Forward, barbarians!

There are two major views of history facing each other. The first one is big because it is old, widespread and tough: The "determining moment" of history in this conception is seen in the splendour of domination, in power, in the initiative, the will and energy of heroes, leaders and groups, all of which would plunge into battle to finally bring the cup that extinguishes their thirst for power to their trembling lips; through these clashes and wars, the paths of humanity would be marked.

The second view is ours. Let us take an extremely clear formulation from Engels: “According to the materialistic conception, the ultimately determining moment in history is the production and reproduction of immediate life”.

This is how Engels introduces us in 1884 to the outstanding treatise bearing the title: “The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State”. From the first to the last word of this scripture, as well as from the first to the last word of Marx’s revolutionary doctrine of the proletariat, the thesis runs through an uninterrupted thread: Family, property, power, are not institutions accompanying the beginnings of the human species without which it could not live. People formed a society long before these three institutions pushed themselves into it. This is empirically demonstrated, we prove that all three are swept away one day. Our programme does not contain anything about change, reform or transformation, but rather the smashing of these three foundations of civilization: family, property, state.

We will deal separately with the family, gender relations, in due course. Here, too, the individualistic explanation of the quest for the pleasure of the I, with all its abnormal constructions and all its rottenness, is done away with: It is not a voluntarist, but a determinist and social explanation that will emerge.

At the moment, the words explaining what the “production and reproduction of immediate life” is, should suffice:

“This, again, is of a twofold character. On the one side, the production of the means of subsistence, of articles of food and clothing, dwellings, and of the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species”.

Like Pius XII, we too (in contrast to the existentialist bourgeois - these hunters after ever new showers on the epidermis² of their nascent corpses) see in love a means of producing people. However, as we are not guided by mystical or ethical notions, we can see that, like the child is playing in order to one day be able to follow the predator in the forest or the... bus in the thicket of cities and a motor is “retracted” by millions of revolutions before it releases useful energy on the road, sexuality also has a much broader field of activity than at the moment of the useful meeting of two germ cells.

The institutions corresponding to the generational sequence precede those of the production of factory products, but always “the social institutions, under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live, are determined by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labour on the one hand and of the family on the other”.

At the level of savagery and barbarism, the human species thrives on the products of nature without too much labour effort. At this stage, the kinship and family systems predominate as determining elements - at a later stage of "civilization", in which the number of people and the share of human

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² Epidermis (Greek): uppermost layer of the skin.
labour in the production of the means of subsistence has increased, production systems have priority. Familial and certain social forms are transitory and disappear when their own inertial force has exhausted itself. Morgan\(^2\) (whose researches Engels used on the basis of Marx's notes about Morgan's "Ancient Society" of 1877) found traces of vanished family forms in the "kinship systems" of all peoples and although he did not start from a declaredly materialistic system, Morgan noted that while the reality of gender life and reproduction (family) develops, the old kinship systems with their social and legal consequences survive: These systems, he says, are "passive".

"And," adds Marx, "the same is true of the political, juridical, religious, and philosophical systems in general."

And it is precisely since we have known the transience and passivity of all these systems that we have been able to leave behind the bourgeois and reactionary philosophy of Voltaire in his "Candide"\(^3\). The bourgeoisie emerges and passes away as bribable as doubtfully. For it, the following philistine dialogue is definitive:

"Do you think," said Candide, "that mankind always massacred one another? Were they always guilty of lies, fraud, treachery, ingratitude, inconstancy, envy, ambition, and cruelty? Were they always thieves, fools, cowards, backbiters, gluttons, drunkards, misers, villains, debauchees, fanatics, and hypocrites?"

"Do you believe," said Martin, "that hawks have always been accustomed to eat pigeons when they came in their way?"

"Doubtless," said Candide. "Well then," replied Martin, "if hawks have always had the same nature, why should you suppose that mankind had changed theirs?"

Candide lays down his arms, muttering that the "free will" makes "a great deal of difference"... We do not believe in free will, like Candide, but know with Engels who set "in motion the lowest instincts and passions in man" unknown to the barbarian age: "civilization"; and the most advanced one is that which you, Monsieur Arouet de Voltaire, proclaimed.

Because we are in favour of this one of the two conceptions of history (which throws the spirit of good and evil, as well as the animal "nature" of human existence on the scrap heap), in 1914 we were able to describe the search for the war aggressor among the crowned despots of Petrograd, Berlin or Vienna, just as in 1939 the cynical, unanimous identification of the war criminal with the leaders of Berlin, Rome and Tokyo as idiotic.

And according to the same coherent line only a small minority is still able to discern the same hollowness in the mutual accusations that the Achesons and Vyshinskys\(^4\) exchange in the UN General Assemblies - with a demonstrative bow to the traditional historiography valid for both. Both attribute the reason for the outbreak of a new and even more horrible war (among the brothers of yesterday who punished aggressors and convicted criminals) to the desire of the opposing leadership clique to gain more power, more territory, more control over the masses of people. Each of the two declares that a possible global catastrophe could only be attributed to the sadistic greed for power of a limited

\(^2\) Morgan, Lewis Henry (1818-1881): American anthropologist and ethnologist.

\(^3\) Voltaire (1694-1778): "Candide, ou l'Optimisme"; chapter 21: "Candide and Martin come near the French coast and continue to talk wisely". This satirical novel, published in 1759, turns against Leibniz's optimistic worldview ("the best of all worlds") and, on the other hand, postulates the unchangeable evilness of man.

\(^4\) Acheson, Dean (1893-1971) and Vyshinsky, Andrei (1883-1954): the US and USSR foreign ministers at that time.
clique of power; both speak in fact of peace, which would be possible and according to their will, if only the “poison fangs” of the opposing camp were pulled.

Now, if among us few revolutionary groups (that have nothing to do with the gangs and clusters that have hired themselves to one or the other “vice boss”) it is clear that every bit of Marxism breaks away when the cause is reversed and appended to the other and opposing view of history (instead of tracking down the "determining moment" in the economic and in the struggle of social classes), if all this is obvious, then why do some in those at the same time anti-Trumanist and anti-Stalinist groups not see, that if war and oppression are attributed to the intentional evil will of individuals, one makes the same mistake, as if, "in order to explain today's Russia", one identifies a third class in a state hierarchy, which, clinging to power and enjoying its delights ever more extensively, is supposed to block our path (from Engels' booklet) from the level of savagery to communist society by a gigantic and unexpected obstacle?

"But do you think the entire history could be presented in a little booklet!?" Hold it! No one who, like us, is a modest disseminator of old propaganda topics, who, precisely because he has never hired himself out, lives as an ordinary worker and does not even (perhaps out of hatred for Voltaire) dispose of an encyclopedia, can deny the possibility that a knowledgeable and well-informed competitor may emerge who has been able to process enormous scientific material from all corners of the globe. Morgan alone, to whom Engels adheres, fought for 40 years to study the question and get some support from the American federal government; but since he was not in the reputation of holiness (are there still naive scientists today as well?), the mantle of oblivion was finally spread over him. We are therefore always prepared to examine our amateurish ignorance.

We have only one condition. From all sides, it is declaredly spoken in the name of Marx, so he is not considered “outdated”, although we are separated from his work for about 80 years. Beria⁵, who replaced Stalin at the October parade, concluded with a hymn to the great teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. In the spirit of American propaganda, Acheson's article distributes the writing of Sir David Kelly, once ambassador of the Labour Party in Moscow, entitled “Karl Marx - defeated by Stalin's tyranny”.

We will therefore pause at all times to learn from a rival; but only when he has the courage to write this simple and succinct line over his treatise: "What a fool Marx was!".

Only then would such a person have the right to explain to us that, on the basis of other and solid contributions from positive science, it now turns out that the historical view of which we are catechumens⁶ is no longer correct.

Everyone else is very concerned about appearing as Marxists: In our eyes they are both donkeys and sheep.

Yesterday

Let us follow some passages of text in which Engels goes beyond Morgan to prove that everything “goes down the drain” if we believe the fairy tale of the power-hungry, energetic and bold subjects - or the fairy tale of the bureaucratic “cliques” who confidently spread their “rond de cuir”? their

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⁵ Beria, Lavrentiy (1899-1953): from 1938 head of secret service. After the death of Stalin in 1953, he formed a kind of triumvirate with Malenkov and Molotov. In the same year he was charged with treason and shot.
⁶ Catechumens (Greek): an applicant for baptism in Christianity. Here in the sense of a student who is taught in a certain conception of history.
⁷ rond de cuir (French): originally leather (seat)cushion; today colloquial for bureaucrat.
comfortable cushions, on the craters of the great volcanoes of history and extinguish the spitting fire with the power of their “flatus a tergo”\(^8\).

Let us leave aside, as already said, gender relations and the explanation of primitive family forms for the moment. We are concerned with quoting a single passage of a fundamental nature, because it applies to all questions relating to future society ever since our school invalidated the utopian school. Monogamy is not a “natural” state, because it did not always exist; It turns out that the various peoples have passed through different stages, not only of polygamy and polyandry, but also of group marriage. The tribe is divided into several *gentes*. The members of one and the same *gens* cannot marry among themselves: the men of a *gens* or *gens* group are the "multimen" of a group of "multiwomen" of another *gens*. We have coined these two words in order to present the concept of *group marriage* in a commonly understandable way; group marriage preceded monogamy, but it is something quite different from “random sexual intercourse” or the fairy tale of “free love”: Laughing about group marriage is as stupid as getting upset about it. In any case, the modern family is a newer and more transitory form. So it will give way to a new form. To which one? Here then follows the outcry of the petty bourgeois. And thus concludes Engels:

“What we can now conjecture about the way in which sexual relations will be ordered after the impending overthrow of capitalist production is mainly of a negative character, limited for the most part to what will disappear. But what will there be new? That will be answered when a new generation has grown up”.

Let Acheson and Vyshinsky - as equal partners - accuse each other without hesitation of polluting the holy human person as well as the holiness of the family and endangering the preservation of the existing “civilization” common to them. It is not those who hurt today’s institutions: the personality, family and civilisation, but those who defend and protect them, that must be put up against the wall.

Let’s make a leap to where barbarism flows into civilization. The key to the transitions can be found in the successive forms of the division of labour. Up to the first stage of barbarism, there is only the *natural* division of labour namely that between the genders. And from this emerge the *gentes* societies, limited communities. Engels is singing a true hymn to the barbaric system. This simple organization solves all internal problems without disputes. Dispute outside the *gens* must be resolved by war: After all, we do not live in an Arcadia\(^9\) or in a world where the UN works as a Nenni\(^{10}\) would like: Namely, according to the *Principles of the United Nations Charter* (see Acheson’s article!). From Nennis jabbering we return to Engels, so sharpen your ears:

“War settles external conflicts; it may end with the annihilation of the tribe, but never with its subjugation. It is the greatness, but also the limitation” (think about it!) “of the gentile constitution that it has no place for ruler and ruled”.

The natural division of labour between the genders is overshadowed by the division of labour due to progress. *First* major *social* division of labour: Breeders of domesticated cattle separated themselves from ordinary hunters and fishermen. The former already produced more than they needed and

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8. *flatus a tergo* (lat.): Wind from behind; fart.
9. *Arcadia*: Landscape of the Peloponnese (Greece). In Hellenic and Roman poetry symbol for a land of "good rural custom and quiet peace".
10. *Nenni, Pietro* (1891-1980): model specimen of an opportunist, 1914 member of the Republican Party, advocate of war, then with the fascists. 1921 member of PSI. After World War II, leads the PSI into an alliance with the PCI (Togliatti’s “sidekick”), which he dissolves again in 1956/57 to prepare the entry of the PSI into the centre-left government.
produced new consumer goods (milk, skins, wool, fabrics, etc.). Private property has arisen: I, poor human being, could only philosophize: God created it. Today I can only philosophize: To hell with it.

Learning that more can be produced means learning to obtain labour power: The victorious groups no longer kill the defeated groups. They begin to behave in a civilized manner and make the war prisoners into slaves. The first division of society into classes has arisen: Slaves and lords.

The second major social division of labour is the separation of craftsmanship from agriculture. The production of slaves is supplemented by that of serfs. A new social class division occurs: between the poor and the rich: “We have now reached the threshold of civilization”. And the threshold of bureaucracy too: Tell us, Friedrich, and forgive the omissions.

“The confederacy of related tribes becomes everywhere a necessity, and soon also their fusion, involving the fusion of the separate tribal territories into one territory of the nation. The military leader of the people, res, basileus, thiudans 11 – becomes an indispensable, permanent official. The assembly of the people takes form [...]”.

“War, formerly waged only in revenge for injuries or to extend territory that had grown too small” (wherefore the defeated were killed), “is now waged simply for plunder and becomes a regular industry. Not without reason the bristling battlements stand menacingly about the new fortified towns; in the moat at their foot yawns the grave of the gentile constitution, and already they rear their towers into civilization. Similarly in the interior. The wars of plunder increase the power of the supreme military leader and the subordinate commanders” (meaning: Eisenhower and Rokossovsky still rested “in mente dei”12, as well as Franco and Peron, De Gaulle and Tito13...); “the customary election of their successors from the same families is gradually transformed, especially after the introduction of father-right, into a right of hereditary succession, first tolerated, then claimed, finally usurped; the foundation of the hereditary monarchy and the hereditary nobility is laid.”

Civilization is now in full bloom; With a third social division of labour, the Middle Ages brought us the merchants, a class that has nothing to do with production but is dedicated to the bartering of products. We are in the monetary phase, which encourages the formation of the greatest wealth and possessions; the division of classes becomes clearer; now the state appears (which proves that it once did not exist just like the family and property). Engels shows how its creation occurs in Athens, Rome and with the Germanic peoples. Here we come across the essential passages quoted by Lenin in “State and Revolution”.

Point 1, a nail hammered in firmly by us: the unity of territory. Point 2: the establishment of a public force.

“It may be very insignificant, practically negligible, in societies with still undeveloped class antagonisms and living in remote areas, as at times and in places in the United States of America. But it becomes stronger in proportion as the class antagonisms within the state become sharper and as adjoining states grow larger and more populous. It is enough to look at Europe today, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have brought the public power to a pitch that it threatens to devour the whole of society and even the state itself.” Today, 1951, it is clear that by seafaring and aviation, radio etc. all the major states “border” each other, are neighbours. Only the blind do not see how the police and bureaucracy inevitably develop inflationary in our traditional Marxist view.

11 rex (lat.), basileus (Greek), thiudans (Gothic): military leader.
12 In mente dei (lat.): in the spirit of the gods; here: persons not yet born.
13 All of the mentioned persons held high military rankings before switching to politics.
Engels then speaks of taxes:

“In possession of the public power” (political factor) “and the right of taxation” (economic factor) “the officials now present themselves” (although the cockcrow hasn’t welcomed the 20th century yet) “as organs of society standing above society. [...] Representatives of a power which estranges them from society, they have to be given prestige by means of special decrees, which invest them with a peculiar sanctity and inviolability.”

Smile, we smile like Vyshinsky (but not so forced). Chaulieu and his helpers actually uncovered the omnipotence of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the middle of the 20th century!

From the history of the emergence of the state, its death is concluded here with unshakable certainty. Engels:

“Civilization is, therefore, according to the above analysis, the stage of development in society at which the division of labor, the exchange between individuals arising from it, and the commodity production which combines them both, come to their full growth and revolutionizes the whole of previous society.”

And a little further: “The central link in civilized society is the state, which in all typical periods is without exception the state of the ruling class, and in all cases continues to be essentially a machine for holding down the oppressed, exploited class.”

This civilization whose dawn we have shown must experience its apocalypse before us. Socialism and communism come after and stand above civilization, just as civilization followed barbarism and stood above it. Socialism and communism are not a new form of civilization:

“Since civilization is founded on the exploitation of one class by another class, its whole development proceeds in a constant contradiction.”

If, therefore, Truman, Stalin and Churchill find themselves under the same anti-barbaric roof, and Chaulieu and some other relics want to have their place there as well - we remaining ones prefer to stay out with Marx, Engels and Lenin.

It may be confusing that communism has not yet emerged from a downfall of civilization; but it is completely ridiculous to confuse the satisfaction of capital about this fact with a threat of barbarism.

Let’s turn back a little to dedicate another impressive page to the barbarians. It is about the emergence of the great Frankish Empire, the Empire of Charlemagne, which was formed on the ruins of the Roman state. It was just the young barbaric forces that got in the way of a bureaucratic course of events.

“The Roman state had become a huge, complicated machine, exclusively for bleeding its subjects [...] the pressure was intensified until the exactions of governors, tax-collectors, and armies made it unbearable”. The Roman state “gave as the justification of its existence that it maintained order within the empire and protected it against the barbarians without. But its order was worse than the worst disorder, and the citizens whom it claimed to protect against the barbarians longed for the barbarians to deliver them.”

It seemed as if with the victorious invasions history, and thus civilization and culture, had been stopped for four centuries (in which the Europe torn from Rome was redesigned within the Germanic gentile constitution). But this was not the case. The young barbarian blood assimilated all the vital elements it found within the classical tradition. As always, the acquired technology, knowledge and actual advances of the defeated were not lost, but became the starting point of the new development. How often have we quoted the example of the victorious barbaric invasions, as well as the victorious anti-
Jakobin and anti-Napoleonic coalitions, against anti-developmental ossification. Here now the passage that tells it to us:

“The social classes of the ninth century had been formed, not in the rottenness of a decaying civilization, but in the birth-pangs of a new civilization. Compared with their Roman predecessors, the new breed, whether masters or servants, was a breed of men.”

“But what was the mysterious magic by which the Germans breathed new life into a dying Europe? Was it some miraculous power innate in the Germanic race, such as our chauvinist historians romance about? Not a bit of it. The Germans, especially at that time, were a highly gifted Aryan tribe, and in the full vigor of development. It was not, however, their specific national qualities which rejuvenated Europe, but simply – THEIR BARBARISM, their gentile constitution.”

“All the vigorous and creative life which the Germans infused into the Roman world was BARBARISM. Only BARBARIANS are able to rejuvenate a world in the throes of collapsing civilization.”

**Today**

So it is an utterly banal and pathetic mistake to try to explain the stagnation of class antagonism and anti-capitalist revolution with the help of volitional factors and malevolent police bands.

However, a cardinal mistake is to try to plant on us, after the level of capitalist civilization that we proclaimed as the last and worst level, a new, unforeseen class civilization. It is nonsense to search for a third class in order to then place this state as the state of this ruling class - which is not identical to the bourgeoisie - where it itself is supposed to be only the staff of the state, a staff that is not a new figure. We have understood and analysed this through all class struggles and successive forms of state.

Another mistake, as we have seen and will see, is the following stepladder: private capitalism – state capitalism – socialism. If this trio were to dominate the stage, the conclusion of the French left’s “bulletin” would be unavoidable: No condemnation and shame, but rather an alliance or support for the second stage - so that state capitalism, whether the Prime Minister is a Hitler or a Stalin, can face us alone as soon as possible.

Already immediately after the First World War, at the first appearance of fascism in Italy in 1919, we solved the historical and strategic question: No joining a liberal-democratic bloc against fascism - and just as little any bloc forming with fascism against the liberal bourgeoisie. We also immediately said why: Because they are not two social classes, but one and the same.

To have practiced the bloc strategy, even in both directions, is enough for us to explain the retreat of our revolution.

The hollowest construction is the one that wants to confront this infamous world (whose potential, however, is exceptionally high) of capitalist civilization (and also the majority of the proletarians, who are now being used as a result of major historical mistakes) with the alternative of the “spectre of barbarism”: “Even if there is no revolution that gives birth to a new world and it may be suffocated, is the disintegration crisis of today's society still occurring, so that we cannot come to socialism, but fall back from civilization into barbarism?” From pure brain caliber this threat does not frighten any bourgeois and does not encourage any proletarian to fight. No society disintegrates because of its internal laws, its internal necessity, if these laws and this necessity do not lead to the uprising of a human mass organized with the weapons in hand - something we know and expect. There is no death without trauma for any “class civilization”, no matter how corrupt and disgusting it may be.
As far as the barbarism is concerned, which is supposed to arise spontaneously after the death of capitalism as a result of its disintegration: If we regard its disappearance as a necessary condition for further development, which then had to lead inevitably through the swamp of the subsequent civilization, then there is nothing so terrible about its characteristics as a human form of coexistence that an unexpected return could frighten us.

How against Rome the wild hordes were needed - so that so many and so great useful contributions to the organization of people and things will not be lost - which were unconscious contributors to a much bigger revolution still far away in time, we want the gates of this bourgeois world of profiteers, oppressors and butchers to be struck by a powerful barbaric wave capable of burying this world among itself.

But just as there are borders, walls and curtains in this world, all forces, even though they compete against each other, are gathering around the tradition of this very civilization.

When the revolutionary movement of the working class becomes strong again, organizes and arms itself, and when formations emerge that do not adhere to the civilization of an Acheson or Malik\(^\text{14}\), then these will be the barbaric forces that will not disdain the ripe fruit of modern industrial potential, but will snatch it from the throat of the exploiters by breaking their still sharp teeth.

*Socialism* will therefore welcome a new and fruitful barbarism, such as the one that came down the Alps and rejuvenated Europe; It had not destroyed but honoured the centuries-old fruit of knowledge and arts preserved in the womb of a vast realm.

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\(^{14}\) Malik, Yakov (1906-80): Russian diplomat and politician, including deputy foreign minister.