> Ibid., 158.

working class is now for him merely wishful thinking. He now advocates common sense instead of instinct.<sup>801</sup> Instead of trying to gain direct ownership, workers should aim at attaining indirect power through indirect means of acquiring share certificates or other properties which have monetary value, and the coalitions are the best means of doing this. Coalitions are, according to Dühring, to decide the distribution of earnings, but do not influence production. The organizations should accept the existence of an antagonistic position in relation to the employers, which can only be stabilized by having a contract on the working conditions, especially the level of salaries. The contracts are necessary and must remain as long as judges cannot be considered a legitimate impartial third party, which is the case with the current government. (Dühring does not rule out a communal arbitration at some later date.) He also foresees the coalitions becoming involved in providing unemployment insurance for workers.

He is, however, extremely skeptical of using the coalitions as an instrument to fight company management. More vehemently than in the past, he now rejects general strikes. They are not likely to succeed because they lend the government the perception of a moral power which it would otherwise not have. Beyond this position, which he also held in the past, he now considers strikes to be a ruthless affront to the rest of the population, which is harmed by them.<sup>802</sup> True to his belief in the sovereignty of the individual, now even stronger than before, he also warns against the pressure put on workers to go on strikes; this is unacceptable, especially when one considers the uncertain prospect of the strike having success. He warns against what he calls “strike-ism” and implies that class struggle can degenerate into “class murder”. He writes, “Strike-ism, which seemed to be a beneficial corrective measure in the beginning, has created a wild boisterousness of bans by the employers and thus turned all action into a war in which there is no trace of legal consideration to speak of. The ‘strike-istry’ has taken on the character of a mere inclination to social revolution and the so-called general strikes have received the senseless tasks of dissolving the current society into its atoms and thus destroying it. More than class murder, it is a kind of suicide and strangely enough one in which the masses destroy their own people”.<sup>803</sup> It seems that Dühring does not hold much hope for the future of the coalitions helping the workers and one can wonder, as Albrecht does, how he envisions organizing the men whose cause he is fighting for.<sup>804</sup>

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<sup>801</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>802</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>803</sup> SR, 3.

<sup>804</sup> Albrecht, ED, 265.

Dühring rejects every kind of collectivism or action by general associations of individuals which suppress other people or groups. The state is seen as the most powerful collective configuration and now he believes it should be limited to an absolute minimum, i.e. only to keep law and order, maintaining basic public facilities such as streets, roads, etc. Any compulsion from the side of the government towards citizens and their basic rights, towards institutions which have effect on individuals, especially property, but also towards education and training, is to be rejected. The driving force of society is the individual, or as Albrecht writes (perhaps ironically with reference to Nietzsche) the superman (“den Übermenschen”).<sup>805</sup>

As we have seen, one of Dühring’s greatest reproaches of Marxism was its non-political nature. Whereas the Marxists saw society as a product of capital, Dühring was convinced that it was the other way around, i.e. that society shaped the development of capital. In the final phase of his career, the political is now emphasized even more than before. Any improvement of the economic conditions of society involves a restructuring of political behavior. Personal political liberation is the precondition of economic liberation.<sup>806</sup> All injustice is now seen as stemming from inter-personal relationships between people which are based on violence and theft based on weaponry. Only political methods will be effective to alleviate the disproportion between the powerful and the weak. The use of weapons to take back freedom that has been taken away is not only just – it is a human right. This counter measure is, however, only temporary, and serves to sustain a condition where violent struggles are overcome. Police action is only needed to combat coincidental disturbances – a statement which Dühring admits can in no way apply to the present and has utopian overtones.<sup>807</sup>

Dühring rejects the current forms of parliamentary government.<sup>808</sup> Apparently at a loss for an ideal suggestion, he attempts to create what he sees as an improved make-shift alternative to the existing conditions which favor the individual. He supports the right to vote as a general human right, but calls for the creation of a special (first) house made up of people who possess “outwardly recognizable property”; the members are not selected according to the size of their property, but rather are voted upon by others with property. This house’s jurisdiction is in matters concerning property, and especially those where property rights are being violated; for example, through dispossession or taxes. The role of parliament should be

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<sup>805</sup> Ibid., 261.

<sup>806</sup> CNS, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 388.

<sup>807</sup> SR, 91.

<sup>808</sup> Cf., WCA, 67 et seq.

considerably limited, especially in all matters pertaining to labor, such as working times, etc. The ideal of parliamentary government, in which the free, sovereign individual is able to make his rights and interests felt politically, and can thereby create the preconditions for a just social and economic order, is only fulfilled when the mindset of the people is reformed in the sense of an anti-egoistic perspective. Then, according to Dühring, nobody will need the parliamentary power to fight the principles that the recognition of its independence are based on.

In his last book, *Social Rescue*, Dühring goes beyond these ideas, advocating a radical and defiant application of individualism as a way out of the current predicament. In almost Nietzschean fashion, he describes the right of the masses to vote as something which ruins exceptional achievement. A mass democracy amounts to patronizing the nation through the rule of demagoguery: the voters are seen as lemmings, blindly following their leaders over the edge of the cliff. The latter have a universal calling to preach about and decide on matters they know little, if anything, about. Ultimately, in order to rule, Dühring is of the opinion that commissions must be formed that serve as a refuge and where decisions can be made by commissars hidden from the limelight of the public. When viewing the present political situation, he concludes: the ruling parties are all the same. “Social ruin is thus everywhere!” he proclaims. Like de Tocqueville, but in a much more raw manner, he goes on to warn against parliamentary democracy as a kind of tyranny of the masses amounting to “mass slavery” and “mass deceit”.<sup>809</sup>

His solution for the moment is the creation of a “legal protectorate”. Dühring does not believe the once powerful historical dynasties will live on and, prophetically for the year 1907, writes that “even in Russia” the monarchy will be powerless if not completely done away with. The answer is not to be found in any form of collectivism, but rather in individual initiative. He foresees a man of noticeable achievement, backed up by armed power, giving the wrath of the people an ordered expression. He writes: “Given a decisive legal will, which must of course be aided by an elite, he can create order and facilitate a transition to such conditions in which a legal will, rooted in the people and society, creates the possibility of better institutions [...]”.<sup>810</sup> Thus through the societal crisis at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which he has before him, Dühring envisions a revolutionary transitional regime coming to power through violent struggle. It will be led by a morally and intellectually exceptional leader who is

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<sup>809</sup> SR, 279-280.

<sup>810</sup> Ibid.

backed up by armed force and surrounded by an elite who share the same spirit. Once a policy of law is established, there will be a “purified” way of thinking and a new order will be ushered in through the personal initiative of society. For Dühring, the only decisive thing that one can count on in light of the ruinous conditions of society is the “inner revenge and nemesis inherent in all bad things which pits the powers of the devil against one another”; however, he contends, the “most important reagent is that which proceeds from good and thus from law”.<sup>811</sup>

### 3. *Dühringianism at Work*

In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Dühringianism had by no means died out. Dühring still had many supporters, one of whom was the Jewish-German intellectual Benedict Friedländer. Friedländer, who apparently took little offense to Dühring’s virulent anti-Semitism, wrote books and articles in support of Dühring and, according to Hans Blüher, even named his son after him.<sup>812</sup> When he died in 1908, he left Dühring an inheritance of 10,000 Mark, a substantial amount of money at the time, which Dühring did not claim, because Friedländer was Jewish. For him to have taken the money, he wrote, would have been “an intolerable contradiction”.<sup>813</sup>

The “signature movement” of 1885 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Dühring’s career as a scholar had shown that he had many followers in the Slavic speaking countries.<sup>814</sup> In Russia there were several translations of Dühring’s books, and his cause was passionately supported by Konstantin Iwanowitsch Petrow from Taschenkent in Turkestan, who has been called the “father of the new Dühring movement in Russia”.<sup>815</sup> Petrow was highly active in propagating the Dühring cause before being murdered by the Bolsheviks in the First World War. One of the men Petrow brought into the movement was Dimitri Roitmann, a teacher of mathematics at St. Petersburg’s Karl May School, an elite private boys school for children of German families founded in 1856 that still exists to this day. He became the founder of what Dühring had called a “character group” (as detailed in *Wirklichkeitsphilosophie*, the second edition of *Cursus der Philosophie*). The erudite Roitmann wrote an in depth monograph on Dühring in Russian entitled *Eugen Dühring – The Founder of a New Inspiring Intellectual Vanguard. A Systematic Portrayal of his basic Teachings, Research and Discoveries. On the*

<sup>811</sup> “Zukunfts Horizont,” in PE 190 (August 1907): 1513.

<sup>812</sup> Hans Blüher, *Werke und Tage. Geschichte eines Denkers* (München: Paul List, 1953), 234.

<sup>813</sup> Cf. PE 218 (October 1908).

<sup>814</sup> Cf. Dühring Papers, HA/SBB.

<sup>815</sup> Hans Reinhardt, “Dührings Geist in Rußland bis zum Beginn der Bolschewistenherrschaft,” *Sendbogen für Dühringsche Geisteshaltung und Lebensgestaltung* 18 (January: 1930): 3.

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Literary Work of the Reformer, Thinker and Researcher.<sup>816</sup> The detailed nineteen-paged table of contents (written in German) sent to Ulrich Dühring gives testimony to an in depth propagandistic work, like none other in the comprehensive list of books on Dühring. It contains seven parts, and there is a separate chapter devoted to the issue of the Jews; the final chapter handles Dühringianism in Russia. In a letter to Dühring from 1908, Roitmann writes that intellectually the situation is favorable: he has succeeded in making three young people “full-fledged Dühringians”, two of his former students, a philosopher and a mathematician, the third a lab technician.<sup>817</sup> He has brought up the Jewish question with them, which he implies is a sensitive topic in Russia; the young men were shocked at first by Dühring’s views, but then “came to terms with it”. (Dühring’s “anti-Professor” stance, he writes, was not difficult.) Roitmann himself never had any doubts about Dühring’s position on the Jews, as he “was not prejudiced towards them as a child”. He reports that the material situation of his publishing house is not favorable and that he is very ill, but will not give up hope. Over the fate of Roitmann’s book there is little known. He died 23 December 1911, before the Russian Revolution would wipe any alternative socialist ideas off the map in Russia.<sup>818</sup>

Dühring’s books also reached across the Atlantic to the United States. There were no English translations of his works, but his books seemed to have been widely read by members of German-speaking communities in small and large American cities. Otto Wiedtfeldt, the German ambassador and subscriber to *Personalist und Emancipator* living in the U.S., wrote Ulrich Dühring that his father’s books were to be found in the American libraries: mostly *Critical History of Political Economy*, *Critical History of Philosophy*, and *The Worth of Life*, rarer the *Jewish Question*, which he found in only two libraries. The New York Library, the Library of Congress in Washington and the Chicago Public Library contained all or nearly all of his books, as well as some of the secondary literature on Dühring. Surprisingly, the books of Carey were missing completely “because he is either not recognized or is considered to

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<sup>816</sup> The German title is “*Eugen Dühring – der Begründer der neuen actionsfähigen Geistesführung. Eine systematische Darstellung aller seiner Grundlehren, Forschungen und Entdeckungen. – Zur 50-Jährige literarische Arbeit des Reformators, Denkers und Forschers.*” Dühring Papers, Box 6 HA/SBB.

<sup>817</sup> Roitmann to Dühring, 12 Dec. 1911, Dühring Papers, Box 6, HA/SBB. (Krakower und Sawarsin were Roitmann’s pupils.)

<sup>818</sup> Dühring wrote a series of articles in *Personalist* on the development of his cause in Russia in 1912: Cf. “Unser Geist in Rußland,” PE 295 (February 1912) et seq. See also “Mein System und die russische Revolution,” PE 369 (May 1917). Hans Reinhardt refers to an article in the Estonian paper “Waba Maa” sent to him by a follower of Dühring’s in Dorpat named Eduard Blumberg in which Roitmann’s book is reported to have sold well in Dorpat. Cf. Hans Reinhardt, “Dührings Geist in Rußland bis zum Beginn der Bolschewistenherrschaft,” *Propagandablätter für Dühringsche Geisteshaltung und Lebensgestaltung. Dreizehnter Zittauer Sendbogen* (March 1929): 4-6.

belong to the protectionists”. Wiedtfeldt comments that *The Worth of Life, History of Philosophy, and History of Political Economy* are quite well read (*nicht wenig gelesen*), which can be seen from the entry stamps in the back of the books. His final conclusion is that the American libraries offer more of a chance to read Dühring’s books than the German libraries; however, he notices, the German language is losing ground and “those who are young only speak English”.<sup>819</sup>

Over in Germany, Emil Döll and Ulrich Dühring founded the “Dühring Gemeinschaft” in 1914, which was not an officially registered organization, but rather a small, tight-knit group conceived along the lines of the “character-building associations” which Dühring had advocated in the book *Wirklichkeitsphilosophie* (1895). Beginning in September of 1914 they began issuing the *Sendbogen*, a journal with essays about and by Dühring sent to followers who were not directly part of the community. Shortly before this, Döll organized a Dühring congress in a town in the Harz Mountains, which was attended by the Austrian Klebek, the Russian Krakow and the Estonian Blumberg. The portrayals of the journal were intentionally kept short as their goal was primarily to awaken interest for the cause. Despite their initial success, the flyers were forced to be discontinued during the First World War and resumed in November of 1921, shortly after Dühring’s death. Twenty-seven issues were published until they were discontinued by Ulrich Dühring in 1925. Two years later, Hans Reinhardt began printing a new series titled “*Propagandablätter für Dühringische Geisteshaltung und Lebensgestaltung*” (Propaganda Sheets for Dühringian Mindset and Way of Life), which went on successfully until 1929 when they were renamed *Sendbogen für Dühringsche Geistesführung und Lebensgestaltung*. There were several other initiatives (all labeled with similarly awkward sounding names) which followed the cause laid down by Dühring: the “Popularized Introductory Writings on the Results of Eugen Dühring’s Reformatory Thought” (*Gemeinverständlichen Einführungsschriften zu Eugen Dührings reformatorischen Denkergebnissen*), the Societas Eugen Dühring (S.E.D.), the “S.E.D. People’s Books” (S.E.D. Volksbücher), “*Der Ruck. Wissenschaftliches Blatt für Volk und Völker*” as well as smaller writings authored by individual my individual organizations.

#### 4. The Will to “Die Completely”

Dühring remained active in the last years of his life, continuing to publish and contribute to *Personalist und Emancipator*. In July of 1911, Emilie Dühring died of a heart attack

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<sup>819</sup> Otto Wiedtfeldt to Ulrich Dühring, 18 May 1914, Dühring Papers, Box 6, HA/SBB. This was a trend which had been already observed by Friedrich List in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Cf. Friedrich Lenz, *Friedrich List. Der Mann und das Werk* (München und Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1936), 402.

following an attempt to take her own life.<sup>820</sup> Although relatively little is known about Frau Dühring, the influence which she had on her husband's career should not be underestimated. Ernst Schmeitzner, who dealt with her on business matters, implied that she had a lot to do with management of Dühring's career and wrote, "she is capable of anything".<sup>821</sup> Emilie shared her husband's anti-Jewish ethos and, if we are to believe Dühring himself, went even beyond her husband in this respect.<sup>822</sup> A poem which she published titled "Des Judens Vaterland" (The Fatherland of the Jews), an anti-Semitic parody of Arndt's famous poem "Des Deutschen Vaterlands" would speak for this assessment. Another indication that Emilie Dühring was a driving force behind her husband's anti-Semitism is that after her death, his position on the Jews seems to have softened somewhat.<sup>823</sup> His extremely cordial and respectful relationship with Hermann Schwarzwald developed following his wife's death; the fact that Schwarzwald was Jewish does not seem to have been an issue for Dühring.

Dühring would outlive his wife by ten years, continuing to publish and write in *Personalist und Emancipator*. He and his son "bungled in the household", according to Ulrich Dühring, before employing his wife's twenty-two year old younger sister nearly two years later. She took care of Dühring's physical well-being, and managed household chores. Although she reported that there were often arguments between Dühring and his son regarding scientific issues, the way that two men were able to bond together and continue their literary productivity is a truly amazing feat.<sup>824</sup> Considering that Dühring had lost not only his life-long companion, the mother of his children, but also the voice that conveyed the material which had entered his mind throughout his career, the fact that he was able to carry on, as productively as he did, for ten more years is perhaps one of the greatest achievements of his entire career.

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<sup>820</sup> She had suffered from bouts of acute melancholia which appeared, according to Dühring, in intervals. In connection with this disorder, she had attempted to commit suicide years before. Cf. *Zum Andenken an Frau Emilie Dühring*, 28-29. "Einer von uns," in PE 282 (June 1911): 2249, (II.) in PE 283 (July 1911): 2257-2258, (III.) in PE 286 (September 1911): 2281-2282.

<sup>821</sup> Schmeitzner wrote, in a letter to Nietzsche, one of his other leading writers, "Ich kann nichts behaupten, aber eine Frau D[ühring] ist, nach den Erfahrungen die ich mit ihr gemacht habe, zu Vielem fähig!" Malcom B. Brown, „Friedrich Nietzsche und sein Verleger Ernst Schmeitzner," 235.

<sup>822</sup> Cf. "Einer von uns," PE 287 (October 1911): 2282. Dühring reflected following her death that she probably had more of a hard-line position against the Jews than he; he writes that there were times when he thought of giving up writing on the Jews for good, but his wife would not let him do so. He writes, "Im Gegensatz zu dieser meiner Neigung, die Juden schießen zu lassen, kam meine Frau nie aus der Haltung." Ibid.

<sup>823</sup> In an article from 1917 he claims, for example that the English, as a race, are every bit as much to blame for the problems facing the world as the Jews. He advocates now an "English Question" which should be treated the same way that he had treated the "Jewish Question" earlier.

<sup>824</sup> *Zum Andenken an Frau Emilie Dühring*, op. cit., 31. Also, Ulrich Dühring, "Eugen Dühring gestorben," in PE 414 (November 1921): 3306.

Soon after the *Sendbogen* was discontinued during the First World War, Dühring nearly completely lost his hearing, which disabled him having books, journals, articles, and letters read to him as had been done up to then. According to his son, he looked at this situation positively and was satisfied to concentrate mostly on his own thoughts. Dühring took pains to see that his books – particularly on political economy – were available in the bookstores, which due to the war and the financial crisis accompanying was extremely difficult. He expressed the will to revise and complement his works as late 1920, which his failing health would not allow.<sup>825</sup>

Dühring had devoted an entire chapter to the subject of death in his first philosophical book *The Worth of Life*. Death, he holds, is neither good nor bad, neither moral nor immoral. Its only positive value lies in that which it destroys. Life is therefore the measure of death. The essence of life is not to reach a certain goal, but the functions which carry it. There is no hereafter; death is “authentic, full, and complete”. The nature of the Philosophy of the Actual allows for no phantasms or superstitious deifications of the world. Anticipating that the end was near, he was emphatic to his son that there were to be no rites observed at his funeral. He did not even want a gravestone. The end came on the 21 September 1921 and was portrayed by Ulrich Dühring in the “death issue” of *Personalist und Emancipator*. Dühring’s death throes came in the afternoon, and during a short break he said with a relieved voice, “If I pull through now, I’ll pull through later”. Fifteen minutes later, shortly after the sundown, he fell into unconsciousness and passed away. Fittingly perhaps, he had shown a notion of hope and seemed to be looking ahead to something at the precipice of death, “where all are equal and all are free”.<sup>826</sup>

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<sup>825</sup> Ibid., 3307.

<sup>826</sup> September 21<sup>st</sup>, the day of Dühring’s death, was coincidentally the same day that Schopenhauer had died on sixty-one years earlier. On a side note, Dühring also died on the exact same day of the Oppau explosion in Ludwigshafen, up to that time one of the greatest disasters to have ever hit the civilized world, in which 500 to 600 people were killed and 2,000 injured from a chemical explosion at a BASF plant.

## CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTUS

*“No, this is not good enough, there is somewhere something better.”*

### The Promethean Will

Our plan has been to give a comprehensive portrayal of Dühring’s life and works, and, in so doing, to systematize and critique the phenomena of his production as a scholar and activist. Although not our main task, we have also aimed to free a controversial but significant German scholar from the one-sided treatment he has received as a “chauvinist” and “anti-Semite”. Instead of focusing primarily on the immature outbursts, aggressive polemics, and diatribes of what Albrecht has termed the “ruinous phase” of Dühring’s career, we have provided a history of his entire life, examining his worldview and bearing towards science along with his system of sociopolitical economics, all within the context of the two main periods of his biography. Before putting Dühring’s career into a final perspective, the question remains as to how there could be such a stark discrepancy between the early and late phases of his career. Was this a case of a once great mind running amok in the second half of his career amid the trials and tribulations he faced, or were Dühring’s actions somehow connected to the tenets of his philosophy, which may have served to facilitate the circumstances he faced?

### *Discrepancy and Consistency*

In the 1860s and the early part of the 1870s, Dühring displayed a talent for penetrating analysis and poignant intellectual critique, as evidenced by his voluminous articles, essays and books at the time. His writings in this period showed the education and erudition of a trained *Staatswissenschaftler* who understood the mechanisms of government and the political structures of European and American society.<sup>827</sup> Although his idealism was also evident early on, Dühring came across then as a sober and learned social reformer with practical suggestions for improving German society in the face of the pressing social problems associated with the Social Question. In the second half of his career, his work was marred by the increasingly subjective perspective of a man bent on taunting and reviling segments of the German educated establishment and the public at large. Lacking restraint, he engaged in orgies of invective that escalated to the point of advocating fanatical measures of destruction of influential societal groups, e.g. professors, aristocrats, and Jews, whom he saw as corrupting society.

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<sup>827</sup> Here we think here particularly of his voluminous early publications and especially his writings for the Hildburghausen *Ergänzungsblätter zur Kenntnis der Gegenwart*, a supplemental magazine to Meyer’s encyclopedia from 1866-1871.

During his rise to prominence, Dühring was able to fulfill certain needs that existed among educated Germans; the impression that civilization was losing its human element and that people were becoming superfluous machines in the recently industrialized society created a malaise of sorts among Germans. He became popular, as Maria Reményi has observed, because he was able to convey the results of the new developments in science in a clear manner, which seemed to lessen the gap between scientific specialists on the one hand, and a public interested in science, on the other. His writings offered clear-cut schemes for what was right and wrong in society; they postulated the existence of absolute truths of “correct science”, combining this with an historical awareness and a fervent belief in progress which had the effect of making disturbing social development seem more understandable.<sup>828</sup>

In the second half of his career, which began following his dismissal from the University of Berlin (and which coincided with Engel’s devastating polemic against him) Dühring adjusted his literary efforts to the new circumstances in which he found himself. Having lost any direct influence he might have had among Social Democrats, he changed his publishing strategy away from trying to influence the German labor movement towards finding a readership among the educated middle class. Although he began to concentrate on questions of religion, ethnicity, and “mind leadership”, as he called it, the idea of using science to better society remained inherent in his work. In the first phase of his career, he had been concerned more with concrete political issues and, as evidenced by the commission he received from Chancellor Bismarck (ultimately published under the name of Hermann Wagener), actually had the real chance of seeing his ideas, e.g. his suggestions for workers coalitions, being practically applied. The second period of his career was markedly apolitical in the sense that he drifted so far from current practical concerns that he did not have even remote access to channels of influence. The first phase was characterized by a sense of what could be called *ad hoc* realism and the second phase more by increasingly abstract idealism, or even a metaphysical perspective, as Voelske chose to describe it.<sup>829</sup>

Despite contradictions to and alterations of certain positions in the two main periods of his career, when we consider the basic philosophical premises of his *Weltanschauung* and his

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<sup>828</sup> Maria Reményi, “Eugen Dühring und die Rezeption moderner mathematischer Konzepte,” in *Mathematikgeschichte und Unterricht III. Mathematik im Wandel*, ed. Michael Toepell (Hildesheim: Franzbecker), 253. Without further explanation, Link labels Dühring as “one of the most radical protonormalists”. Cf. Jürgen Link, *Versuch über den Normalismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 245.

<sup>829</sup> Voelske’s dissertation on Dühring, written during the 1930s, speaks of Dühring’s turn to “metaphysical anti-Semitism.” After advocating the role of the “state” and of the “nation” at different junctures, Dühring came to place more weight on “ethnicity” as an “intermediate” reality between the individual and humanity. Cf. Voelske, *Die Entwicklung des “rassischen Antisemitismus” zum Mittelpunkt der Weltanschauung Eugen Dührings*, 22.

bearing towards science, the discrepancy between the early and late phase of his career should, in our opinion, not be overestimated. To a large degree, we hold, his basic outlook remained consistent and along the lines he had originally established for his Philosophy of the Actual. From the beginning onwards, as we have seen, his writings were characterized by an unshakable belief in the conscious powers of the human intellect to shape life and positively affect man's destiny. They were marked by the will to establish absolute scientific clarity in all forms of life, and professed a view of the world with a strong allegiance to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries' views of progress.<sup>830</sup> Despite its optimistic tenor, as we have seen, the Philosophy of the Actual remained largely pessimistic with regard to concrete social matters; Dühring believed it was necessary to combat the violent forces which stood in the way of progress and freedom at any cost. His basic philosophy expressed an unwavering faith in the ability of the human mind, and it had a hatred of ambiguity, which led Vaihinger to speak of Dühring's "ruthless rationalism".<sup>831</sup> From the beginning until the end, his thought retained a characteristic sobriety, grave even for a country known for its serious and pensive thinkers. He was convinced that a philosophy that adheres to exact science, that embodies personal conviction, and that was geared towards "the cause of life" could elevate humankind. This conviction ran through his entire career. The roots of the outbursts that came to characterize the "bad Dühring", we hold, were inherent in his philosophy. The Philosophy of the Actual tended to shun the over-application of human abstraction (*Vernunft*) and contemplation in favor of the intuitive and the concrete (*Verstand*). Dühring abandoned the transcendental critique of the faculties of the mind, which Kant had been careful to establish, and was convinced that the categories of the mind were objective. With complete faith in the human intellect, he believed that the quandaries of the individual and of society in the industrial age could be solved through conscious, rational discourse. In contrast to both Kant and Schopenhauer, Dühring abandoned strict laws of determinism in the world of experience in favor of political laws that applied to the social world and allowed for purely human initiative.

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<sup>830</sup> Dühring's belief in the values of the Enlightenment and the ideas of social progress put him at odds with German "conservative revolutionary" nationalists, who he is often grouped together with – e.g. the book *Propheten des Nationalismus* edited by Schwedhelm. It is, however, telling that Armin Mohler's dissertation, *Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932*, written under the tutelage of Karl Jaspers in 1950, does not mention Dühring a single time. Dühring also does not fit the ideal type of a "Germanic ideology" developed by Fritz Stern in his classic work on Paul de Lagarde, Julius Langbehn, and Möller van den Bruck (cf. Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, introduction). Stern's comment that "above all these men hated liberalism" does of course not apply to Dühring, who felt a strong kinship with Jean Jacques Rousseau and championed the values of French Revolution; Dühring also engaged himself for the rights of women to study at the university. (Regarding the latter, see Reménye, "Der Fall Eugen Dühring und die Diskussion um das Frauenstudium in Berlin," 270-279.) Nor can Dühring be placed in the category of Ringer's "German Mandarin," part of a "threatened elite of German 'bearers of culture', members of a distinct cultured segment of the nation". Cf. Ringer, Fritz, *The Decline of the German Mandarins. The German Academic Community 1890-1933*, 3.

<sup>831</sup> Cf. Vaihinger, *Hartmann, Dühring und Lange*, 7.

Through “rational imagination”, which he added to his system in the 1870s, human volition was granted direct importance for shaping human development. The eudemonistic quality of Dühring’s philosophy and his optimistic conviction that “good will ultimately prevail over evil” led him to believe that the “immediate” or current badness in society must be fought and destroyed. He remained focused on the present, and when the nature of his writings and activism shifted in the second half of his career, the change was largely an application of the same Philosophy of the Actual in the face of a new setting. His emphasis on the ethical and practical value of instinct, as founded in his theory of Natural Law based on reactive instinct, caused him to respond impulsively and aggressively in view of the precarious situation of isolation in the last phase of his life, and the powerlessness he experienced. Instead of emphasizing the discrepancy between his early and later thought, one might perhaps speak of “different settings” for the activity of the same Philosophy of the Actual. Dühring showed little concern for the appearance of consistency, and was not afraid to adapt to the given situation in which he found himself and society. The changes in his positions and outlooks, which we have followed, give testimony to this, and bring to mind Emerson’s plea for self-reliance, “Speak what you think now in hard words and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said today”.<sup>832</sup> As a blind man, if Dühring had not possessed a high degree of self-reliance and confidence in his own knowledge and natural abilities his work as a scholar would never have been possible. He held the belief in himself and in his own philosophical worldview until his death.

### *The Crisis of the Mind*

The Danish philosopher Harold Höffding wrote in 1894 that Dühring’s philosophy represented “one of the most interesting speculative attempts of our day”.<sup>833</sup> This statement begs the question as to what it was exactly that Dühring was trying to attempt. General slogans of “reforming life”, “fighting for justice and exactness”, “combating corruption in science”, are to be found in his autobiography. Like no other thinker perhaps, his life and his cause were nearly inseparable. Ernst Nolte makes an interesting comparison between Dühring and Nietzsche in his book *Nietzsche and Nietzscheism*; both thinkers were fighters, but the battles that Nietzsche fought were “on his own”, i.e. were contained within his mind and in his writings. The battles which Dühring fought, on the other hand, took place in real life: his blindness before he was thirty, the influence of his ideas among the Social Democrats, the public fights with the Berlin professors, his dismissal from the university, and the student

<sup>832</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance and other Essays* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1993), 24.

<sup>833</sup> *A History of Modern Philosophy*, 561.

protest movement that resulted from it. Nietzsche, Nolte writes, was himself a battlefield, but Dühring actually fought battles.<sup>834</sup>

Yet particularly in matters of philosophy and theoretical speculation, the border between thought and reality cannot always be drawn exactly. Dühring was not only pitted against numerous “real life foes”, he was also fighting against a strong philosophical current existing in his day and beyond. Since Kant and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one of the prime motives of German thought was an attempt to move the human intellect away from its focus on reality and outward concerns, as it were, towards the analysis of the *functions* of human thought. This tendency ended in what Gehlen has termed the “devaluation of the mind”.<sup>835</sup> Not only Kant, but also Schopenhauer, who saw the mind as being merely the tip of the iceberg of the will, cast doubt on the faculties of the human intellect. Hegel’s philosophy and the romantic movement, which accompanied it, served to counter the tendency of critique begun by Kant, but after Hegel’s death, at around the time of Dühring’s birth, the “subversion of the intellect” continued until, in Gehlen’s words, “the mind had lost its reality”.<sup>836</sup> Dühring’s *Philosophy of the Actual*, as its name directly implies, was a bold attempt to confront and break this trend.

The mind was not only endangered philosophically; amid rapid industrialization and the emergence of a society of the masses, the role of the individual in general had lost the value that it had possessed at the beginning of the century. We touched upon the fact that the intellectual climate in Germany had undergone substantial changes during the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In one of Dühring’s early essays on Schopenhauer, he had emphasized that the modern world threatened the individual in many ways. The accumulation of general knowledge rendered man less significant; unilateral efforts had become greatly constrained; strong individual opinions about general notions were seen suspiciously (especially where they go against generally accepted views of the people); a truth that cannot be confirmed through common sense was damned. He wrote, “The further we go back in history, the more the great personalities stand out. The more we progress to higher levels of culture, the more individual effort disappears in the broadness of being and particularly from high points of our development in time one can claim that they are the most adverse for originality and independence.”<sup>837</sup>

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<sup>834</sup> *Nietzsche und der Nietzscheanismus*, op. cit., 21.

<sup>835</sup> *Wirklicher und unwirklicher Geist*, in *Arnold Gehlen Gesamtausgabe. Philosophische Schriften (1925-1933)*, ed. Lothar Samson (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), 127 et seq.

<sup>836</sup> Cf. Lothar Samson, *Naturteleologie und Freiheit bei Arnold Gehlen. Systematisch-historische Untersuchungen* (Freiburg/München: Karl Alber, 1976), 68-70.

<sup>837</sup> “Arthur Schopenhauer und die Bestrebungen unserer Zeit, Part One,” op. cit., 1.

Dühring noticed that only pedestrian views were seen positively, and he posed the question as to how the individual can play a significant role in the modern age of the masses. The answer he gave is that the human mind will never be satisfied to be subordinated under the pressures of society. The creative thinker will always be able to turn “knowledge and desire” into a unity for himself, and challenge the impediments of freedom and justice. Natural science, he believed, was an ally in this pursuit and not an opponent. It would protect the individual. The Philosophy of the Actual optimistically postulated that the sphere of human instinct and emotion would ensure that any theoretical disharmonies between the individual and the whole of society would be resolved, and that a practical balance is found to even out intolerable conflicts that arise. In the face of adversity, Dühring believed, certain enlightened like-minded individuals would rise to the occasion, as they had in the past, and act against the economic and political corruption of the powerful, who sought to control and manipulate the minds of freethinking individuals. Despite the crisis of the mind, brought upon by violent forces which currently ruled society, Dühring thought individualism would finally prevail and freedom would be preserved. The “enlightened outsider”, a powerful Promethean figure rooted in intellectual history, and indeed in the nature of mankind, will be there to preserve the power of human freedom and the integrity of the mind.<sup>838</sup> If the mind is a sovereign instrument, fit to solve the problems of the world, then the outstanding minds will not merely survive in the face of adversity, they will ultimately be able to shape the fate of society as a whole.

### *Socialism Proper*

Nietzsche once remarked that the driving force behind Dühring was not his “exuberant mind, but rather ambition”.<sup>839</sup> One might turn this phrase around and claim that the driving force of Dühring’s ambition was in many ways a “justification of the exuberant mind” itself. His faith in the human mind drove him to create a system of sociopolitical economics, which stands as one of the most elaborate, and indeed ambitious, attempts to answer the Social Question in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Marxism, which would go on to impact the world in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in many ways, did not possess the thoroughness, the fine knowledge, and the consistency to be found

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<sup>838</sup> This view holds a certain resemblance to the idea of “the remnant or certain alien spirits” expressed by Albert Jay Nock (1870-1945) in the final chapter of his book *Our Enemy the State*. Nock spoke of “certain alien spirits who, while outwardly conforming to the requirements of the civilization around them, still keep a disinterested regard for the plain intelligible law of things, irrespective of any practical end. They have an intellectual curiosity, sometimes touched with emotion, concerning the august order of nature; they are impressed by the contemplation of it, and like to know as much as they can, even in circumstances where its operation is ever so manifestly unfavorable to their best hopes and wishes.” *Ibid.*, 146. It is possible, if not likely, that Nock was influenced indirectly by Dühring through Franz Oppenheimer, who Nock considered a “Galileo”. *Ibid.*, 49. Oppenheimer’s book *The State* was often quoted by Nock.

<sup>839</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Wille zur Macht. Versuch einer Umwerthung aller Werthe ; drittes und viertes Buch ; Nachträge ; 1884 – 1888, Gesammelte Werke*, vol.19, ed. Richard Oehler (München: Marsuion, 1926), 206.

in Dühring's work.<sup>840</sup> From the beginning of his career onward, Dühring was concerned with creating a realistic and scientific instrument for social reform that could serve to emancipate the individual and serve the whole of society by emancipating its suppressed groups from the social injustice they endured.

Dühring's concept of socialism, like that of Marx, involved theory based not only on abstract or pure laws, but also on laws applicable for the social world. He followed Adam Smith in using the abstract or isolating method, but parted company from classical economics by postulating Laws of Development, or regularities from which the further evolution of the future is determined.<sup>841</sup> Whereas both Marx and Dühring based their theories, to a certain degree, on developmental patterns, the laws that Dühring espoused are different from Marx's as they apply to the actual patterns of behavior involved in production and consumption, as opposed to the salutary core concept of Marxism, which prophesized revolution and ultimately a classless society. We have shown in Chapter Eight that Dühring came closer to a truly "post-utopian socialism" than did Marx.<sup>842</sup>

To enhance socialism, Dühring turned to the ideas of the two greatest bourgeois opponents of laissez fair capitalism in the generation before him: Henry C. Carey and Friedrich List. He used the ideas of both men to carve out his system, the main principle of which was that economic development was socially determined and that political economy should be divided into "pure economics" (pertaining to production) and "political economics" (pertaining to distribution). We saw that, like Adam Smith, Dühring believed that the source of wealth was in work, and he assumed that wealth was advanced through the division of labor; theories of value, prices and money were interconnected. According to Dühring, as expressed in his *Critical History of Political Economy* from 1871, the unity of the science had been lost in the period that followed Adam Smith. Political economy was divided into the largely pessimistic English school of liberalism and the still largely utopian school of socialism. The new phase of political economy, he believed, was ushered in by Henry C. Carey whose ideas, along with List's, were able to restore a harmonic unity of political economy. Of fundamental importance for Dühring and for the theoretical aspect of his understanding of socialism was Carey's refutation of the pessimistic theory of diminishing returns with regard to the cultivation of

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<sup>840</sup> It should again be reminded that it was the deficits of Marxism in comparison to Dühring's system which led Engel's write his un-called for attack on Dühring, which – finally – clarified important elements of the Marxian dogma for generations to come.

<sup>841</sup> Scientific socialism, which both men advocate in their own way, must involve Laws of Development, in as far as it seeks to change the unfavorable conditions of society in the present. See also Binder, SSED., 52-53.

<sup>842</sup> See Chapter Eight above as well as James Gay, "Eugen Dühring and Post-Utopian Socialism," in *The State as Utopia. Continental Approaches*, ed. Jürgen Backhaus (New York, et al: Springer, 2011), 202-203.

soil, as described in Chapter Seven. Carey had correctly pointed out, he believed, that through technology, the soil would yield more and not less.<sup>843</sup> Technological advances would enable the best soil to be cultivated after the worst and not the other way around, as Malthus and Ricardo believed. Dühring also, as we have seen, adopted the main principle of Carey's theory of value, which postulated that it is not the production costs, but rather the reproduction costs that determine value; value is not what an object can do for me, but rather what I have to do to attain this object. This idea was again developed in terms of the natural and political aspects of his theory.

Proceeding from Carey and List's teachings, Dühring developed his own ideas, which were based on his own philosophical worldview and especially his understanding of Natural Law as being rooted in reactive instinct. The harmony that Carey postulated under a "Unity of Law" could, in Dühring's opinion, not be presupposed; a law was, he believed, not unified, as the laws of nature are different from those of the social world where arbitrary power and domination can play a decisive role. Dühring's own theory came to involve the socialist principle of abolishing all subordination and domination by the means of, as he saw it, realistic mechanisms. A harmony in society could be attained when the "criminal state" (*Gewaltstaat*) and "property based on violence" (*Gewalteeigentum*) were eradicated.

Dühring's vision of socialism, we hold, took the leftist idea of emancipation to its utmost extreme, or perhaps one could say, he drew the final consequences from liberalism. With his ambitious nature, to which Nietzsche referred, Dühring had, in many ways, brought the leftist values stemming from the French Revolution to a logical conclusion. His design for a Free Society would abolish domination and servitude completely and establish equality. Social organization was to undergo a complete recreation (although developing on the basis of existing political organization). The system of wages would be abolished to be replaced by specific price mechanisms, and gold would be used for payments. Each person was to have the greatest possible range to develop and fulfill his or her potential in order to live peacefully in, and behave respectfully towards, the whole of the community. Free Society was not to come about through a sudden revolution, as in Marxism, but rather was to evolve out of the current structures of society. The leftist postulate of equality was, in a sense, taken to a new level, as the communities of the Free Society were to be based on common ancestry with foreign ethnic elements being excluded. Thus Dühring's anti-Semitism, which would later

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<sup>843</sup> This principle has farther reaching consequences for the role of technology in other fields.

come to involve fanatical propositions of annihilation, developed to no small degree from a consequential interpretation of the tenets of socialism.<sup>844</sup>

### *Dühring and the Current Age*

Dühring was not a great thinker in terms of impact. Following his death in 1921, his thought never regained the influence that it had in the 1870s, when his ideas threatened to spawn - or at least be an important part of - a mass political movement.<sup>845</sup> His system of sociopolitical economics lived on, however, in intellectual circles through the writings of Franz Oppenheimer, whose ideas of “liberal socialism”, as Oppenheimer acknowledged, were strongly shaped by Dühring. Eduard Bernstein’s “revisionism”, which would come to influence the political orientation of the Social Democratic Party, was also closely related to Dühring’s socialist ideas, which Bernstein had read with interest in his formative years. The Dühringian movement in Russia, which had just begun to germinate, was crushed by the Bolsheviks during the First World War with the murder of Konstantin Petrov, its leading exponent. In America, aside from a few scattered supporters, Dühring’s ideas had no chance because of their alliance with America’s strongest opponent of capitalism, Henry C. Carey, whose books were not made available in public libraries because of their systematic opposition to free trade. The widespread availability of Engel’s polemic against Dühring in libraries and bookstores in America also worked against Dühring’s ideas being received, as did, perhaps most importantly, the lack of translations of his works.

Although Dühring’s impact, particularly when compared with his rival Marx, was miniscule, and although he remained on the fringes of the German intellectual establishment, receiving little if any institutional recognition for his work after 1877, in terms of sheer scientific *Bildung*, intellectual capacity, and productivity, Dühring was truly one of the great minds of his day. His prolific production as a scholar is all the more remarkable when his physical handicap as a blind man is taken into consideration. His work is particularly valuable for the present as he was, alongside Karl Marx, one of the few all-around scholars of the classical period of German thought, with legal and philosophical training, to approach the problems of political economy. Unlike Marx, he also had an original philosophy of his own. Particularly

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<sup>844</sup> The historical relationship between socialism and anti-Semitism has been investigated by Edmund Silberner. Cf. *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage* (Berlin: Colloquim Verlag, 1962). On Dühring as representative of anti-Capitalism and anti-Semitism, see Josef Schüßlburner, “Eugen Dühring: Marx-Konkurrent, Vorläufer Hitlers und Wegbereiter von ‘Godesberg’,” *EF-Magazine* 81 (April 2008): 47-50. Schüßlburner connects Dühring’s concept of socialism with the Godesberg Program of 1959, where the German Social Democratic Party gave up Marxism and took on a more favorable approach to capitalism.

<sup>845</sup> As mentioned above, the threat of a mass movement based on Dühring’s thought challenging Marxism is what provoked Friedrich Engel’s *Herr Eugen Dühring’s Revolution in Science*.

Dühring's ideas on capital and credit might prove to be relevant in light of the global economic crisis begun in 2008. One can be anything but a friend of Dühring's postulates of emancipation in order to recognize the evils of excessive government power over the people, which Dühring investigated so thoroughly. Much of what he wrote in the 1870s on the dangers of oppressive centralized governments (*Gewaltstaat*) anticipated what came into being in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As an enthusiastic representative of the Enlightenment, Dühring looked down on the 19<sup>th</sup> century as an era of reactionary thinking. Had he lived longer it is likely that he would have disliked the 20<sup>th</sup> century even more. His staunch opposition to Marxism would have undoubtedly made him an opponent of Bolshevism. However, despite his pronounced anti-Semitism, it is unlikely that he would have approved of National Socialism, which in its short reign in Germany embodied tactics of the *Gewaltstaat* he had warned about.<sup>846</sup> As Schüsslburner has pointed out, Dühring was against the concept of "national socialism", as it had been suggested by Ferdinand Lassalle in the early 1860s, as he considered it "untenable in the long run for all authentic socialism".<sup>847</sup> There is little doubt, however, that Dühring also would have been just as vehemently opposed to our current democratic society, which has gravitated, it seems, to a sort of "leftist capitalism", i.e. an increasingly nontraditional, multi-cultural, and egalitarian globalist society, with strong government intervention in markets initiated by private interests. Indeed, Dühring's design for society and for capitalism might be described as the exact opposite of the society we have today: his vision could even be termed a kind of "right-leaning socialism", or a society made up of ethnically homogeneous communities with little to no government intervention, having a hierarchical structure based upon the abilities and achievements of its members.

Eugen Dühring may be an obscure figure today, but his life and work, we believe, hold special significance for the intellectual history of 19<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. Dühring's

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<sup>846</sup> As mentioned above, Dühring was opposed to racial laws instituted by the government, seeing them an affront to the natural human desire, which was the only true basis for marriage and reproduction. Gerhard Lehmann, the well-known Kant researcher and National Socialist philosopher in Germany under Hitler, correctly assesses that Dühring, despite his unification of socialism and anti-Semitism, could not be a member of the "gallery of National Socialist ancestors" (*Ahnengalerie des Nationalsozialismus*) because of his hatred towards romanticism and mysticism, as well as his materialism. Gerhard Lehmann, „Eugen Dühring zum 100. Geburtstag,“ *Vossische Zeitung* (15 January 1933): 1.

<sup>847</sup> Schüsslburner, "Eugen Dühring: Marx-Konkurrent, Vorläufer Hitlers und Wegbereiter von 'Godesberg'," 49. There is no record of Adolf Hitler mentioning Dühring, although having lived in Vienna and being interested in ethnic politics, it is more than likely that he had at least heard of Dühring's book on the Jews. The liberal emancipative views of Dühring found little resonance in the movement. Walter Frank, a historian for the Reichsinstitut für die Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands, edited a book in which an article mentioning Dühring was published. Cf. Clemens August Hoberg, "Zur philosophischen Entwicklung des Rassenantisemitismus," 102-106, in „Zur Geschichte der Judenfrage,“ *Historische Zeitschrift* 164, ed. Walter Frank (1941): 102-113.

literary and scientific production was unsurpassed in his day, and is nothing less than sensational, particularly when one considers his blindness, as well as his status as an untenured lecturer. In light of his handicap, one might even say without exaggeration that Dühring's literary achievements as a scholar signify one of the great intellectual feats of modern intellectual history. Above all, his *Weltanschauung*, his bearing towards science, and his system of sociopolitical economics, examined above, represent a highly original attempt of a learned scholar to thoroughly and coherently address fundamental quandaries and issues facing man in the modern world. Dühring did not succeed at finding a solution to the discrepancy between the individual and the good of the whole of society; he did not, as Binder has emphasized, succeed at uniting equality and freedom; and he did not, to his own detriment, always follow the rules of decent behavior. He did, however, create a philosophic and scientific body of work which was an expression of his times, his own hard life, and his will to defy unjust authority at any cost.

## APPENDICES

**I Lecture Notes from Dühring's "Geschichte der Philosophie" ca. 1870.**

*Universitätsbibliothek der Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Singl-Handschr. Koll., Nr.: 68.*

*A. Haupttext*

Die Philosophie ist Hervorbringung der höchsten Begriffe über Leben und Welt; die Freiheit des Denkens im höchsten Aufschwung; die Autorität ist im strengsten Sinne in der Philosophie ausgeschlossen. Die eigene Konstatierung der Wahrheit; Urtheil über das Wesen der Sache ist erstes Erfordernis. Die Philosophie ist Wissenschaft und Gesinnung. Es kommt nicht sowohl auf theoretische Wahrheiten an, als auf Tradition und Fortpflanzung derselben. Der Trieb der Leidenschaften muss den Menschen bewegen, das hohe Ziel der menschlichen Bestimmung in der Phil. zu erreichen. Ohne Gesinnung also giebt es Philosophirer, nicht Philosophen.

Philosophisches Heroenthum und Massenstreben. Wie in jeder Geschichte, so gibt es auch in der Phil. Heroen u. Epochen, deren Gestaltungen durch die Beziehungen mit den äußeren Verhältnissen beeinflusst werden. Practisch haben die einzelnen Persönlichkeiten auf die Phil., theoretisch die Massenwirkungen den größten Einfluß.-

Quellenstudium der Geschichte der Philosophie besteht darin, dass man Forschung u. Studium richtet auf die Quellen mit dem nöthigen Geiste, mit den Schriften der Philosophen u. ihren Systemen sich eifrig zu beschäftigen u. zu studieren. Das Urtheil und d. Eindringen der Philosophie in den Gegenstand ihrer einseitigen Beschäftigung wird uns hierbei die besten Orientierungsmittel bieten.X<sup>1</sup>

Verständnis der Vergangenheit aus der Gegenwart. Wie überall so auch in der Geschichte der Philosophie gilt der Satz: die Gegenwart muss aus der Vergangenheit verstanden werden und umgekehrt.

Es muss ein Ideenankreiskreis vorhanden sein vermöge dessen es das Frühere versteht. Es kommt darauf an was die Phil. will.<sup>2</sup> dies ist der Schlüssel zu allem. Dazu muss die Gegenwart einen Reichtum philosophischer Leidenschaften bieten, um die Vergangenheit zu verstehen. Welches X<sup>3</sup> ist der gesunde, frische Boden der Philosophie? Die Epoche, die den lebendigen Sinn für das Verständnis der Phil hat. Die Culturaufgaben der Zeit müssen dabei in der Entwicklung der Phil in Betracht kommen; die Stimmung unserer affeciven Auffassung der Dinge wirkt auf Zustandsgestaltung der (Dinge) Philosophie.-

Die kritischen Gesichtspunkten der Behandlung sind neben den geschichtlichen auch der biographischen und der geographischen charto XXX<sup>4</sup> In welchen Verhältnissen philosophierten früher die Philosophen, wie stellten sie sich zur Gesellschaft, wie weit waren sie frei? Der Culturaufschwung und Corruption ist von Einfluss.

Man spricht von der Philosophie der alten mittleren und neuern u. seit Kant der neusten Zeit. Das Mittelalter ist eine Wüste und Lücke im philosophischen Leben. Die griechische Philosophie ist der erste Anfang des phil. Denkens. Es folgt auf sie die Zeit von der Herstellung der Wissenschaften im 15. Jahrh.. Die Philo. ist Erzeugnis des selbstbewussten Geistes, und dies geschah in griech. Zeit zuerst. Das Mittelalter lebt in wirklichem

Geistesdunkel. Die breite europäische Philosophie ist aber von der spezifischen deutschen zu scheiden; sie ist der Gipfel: Zuspitzungspunkt deutscher Arbeit. Kant ist ihr Angelpunkt.

Wir haben also griech. u. deutsche Philo. mit der Einleitung der mittelalterlichen Restitutionsphilosophie. Kant steht vielleicht dem Original wie des Pythagoras oder Heraklit gleich, u. die deutsche Philos. Hat eine Weltmission; wir stehen noch nicht auf dem Höhepunkt unserer Missionsblüthe. Die ästhetische Begabung des deutschen Volkes ist nicht die der Griechen, sie ist vielleicht eckiger, doch dieses schleift sich ab. Der (Der) mythische Kant ist nicht der feinere harmonische Typus, er steht den Griechen nach. Doch ist er schärfer und tiefer. – Das Ausland könnte unsere Prahlerei tadeln. Der (Der) Zwischenraum ist gegen das Ganze der Zeit verschwindend sagte Lagrange, von der Zeit von Pyth. bis zum Mittelalter (Galilei; warum sollte dies nicht auch in der Philo. Von Herach. Thales et. bis zur neueren Zeit gelten. Die ältere Philos. mehr objektiv der subjektiveren neuen gegenüber zu nennen ist absurd. Die gr. Phil. wird rein äußerlich mit Thales beginnen; sie fängt mit den ionischen Physiologen an, am Ende des 6. Jahrh.

Eine vorsokratische Periode ist zu unterscheiden – dann folgen die moralischen Denker. Mit Socrates tritt Umkehr der Phil. ein; er steht auf seinem Standpunkt allein da. Socrat. u. Plato stehen für die Philologen im Vordergrund der Philos. als Quellengeber. Doch als Denker stehen Thales; Pythagoras Heraclitos als die ersten da. Die höchsten Productionen waren schon zu Socrates u. Plato's Zeit vorüber, u. Aristoteles hat nichts Neues mehr (Urtheil der Geschichtsforscher) produciert.- So tritt also hier der Verfall schon ein.

Wir haben also 1) eine vorsocratische Epoche

2) Wendung zum Sittlichen. Bei Socrates nahm die gr. Phil. schon einen Umschwung; Beginn des Verfalls.

3) Gänzlicher Verfall; Mystifizieismus, Sceptizismus u. Eclectizismus.-

Alles geht schließlich in d. Alexandrinerthum u. Gelehrtenthum über, u. es tritt dann der schlimme Mysticismus ein. – Das Beste ist nicht bewahrt der grause Zufall hat sein böses Spiel getrieben. –Die Barbarei ist gerade in den litterarischen Erzeugnissen überaus groß (Leonardo Davinci's u. Galilei's große Werke sind verloren).

### *B. Randbemerkungen*

Eine objective Darstellung ist nöthig u. wünschenswerth, doch ist sie ohne System nicht möglich. Bei der Phil. kommt die Persönlichkeit u. der Character hinzu.

Die Darstellung Gruckers macht den Anfang der philos. Geschichtsschreibung ziemlich kernig.

Alt ist die philos. Geschichtsschr. Nicht.

Ob die seit Kant in der phil. Geschichtsschreib. auftretende Ehrlichkeit ihn zum Urheber od. Förderer hat, ist unklar. Bule ist noch Kantianer geworden ist nicht mystisch u. magisch. Tennemann more professore Kantianer (...) er ist unsolide. In der 1. Hälfte des 19. Jahrh.

haben Hegelianer geschrieb. sich ihren Lesern anschließend. Sie gaben seine Vorlesungen mit nichthegeianischen Zusätzen heraus.

Kunow Fischer hat spezifisch hegelianisch geschrieben (verblichnes Hegelianerthum, doch viel spezifisches).

Zeller: Geschichte der gr. Philos. (Hegelianer) doch von Auflage zu Auflage abgestreift.

Prof. T(f)ans: suchte die hegelianische Phil. auf d. Erbrecht zu übertragen. (Gr. u. Röm. Erbr.) aber doch Mittelalter konnte er nicht mit Zugel in Einklang bringen, was er Puchta zugab.

Die Gesamtdarstellung v. Erdmann ist auch spezif. Hegelianisch (...): ins Centrum gehörte Rosenkranz. Eine Linke existiert auch.

Fischer ist stagnierend in Hegelianismus.

Die objective Darstellung Ritter ist zu spezif. theol. Das Philos. fehlt. Die Arbeiten v. Brandes sind besser in der röm. Phil. ist er anzuerkennen Zeller mehr gelesen. Schwegler ist Hegelianer.

X Der Mensch selbst ist ein Produkt der Vergangenheit.

Man muss in der Philo. nicht allein wissen sond. auch wollen; es muss phil. Πάθος (Pathos) da sein.

XX Ueberall giebt es einen Verwesungsprozeß; ist er souverain, wo altes vergeht muß neues erstehen und umgekehrt et. gr. Phil. nach der Alexandrinischen Zeit.

Die Philosophie ist nicht reine Wissenschaft. Die Freiheit der Elemente des Gefühls bedingt ihre Blüthe. Von der Kulturaufgabe unserer Zeit hängt unser persönliches Wohl u. Wehe ab, d. Stimmung ab, daher auch die Blüthe der Philosophie.

XXX Culturgeographie der Philosophie.

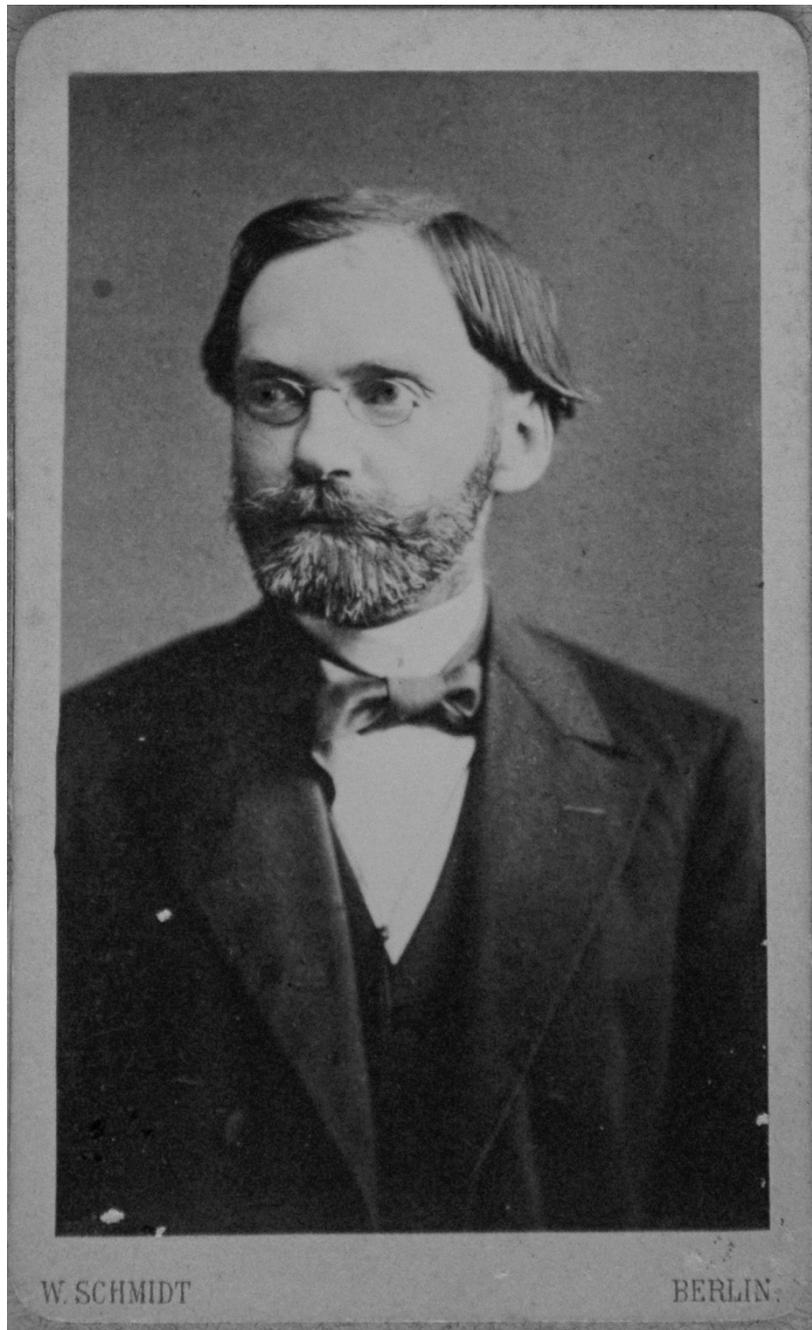
## II Unpublished Essay “Über die Entstehung der Juden Frage in Europa” (1880)

Die Tatsache, daß wir jetzt in der Welt eine brennende Judenfrage haben ist kein Stück wieder aufgefrischtes Mittelalter, sondern im Gegenteil den Regungen des modernen Völkergeistes entsprossen. Auch ist sie nicht eine Angelegenheit vorzugsweise der unteren Schichten, sondern noch mehr der gebildeten Elemente, und zwar umso mehr, je gebildeter und geleuchteter diese sind. Sie erstreckt sich über die Hauptkulturstaaten Europas und greift bereits über den Ozean hinüber. Sie interessiert alle Klassen der Gesellschaft und all Parteien. Sie wird von den Hochkonservativen und von den äußersten Revolutionären wahrgenommen und auch alles was zwischen diesen beiden Enden liegt empfindet mehr oder minder, daß die moderne Lebensfrage der Nationen und des sittlichen Geistes sei. Sie übertrifft das was man gemeinhin soziale Frage nennt vorläufig an Bedeutung. Ihre Existenz ist der wichtigste Fortschritt den in der geistigen Aufklärung des 19. Jahrhunderts über das 18. Hinausgetragen hat. Der Durchschnitt der Schriftsteller, die bisher in der Judenfrage aufgetreten ist, hat sich auf die Parteien stützen müssen, die sich zunächst beteiligt haben, bei uns in Deutschland also auf die landwirtschaftlichen Elemente, auf einen Teil der Konservativen und auf die katholisch politische Richtung. Das Publikum der sogenannten Liberalen und radikalen Parteien fühlt zwar dieselbe Notwendigkeit, hat sich aber nicht regen können; denn es ist von denjenigen Presse, die es bisher noch zu stark umklammert gewesen und auf seine Parteiführer und Parteioorganisation stehen noch unter zu starken Einfluß des jüdischen Elements. Abgesehen von den Parteien können einzelne Schriftsteller aber nur durch individuelle Eigentümlichkeit wirken. Das Hauptbeispiel bei uns war hierfür zunächst der Komponist Richard Wagner, der vor Jahren mit seiner Broschüre über das Judentum in der Musik die unkünstlerische Natur des jüdischen Stammes beleuchtete, aber nach künstlerische Art für die politischen und sozialen Seite der Frage wenig Verständnis entwickelt hat. In der jüngsten Zeit hat dieser Bayreuther Orpheus, dessen Laie auch viele reiche Juden folgen, in jene Richtung nichts Nennenswertes kundgegeben. Er braucht viel Geld, und es scheint daß er wegen der Spenden auf die seine Zukunftsmusik angewiesen ist, nicht unabhängig genug da steht und die Randdissonanzen zu einzelnen Akkorden verklären lässt. Trotzdem wird er vielfach vorzugsweise von Juden geleitet in der Presse angefeindet. Die aller ernsthafteste und tiefgreifendste Behandlung der Judenfrage ergibt sich überdies erst da wo sie als weltgeschichtliche Rassen und Kulturangelegenheit erörtert wird. Sie ist vom freiheitlichen Standpunkt aus mehr eine Völker- und Humanitätsfrage. Sie würde auch vorhanden sein, wenn die Religionsjuden sämtliche ihre Religion abgelegt hätten und nur lauter Rassejuden übrig wären. Sie ist die Frage wie die Übelstände zu beseitigen sind, die aus dem Eindringen des Judentums in die Angelegenheiten der modernen Völker erwachsen. Sie hat viele Seiten und Verzweigungen. Die Erörterung ihrer Entstehung ist nur ein vereinzelt Thema. Aus dem sonstigen reichhaltigen Stoff sei nur an einige Hauptgegenstände erinnert. Das gesellschaftliche Emporkommen der Juden in der jüngsten Zeit ihre Charakterspiegelung in Religion und Moral, die Frage nach ihrer Befähigung zu Wissenschaft und Kunst, ihr Verhalten in der Presse und Literatur, ihre Eigenschaften bezüglich der Gesetzgebung und Politik, die auserwählte Selbstsucht und der hochgradige Größendunkel die sich in der Judengeschichte von Uranfang bis auf den heutigen Tag kundgegeben haben. Ihre schon seit dem Altertum bekannte Feindschaft gegen das übrige Menschengeschlecht, das sind Gesichtspunkte deren jeder allein schon die Zeit seines Vortrags in Anspruch nehmen würde

ohne solche Ausführung lässt sich jedoch wenigstens die nächste Entstehungsursache der Judenfrage einigermaßen sichtbar machen. Seit der Französischen Revolution hat die politische Judenemanzipation das fremde Rasselement mächtiger gemacht und die angeborene Selbstsucht zügellos werden lassen. Die modernen Völker haben in der Meinung auf religiöse Vorurteile zu verzichten die Rasseigenschaften übersehen oder zu gering angeschlagen. Erst heute fängt man damit an die Mängel an Bildung zu verbessern. Die Völker sind nämlich inzwischen durch die Erfahrung mit den Gleichgestellten Juden belehrt worden. Unter den Aufklärern des 18. Jahrhundert stellte sich Voltaire die Juden auch die in Berlin studiert hatten auch noch nicht rein auf Rassenstandpunkt. Er könnte noch meinen, daß die vornehmeren Juden dadurch daß sie schließlich den Aberglauben verachteten und in der übrigen Gesellschaft verschwinden würden, namentlich wenn die Völker ihren Handel selbst besorgten. Die untersten Schichten der Juden aber würden mit den Dieben eine Klasse bilden, um so daß das Judentum künftig dasselbe Schicksal haben würde wie die Zigeuner. Im alten Rom dachte man entschieden und klarer wie er das jetzt auch schon dem weiteren Publikum nicht unbekanntes Wort des humanen Philosophen Seneca beweist, der die Juden den verbrecherischen Volksstamm nannte. Die uralten Völker hatten gelegentlich schon ihre Judenfrage, aber die jüngste Zeit hat die Judenfrage erst so gestaltet, daß sie eine Humanitätsfrage wird, nämlich mit vollem Dasein wie die Frage, mit der Humanität, also die bessere Wahrheit, gegen die antihumane Selbstsucht des jüdischen Elements zu schützen sei. In Deutschland sind es besonders die letzten fünfzehn Jahre, in welchen sich die Mißverhältnisse, die die Gesellschaft durch den Übermut des Judentums ausgesetzt ist bis zur Unleidlichkeit gesteigert haben. So ist hier die so kritische Spannung entstanden. Sonst hatte im 19. Jahrhundert, daß viel Juden anscheinend mit für die Freiheit getreten haben in freiheitlich gesinnten Kreisen ihre sonstigen Eigenschaften mit Nachsicht betrachten lassen. In unserer Ära hat sich aber vor aller Welt gezeigt, daß sie ihre eigene Freiheit und Macht betrieben. Gerade sie haben sich als die Ärztemonopolisten erwiesen und ihre Beteiligung an politischen und sozialen Angelegenheiten hat fast nur das Schlechte im Auge gehabt und gefördert. Leicht verständliche Beispiele sind der Impfwang, der erst kürzlich eingeführten Advokatenzwang überhaupt den Rest der Gesetzgebend und speziell die Justizgesetzgebung in welcher die Züge des jüdischen Geistes nach Inhalt und Form dem Publikum bereits fühlbar geworden sind und es immer mehr müssen. Die noch von Friedrich II angeregte preußische Gesetzgebung war gediegener, gesunder und weit volksmäßiger. Es ist der von den Juden geförderte Geist, der ungeniert Selbstsucht und Monopolherrscheri, der überall Vorrechte ergattert aber keine Pflichten übernehmen will, wie beispielsweise das Verhältnis der Ärzte und Advokaten zu Gesellschaft lehrt. Der Advokat kann trotz seines Zwangs und Bandrechts durch welches er uns aufgenötigt wird, Sachen, die ihm nicht gewinnreich genug sind, ablehnen und uns für seine Dienste von vornherein einen beliebigen Preis machen; denn die Taxe geht nur, wenn etwas nicht abgemacht ist, daß der Advokat also stillschweigend auf besondere Forderungen verzichtet hat. Die Juden sind in den letzten fünfzehn Jahren von unseren Politikern und Parlamentariern förmlich begünstigt und groß gezogen worden. Juden haben die sogenannte liberale Presse ausschließlich bewirtschaftet, die übrige Presse aber auch schon vielfach besetzt. Hierdurch haben sie in der öffentlichen Meinung, wo es nur irgend für die Berufe den er sich zuwendet, eine Judenmeinung untergeschoben. Diese schleichende. Diese schleichenden Verfolgungen gegen diejenigen, welche gegen die Judenmeinung eine Selbstständigkeit behaupten, sind böstiger und niedriger geartet gewesen

als das, was staatliche oder kirchliche Eifer gegen Gegner getan haben. Sie haben Beamte aus ihren Stellungen gedrängt und solche, die keine Bedeutung hatten, durch ihre Reklame aufgeblasen, je nachdem sich diese dem Dienst der Judeninteressen versagten oder anbequemten. Ja komischer Weise haben die Juden darüber entschieden was Freiheit der Wissenschaft gelten soll. Vor allem spitz sich daher der Judenfrage zu Frage der Entjudung der Presse der verschiedenen Länder insbesondere aber derjenigen Deutschlands zu, damit der bessere Geist unter den Völkern wieder eine öffentliche Stimme habe. Die Zurückweisung des Judentums in seiner natürlichen Schranken ist nur die eine negative Seite der Frage nur das Mittel zum Zweck. Das höhere Ziel ist die innere Befreiung des Völkergeistes von der krassen Selbstsucht, die Betätigung der besseren Eigenart der Nation und überhaupt eine bessere Menschlichkeit und eines allgemein Menschenrechts. Das Judentum ist als eigener Staat längst bankrott geworden; die modernen Nationen können nicht dulden, daß es mit seinen Trümmern und Splintern auch sie in den geistigen, sittlichen, politischen, und sozialen bankrott hineinziehe. Ja für die Juden selbst sei es gesagt, daß es eine auf ihnen heilsame Disziplin sein wird, wenn man ihre öffentliche Zudringlichkeit unter den Völkern einige Zügel anlegt.

III Portraits









#### **IV Lectures Given at Friedrichs-Wilhelm Universität 1864-1877**

##### *Sommersemester 1864*

Logik – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag 8:00-9:00

Psychologie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag 9:00-10:00

Naturphilosophie – Montag, Dienstag, Freitag 4:00-5:00

Naturrecht – Dienstag und Freitag, 5:00-6:00

##### *Wintersemester 1864/65*

Logik – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 8:00-9:00

Naturrecht und juristische Dialektik – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 9:00-10:00

Pädagogik und Dialektik – Mittwoch, Sonnabend von 8:00-10:00

##### *Sommersemester 1865*

Logik und Metaphysik - Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 8:00-9:00

Optimismus und Pessimismus– Donnerstag von 6:00-7:00

##### *Wintersemester 1865/66*

Über die Grenzen der Dichtung und Philosophie mit besonderem Rücksicht auf Byron und Schopenhauer – Mittwoch von 6:00-7:00

Logik und Metaphysik - Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 8:00-9:00

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Freitag 9:00-19:00

Über den amerikanischen Nationalökonom Henry Carey – Mittwochs von 5:00-6:00

##### *Sommersemester 1866*

Kritische Geschichte der Philosophie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 9:00-10:00

Über Buckle und dessen Geschichte der Civilization – Mittwoch von 6:00-7:00

Zu Privatisseme in der National Ökonomie

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Freitag von 8:00-9:00

*Wintersemester 1866/67*

Kritische Geschichte der Philosophie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 9:00-10:00

Logik und Metaphysik – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, und Freitag von 11:00-12:00

Über Positivismus in Staat und Gesellschaft – Mittwoch von 6:00-7:00

National Ökonomie– Montag, Dienstag, Donnertag, Freitag von 12:00-1:00

Politik, Polizei und Diplomatie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 12:00-1:00

*Sommersemester 1867*

Kritische Geschichte der Philosophie – Montags, Dienstags, Donnerstag

Über Optimismus und Pessimismus – Mittwoch von 12:00-1:00

Staatswissenschaften

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnertag, Freitag von 12:00-1:00

Politik, Polizei, Diplomatie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 11:00-12:00

*Wintersemester 1867/68*

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag 12:00-1:00

*Sommersemester 1868*

Staats-, Cameral-, und Gewerbewissenschaft

Kritische Geschichte der Philosophie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag von 5:00-6:00

Nationalökonomie - Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag von 8:00-9:00 (privatim)

Zu Privatisseme in der Nationalökonomie, sowie Preussische Finanzen, Polizei- und Verwaltungsrecht

*Wintersemester 1868/69*

Logik verbunden mit einem Cursus der Philosophie – Montag, Dienstag, Freitag von 11:00-12:00 (privatim)

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitags von 12:00-1:00

Über Parteien in Staat und Gesellschaft – Mittwoch von 6:00-7:00

Zu Privatissime in der Nationalökonomie sowie über preußische Finanzen, Polizeiwissenschaft, und Verwaltungsrecht

*Sommersemester 1869*

Kritische Geschichte der Philosophie - Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 9:00-10:00 (privatim)

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 8:00-9:00 (privatim)

Privatissime in der Nationalökonomie sowie über preußische Finanzen, Polizeiwissenschaft, und Verwaltungsrecht

*Wintersemester 1869/1870*

Logik verbunden mit einem Cursus der Philosophie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 11:00-12:00.

Philosophische Privatissimis

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 12:00-1:00

Privatissimis in der Nationalökonomie, sowie preußische Finanzen, Poliziewissenschaft und Verwaltungsrecht

*Sommersemester 1870*

Über philosophische und politische Optimismus und Pessimismus – Mittwoch von 6:00-7:00

Privatissimis in der Philosophie sowie Anleitung zum wissenschaftliche Arbeiten

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag (privatim)

Privatissimis in der Nationalökonomie, sowie preußische Finanzen, Polizeiwissenschaft und Verwaltungsrecht

*Wintersemester 1870/71*

Logik verbunden mit einem Cursus der Philosophie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 11:00-12:00

Privatissimis in der Philosophie

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 12:00-1:00 (privatim)

Über Parteien in Staat und Gesellschaft

Privatissimis in der Nationalökonomie

*Sommersemester 1871*

Geschichte der Philosophie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 9:00-10:00

Über philosophische und politische Pessimismus – Mittwoch von 6:00-7:00

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 8:00-9:00

Privatissimis in der Nationalökonomie

*Wintersemester 1871/72*

Logik – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 11:00-12:00

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 12:00-1:00

Privatissimis in der Nationalökonomie

*Sommersemester 1871*

Über philosophischer und politischer Optimismus – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag  
6:00-7:00

Privatissimis in der Philosophie

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 8:00-9:00

Privatissimis in den Staatswissenschaften

*Wintersemester 1872/73*

Logik – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 11:00-12:00

Nationalökonomie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 12:00-1:00

Staatswissenschaftliche Privatissimis

*Sommersemester 1873*

Geschichte der Philosophie – Montag, Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag von 9:00-10:00

Über philosophischer und politischer Optimismus – Mittwoch von 6:00-7:00

Privatissimis in der Philosophie

Nationalökonomie

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