

The Formation of Marx's Critique of Political Economy: From the Studies of 1843 to the *Grundrisse*

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Introduction

Despite the predictions that consigned it to eternal oblivion, Marx's work has returned to the historical stage in recent years and a number of his texts have reappeared on bookshop shelves in many parts of the world. The rediscovery of Marx is based on the explanatory capacity still present in his writings. Faced with a new and deep crisis of capitalism, many are again looking to an author who in the past was often wrongly associated with the Soviet Union, and who was too hastily dismissed after 1989.

This renewed political focus was preceded by a revival of historical studies of his work. After the waning of interest in the 1980s and the "conspiracy of silence" in the 1990s, new or republished editions of his work became available almost everywhere (except in Russia and Eastern Europe, where the disasters of "actually existing socialism" are still too recent for a Marx revival to be on the agenda), and these have produced important and innovative results in many of the fields in which they blossomed.¹

Of particular significance for an exhaustive reinterpretation is the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA2), the critical historical edition of the complete works of Marx and Engels, which resumed serial publication in 1998.² This brought into print Marx's notebooks and all his preparatory manuscripts for the second and third volumes of *Capital*. The former include not only material from the books he read but also the reflections they stimulated in him; they reveal the workshop of his critical theory, the whole trajectory of his thought, the sources on which he drew in developing his own ideas. The publication of all the *Capital* manuscripts, and all the editorial revisions made by Engels,³ will make possible a reliable critical evaluation of Marx's originals and the extent of Engels's input into the published editions of Volumes Two and Three.

My present purpose is to reconstruct the stages of Marx's critique of political economy in the light of the philological acquisitions of MEGA2, and hence to offer a more exhaustive account of the formation of Marx's thought than has previously been offered. The great majority of researchers in this area have considered only certain periods in Marx's development, often jumping straight from the [*Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*]⁴ to the [*Grundrisse*] (1857–58) and from there to the first volume of *Capital* (1867), or, at best, examining only two other texts: *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847) and *[Theories of Surplus Value]* (1862–63).

The study of priceless manuscripts, and of interesting interim results, has remained the preserve of a narrow circle of scholars capable of reading the German-language volumes of MEGA2. My aim here is to make these texts known more widely, and to revive debate on the genesis and unfinished character of Marx's work.⁶ The study is in two parts. The first, corresponding to the present article, examines Marx's research on

political economy and some of his theoretical breakthroughs in this field, from the early studies of 1843 to the composition of the [*Grundrisse*] (1857–58) – the bulky preparatory manuscripts for the short work entitled *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) that is generally regarded as the first draft of *Capital*. The second article, to be published in the near future, will look at the making of *Capital* through its various drafts, from the [*Grundrisse*] to the final manuscripts of 1881 before Marx's death. In light of the new material of MEGA2, this sequel-essay will consider more carefully some of the most important Marxological debates of the twentieth century, such as those related to the alleged break between the early writings and *Capital*, or to the charge that Engels oversimplified Marx's ideas. It will also try to show how a careful reading of the recent published texts might better illuminate the relevance of Marx's oeuvre to the understanding and transformation of contemporary society.

The present article first seeks to reconstruct the studies in political economy that Marx conducted in Paris, Manchester and Brussels between 1843 and 1847, which culminated in the publication of *The Poverty of Philosophy* (§ II and III), and to consider Marx's political and personal fortunes during the revolutions of 1848 and the first period of his subsequent exile in London (§ IV and V). During this time, he wrote on political economy for the two journals he founded and directed: from 1848 to 1849 the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung: Organ der Demokratie*, and in 1850 the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung: Politisch-konomische Revue*. The conviction gradually formed in him that a new revolution could develop only in the wake of a world economic crisis. Section VI focuses on the 26 notebooks of excerpts that he compiled from 1850 to 1853, known as the [*London Notebooks*]. These bear the traces of his immersion in dozens of works of political economy, and they make it possible to reconstruct an important phase in Marx's thought that few interpreters have investigated until now. Finally, after a discussion of the trial of Communists in 1853 (§ VII) – a significant event that Marx spent much energy combating – Sections VIII and IX review the development of his position in the articles he wrote for the *New York Tribune* on the possibility of an economic crisis in the 1850s. The outbreak of such a crisis eventually coincided with his initial work on the [*Grundrisse*], in which he dealt with the money-value relationship and the process of the production and circulation of capital, introduced the concept of surplus-value for the first time, and critically reworked the profound studies of political economy that had absorbed him in the preceding years. A table, printed as an appendix, sets out the chronological order of the notebooks of excerpts, the manuscripts and the works on political economy from the 1843–1858 period.

The encounter with political economy

Political economy was not Karl Marx's first intellectual passion: it was only just emerging as a discipline in Germany during his youth, and he encountered it only after various other subjects. Born in Trier in 1818, to a family of Jewish origin, he began by studying law in 1835 at the universities of Bonn and Berlin, then switched to philosophy (especially the dominant Hegelianism) and graduated from Jena University in 1841 with a thesis on *The Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*. He would then have liked to take up an academic career, but Hegel's philosophy fell out of official favour when Friedrich Wilhelm IV came to the throne in Prussia, and Marx, having been a member of the Young Hegelians, was obliged to change his plans. Between 1842 and 1843 he devoted himself to journalism, covering

current affairs, and worked on the *Rheinische Zeitung*, the Cologne daily paper, of which he soon became the very youthful chief editor. However, shortly after he took on the position and began to publish articles of his own on economic questions (albeit only legal and political aspects),⁷ the censorship struck at the paper and caused him to end the experience, “to withdraw from the public stage to my study”.⁸ So he continued his studies of the state and legal relations, in which Hegel was a leading authority, and in 1843 wrote the manuscript that was posthumously published as [A *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*]. Having developed the conviction that civil society was the real foundation of the political state, he here set out his earliest views on the importance of the economic factors in the accounting for the totality of social relations.

Marx embarked on “a conscientious critical study of political economy”⁹ only after he moved to Paris, where in 1844 he founded and jointly edited the *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher*.¹⁰ From that moment his own enquiries, which had previously been of a mainly philosophical, historical and political character, turned to the new discipline that would be the fulcrum of his future research. He did a huge amount of reading in Paris, filling nine books of notes and extracts. In fact, he had acquired at university the lifelong habit of compiling summaries of works, often interspersed with reflections that they suggested to him.¹¹ The so-called [Paris Notebooks] are especially interesting for their lengthy compendia from Jean-Baptiste Say’s *Traité d’économie politique* and Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations*,¹² from which Marx acquired his basic knowledge of political economy, and David Ricardo’s *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* and James Mill’s *Elements of Political Economy*,¹³ which enabled him to make his first appraisals of the concepts of value and price and to launch a critique of money as the domination of estranged things over man.

In parallel with these studies, Marx wrote another three notebooks that were posthumously published as [Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844],¹⁴ in which he devoted special attention to the concept of alienated labour (*enttauserte Arbeit*). Contrary to the major economists and G.W.F. Hegel, this phenomenon, through which the worker’s product stands opposed to him “as *something alien*, as a power independent of the producer”,¹⁵ is not considered to be a natural, hence immutable, condition, but to be characteristic of a particular structure of social production relations: modern bourgeois society and wage labour.

Some of Marx’s visitors attested to his intense work during this period. The radical journalist Heinrich Burgers said of him in late 1844: “Marx had begun profound investigations in the field of political economy and nurtured the project of writing a critical work that would refound economic science.”¹⁶ Friedrich Engels, too, who first met Marx in the summer of 1844 and forged a friendship and theoretical-political solidarity with him that would last the rest of their lives, was driven by hopes of an imminent social upheaval to urge Marx in the first letter of their forty-year correspondence to publish as quickly as possible: “See to it that the material you’ve collected is soon launched into the world. It’s high time, heaven knows!”¹⁷ Marx’s sense of the inadequacy of his knowledge held him back from completing and publishing the manuscripts. But he did write, together with Engels,¹⁸ *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism: Against Bruno Bauer and Company*, a polemical broadside against Bauer and other figures in the Left Hegelian movement from which Marx had distanced himself in 1842, on grounds that it operated in speculative isolation and was geared exclusively to sterile conceptual battles.

With this behind them, Engels wrote again in early 1845 urging his friend to complete the work in preparation:

*Do try and finish your political economy book, even if there's much in it that you yourself are still dissatisfied with, it doesn't really matter; minds are ripe and we must strike while the iron is hot... now it is high time. So try and finish before April, do as I do, set a date by which you will definitely have finished, and make sure it gets into print quickly.*¹⁹

But these entreaties were of little avail. Marx still felt the need to continue his studies before trying to give a finished form to the drafts he had written. In any event, he was sustained by the conviction that he would soon be able to publish, and on 1 February 1845 – after he had been ordered to leave France because of his collaboration with the German-language workers' bi-weekly *Vorwärts!* – he signed a contract with the Darmstadt publisher Karl Wilhelm Leske for a two volume work to be entitled *Critique of Politics and Political Economy*.²⁰

Continuing the study of economics

In February 1845 Marx moved to Brussels, where he was allowed residence on condition that he "did not publish anything on current politics",²¹ and where he remained until March 1848 with his wife Jenny von Westphalen and their first daughter Jenny, born in Paris in 1844. During these three years, and particularly in 1845, he pressed on fruitfully with his studies of political economy. In March 1845 he worked on a critique – which he never managed to complete – of the German economist Friedrich List's book on the "national system of political economy".²² Between February and July, moreover, he filled six notebooks with extracts, the so-called [Brussels Notebooks], which mainly concern the basic concepts of political economy, with special attention to Sismonde de Sismondi's *Etudes sur l'économie politique*, Henri Storch's *Cours d'économie politique* and Pellegrino Rossi's *Cours d'Economie politique*. At the same time, Marx delved into questions associated with machinery and large-scale industry, copying out a number of pages from *Economy of Machinery and Manufacturers* by Charles Babbage.²³ He was also planning with Engels to organize the German translation of a "library of the best foreign socialist writers".²⁴ But, being short of time and unable to secure funding from a publisher, the two had to abandon the project and concentrated instead on their own work.

Marx spent July and August in Manchester examining the vast English-language economic literature – an essential task for the book he had in mind. He compiled another nine books of extracts, the [Manchester Notebooks], and again the ones that featured most were manuals of political economy and books on economic history, such as *Lectures on the Elements of Political Economy* by Thomas Cooper, *History of Prices and of the State of Circulation* by Thomas Tooke, *The Literature of Political Economy* by John Ramsay McCulloch and *Essays on Some Unsettled Problems of Political Economy* by John Stuart Mill.²⁵ Marx also took great interest in social questions and gathered extracts from some of the main volumes of English-language socialist literature, particularly *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy* by John Francis Bray and *Essay on the Formation of Human Character* and *Book of the New Moral World* by Robert Owen.²⁶ Similar arguments were put forward in Friedrich Engels's first work, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, which was published in June 1845.

In the Belgian capital, in addition to his economic studies, Marx worked on another project that he considered necessary, given the political circumstances. In November 1845 he conceived the idea of writing, along with Engels, Joseph Weydemeyer and Moses Hess, a “critique of modern German philosophy as expounded by its representatives Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer and Stirner, and of *German socialism* as expounded by its various prophets”.²⁷ The resulting text, posthumously published under the title [*The German Ideology*], had a dual aim: to combat the latest forms of neo-Hegelianism in Germany (Max Stirner’s *The Ego and His Own* had come out in October 1844), and then, as Marx wrote to the publisher Leske, “to prepare the public for the viewpoint adopted in my Economy (*Oekonomie*), which is diametrically opposed to German scholarship past and present”.²⁸ This text, on which he worked right up to June 1846, was never completed, but it helped him to elaborate more clearly than before, though still not in a definitive form, what Engels defined for the wider public forty years later as “the materialist conception of history”.²⁹

To track the progress of the “Economy” in 1846, it is again necessary to look at Marx’s letters to Leske. In August he informed the publisher that “the all but completed manuscript of the first volume” had been available “for so long”, but that he would not “have it published without revising it yet again, both as regards matter and style. It goes without saying that a writer who works continuously cannot, at the end of 6 months, publish *word for word* what he wrote 6 months earlier.” Nevertheless, he undertook to wrap the book up in the near future: “The revised version of the first volume will be ready for publication at the end of November. The 2nd volume, of a more historical nature, will be able to follow soon after it.”³⁰ But these reports did not correspond to the real state of his labours, since none of his manuscripts could have been defined as “all but completed”; when the publisher had still not received even one by the beginning of 1847, so he decided to revoke the contract.

These constant delays should not be attributed to any lack of zeal on Marx’s part. He never gave up political activity during those years, and in the spring of 1846 he promoted the work of the “Communist Correspondence Committee”, whose mission was to organize a linkup among the various labour leagues in Europe. Yet theoretical work always remained his priority, as may be seen from the testimony of those who regularly visited him. The German poet Georg Weerth, for instance, wrote in November 1846:

*Marx is regarded in a sense as the head of the communist party. Many selfstyled communists and socialists would be astonished, however, if they knew just how much this man actually does. Marx works day and night to clear the minds of the workers of America, France, Germany, etc. of the peculiar systems that obscure them... He works like a madman on his history of political economy. For many years this man has not slept more than four hours a night.*³¹

Marx’s own study notes and published writings are further proof of his diligence. Between autumn 1846 and September 1847 he filled three large books of extracts, mainly relating to economic history, from the *Geschichtliche Darstellung des Handels, der Gewerbe und des Ackerbaus der bedeutendsten handeltreibenden Staaten unsrer Zeit* by Gustav von Gulich, one of the leading German economists of the day.³² In December 1846, having read Pierre-Joseph Proudhon’s *Système des contradictions économiques ou Philosophie de la misère* and found it “very poor”,³³ Marx decided to

write a critique. He did this directly in French, so that his opponent – who did not read German – would be able to understand it; the text was completed in April 1847 and published in July as *Misere de la philosophie: Reponse a` la Philosophie de la misere de M. Proudhon*. It was Marx's first published writing on political economy, which set out his ideas on the theory of value, the proper methodological approach to an understanding of social reality, and the historically transient character of modes of production.

The failure to complete the planned book – a critique of political economy – was not therefore due to lack of application on Marx's part, but rather to the difficulty of the task he had taken on. The subject matter for critical examination was so vast that it would take many more years to address it with his characteristic seriousness and critical conscience. In the late 1840s, even though he was not aware of it, Marx was still only at the beginning of his exertions.

1848 and the outbreak of revolution

As the social ferment intensified in the second half of 1847, Marx's political involvement became more time-consuming. In June the Communist League, an association of German workers and artisans with international branches, was founded in London; in August Marx and Engels established a German Workers' Association in Brussels; and in November Marx became vice-president of the Brussels Democratic Association, which incorporated a revolutionary wing as well as a more moderate democratic component. At the end of the year, the Communist League gave Marx and Engels the job of writing a political programme, and shortly afterwards, in February 1848, this was sent to press as the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Its opening words – “A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of communism” – were destined to become famous throughout the world. So too was one of its essential theses: “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.”³⁴

The publication of the Manifesto could not have been more timely. Immediately afterwards, a revolutionary movement of unprecedented scope and intensity plunged the political and social order of continental Europe into crisis. The governments in place took all possible counter-measures to put an end to the insurrections, and in March 1848 Marx was expelled from Belgium to France, where a republic had just been proclaimed. He now naturally set aside his studies of political economy and took up journalistic activity in support of the revolution, helping to chart a recommended political course. In April he moved to the Rhineland, economically the most developed and politically the most liberal region in Germany, and in June he began editing the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung: Organ der Demokratie* that had meanwhile been founded in Cologne. Although his own articles were mostly chronicles of political events, in April 1849 he published a series of editorials on the critique of political economy, since he thought that the time had come “to deal more closely with the relations themselves on which the existence of the bourgeoisie and its class rule, as well as the slavery of the workers, are founded”.³⁵ Five articles based on lectures he had given in December 1847 to the German Workers' Association in Brussels appeared under the title *Wage Labour and Capital*, in which Marx presented to the public, more extensively than in the past and in a language as intelligible as possible to workers, his conception of how wage labour was exploited by capital.

The revolutionary movement that rose up throughout Europe in 1848 was, however, defeated within a short space of time. Among the reasons for the authoritarian conservative victory were: the recovery of the economy; the weakness of the working class, which in some countries scarcely had an organized structure; and the withdrawal of middle classes support for reforms, as they drew closer to the aristocracy in order to prevent a lurch towards excessive radicalism. All this allowed reactionary political forces to regain a firm grip on the reins of government.

After a period of intense political activity, in May 1848 Marx received an expulsion order from Prussia too and set off again for France. But when the revolution was defeated in Paris, the authorities ordered him to move to Morbihan, then a desolate, malaria-infested region of Brittany. Faced with this “veiled attempt on my life”, he decided to leave France for London, where he thought that there was “a positive prospect of being able to start a German newspaper”.³⁶ He would remain in England, an exile and stateless person, for the remainder of his life, but European reaction could not have confined him in a better place to write his critique of political economy. At that time, London was the world’s leading economic and financial centre, the “demiurge of the bourgeois cosmos”,³⁷ and therefore the most favourable location from which to observe the latest economic developments and to resume his studies of capitalist society.

In London waiting for the crisis

Marx reached England in summer 1849 at the age of thirty-one. His life in the capital city was far from tranquil. The Marx family, numbering six with the birth of Laura in 1845, Edgar in 1847 and Guido soon after their arrival in 1849, had to live for a long time in great poverty in Soho, one of London’s poorest and most run-down districts. In addition to family problems, Marx was involved in a relief committee for German emigres, which he sponsored through the Communist League, and whose mission was to assist the numerous political refugees in London.

Despite the adverse conditions, Marx managed to achieve his aim of starting a new publishing venture. In March 1850 he ran the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung: Politisch-ökonomische Revue*, a monthly that he planned as the locus for “comprehensive and scientific investigation of the economic conditions which form the foundation of the whole political movement”. He believed that “a time of apparent calm such as the present must be employed precisely for the purpose of elucidating the period of revolution just experienced, the character of the conflicting parties, and the social conditions which determine the existence and the struggle of these parties”.³⁸

Marx was convinced, wrongly, that the situation would prove to be a brief interlude between the recent revolution and another one lying just ahead. In December 1849 he wrote to his friend Weydemeyer: “I have little doubt that by the time three, or maybe two, monthly issues [of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*] have appeared, a world conflagration will intervene and the opportunity of temporarily finishing with political economy will be gone.” A “mighty industrial, agricultural and commercial crisis” was surely imminent,³⁹ and he took it for granted that a new revolutionary movement would emerge – though only after the outbreak of the crisis, since industrial and commercial prosperity weakened the resolve of the proletarian masses. Subsequently, in *The Class Struggles in France*, which appeared as a series of articles in the *Neue Rheinische*

Zeitung, he asserted that “a real revolution... is only possible in periods when... the modern forces of production and the bourgeois forms of production come in collision with each other... A new revolution is possible only in consequence of a new crisis. It is, however, just as certain as this crisis.”⁴⁰ Marx did not change his view even as economic prosperity began to spread, and in the first (January-February) issue of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung he wrote that the upturn would not last long because the markets of the East Indies were “already almost saturated” and those of North and South America and Australia would soon be, too. Hence:

with the first news of this glut “panic” will break out simultaneously in speculation and production simultaneously – perhaps as soon as towards the end of spring, in July or August at the latest. This crisis, however, since it is bound to coincide with great collisions on the Continent, will bring forth results quite different from those of all previous crises. Whereas every crisis hitherto has been the signal for a new advance, a new victory of the industrial bourgeoisie over landed property and the finance bourgeoisie, this crisis will mark the beginning of the modern English revolution.⁴¹ In the next issue, too, dated March-April 1850, Marx argued that the positive economic conjuncture represented no more than a temporary improvement, while overproduction and the excesses of speculation in the state railways sector were bringing on a crisis whose effects would be

*more significant than those of any crisis hitherto. It coincides with the agricultural crisis. . . This double crisis in England is being hastened and extended, and made more inflammable by the simultaneously impending convulsions on the Continent; and the continental revolutions will assume an incomparably more pronounced socialist character through the recoil of the English crisis on the world market.*⁴²

Marx’s scenario, then, was very optimistic for the cause of the workers’ movement and took in both the European and the North American markets. In his view, “following the entry of America into the recession brought about by overproduction, we may expect the crisis to develop rather more rapidly in the coming month than hitherto”. His conclusion was therefore enthusiastic: “The coincidence of trade crisis and revolution . . . is becoming more and more certain. *Que les destins s’accomplissent!*”⁴³

During the summer Marx deepened his economic analysis begun before 1848, and in the May-October 1850 issue of the review – the last before lack of funds and Prussian police harassment forced its closure – he reached the important conclusion that “the commercial crisis contributed infinitely more to the revolutions of 1848 than the revolution to the commercial crisis”.⁴⁴ Through these new studies, economic crisis would from now on be fundamental to his thought, not only economically but also sociologically and politically. Moreover, in analysing the processes of rampant speculation and overproduction, he ventured to predict that, “if the new cycle of industrial development which began in 1848 follows the same course as that of 1843–47, the crisis would break out in 1852”. The future crisis, he stressed, would also erupt in the countryside, and “for the first time the industrial and commercial crisis [would] coincide with a crisis in agriculture”.⁴⁵

Marx’s forecasts over this period of more than a year proved to be mistaken. Yet, even at moments when he was most convinced that a revolutionary wave was imminent, his ideas were very different from those of other European political leaders exiled in

London. Although he was wrong about how the economic situation would shape up, he considered it indispensable to study the current state of economic and political relations for the purposes of political activity. By contrast, most of the democratic and communist leaders of the time, whom he characterized as “alchemists of the revolution”, thought that the only prerequisite for a victorious revolution was “adequate preparation of their conspiracy”.⁴⁶ One example of this was the manifesto “To the Nations”, issued by the ‘European Democratic Central Committee’, which Giuseppe Mazzini, Alexandre Ledru-Rollin and Arnold Ruge had founded in London in 1850. According to Marx, this group were implying “that the revolution failed because of the ambition and jealousy of the individual leaders and the mutually hostile views of the various popular educators”. Also “stupefying” was the way in which these leaders conceived of “social organization”: “a mass gathering in the streets, a riot, a handclasp, and it’s all over. In their view indeed revolution consists merely in the overthrow of the existing government; once this aim has been achieved, ‘the victory’ has been won.”⁴⁷

Unlike those who expected another revolution to appear out of the blue, by the autumn of 1850 Marx was convinced that one could not ripen without a new world economic crisis. From then on, he distanced himself from false hopes in an imminent revolution⁴⁸ and lived “in complete retirement”.⁴⁹ This is confirmed by the testimony of Wilhelm Pieper, a member of the Communist League, who wrote in January 1851 that “Marx leads a very retired life” and added ironically: “his only friends [are] John Stuart Mill and Loyd, and whenever one goes to see him one is welcomed with economic categories in lieu of greetings.”⁵⁰ In the following years, Marx did indeed see very few friends in London, and he kept in close touch only with Engels, who had meanwhile settled in Manchester. In February 1851 Marx wrote to Engels: “I am greatly pleased by the public, authentic isolation in which we two, you and I, now find ourselves. It is wholly in accord with our attitude and our principles.”⁵¹ Engels, for his part, replied: “This is the position we can and must adopt on the next occasion: ...merciless criticism of everyone.” The “main thing” was “to find some way of getting our things published; either in a quarterly in which we make a frontal attack and consolidate our position so far as persons are concerned, or in fat books”. In short, he concluded with a certain optimism, “what price all the tittle-tattle the entire emigre’ crowd can muster against you, when you answer it with your political economy?”⁵² The challenge thus became one of predicting the outbreak of crisis. For Marx, who now had an additional political motive, the time had come again to devote himself entirely to the study of political economy.

The research notes of 1850–53

During the three years when Marx had interrupted his study of political economy, there were a succession of economic events – from the crisis of 1847 to the discovery of gold in California and Australia – which he thought so important that he had to undertake further research, as well as to look back over his old notes and try to give them a finished form.⁵³ His further reading was synthesized in 26 books of extracts, 24 of which (also containing texts from other disciplines) he compiled between September 1850 and August 1853 and numbered among the so-called [*London Notebooks*]. This study material is extremely interesting, as it documents a period of significant development in Marx’s critique, when he not only summarized knowledge that he had already gained but, by studying dozens of new (especially English-language) books in

depth at the British Museum library, he was also acquiring other important ideas for the work that he was intending to write.⁵⁴

The [*London Notebooks*] may be divided into three groups. In the first seven notebooks (I–VII), written between September 1850 and March 1851, some of the numerous works that Marx read and excerpted were: *A History of Prices* by Thomas Tooke, *A View of the Money System of England* by James Taylor, *Histoire de la Monnaie* by Germain Garnier, the *Satliche Schriften u" ber Banken und Munzwesen* by Johann Georg Busch, *An Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Paper Credit of Great Britain* by Henry Thornton, and *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith.⁵⁵ Marx concentrated, in particular, on the history and theories of economic crises, paying close attention to the money-form and credit in his attempt to understand their origins. Unlike other socialists of the time such as Proudhon – who were convinced that economic crises could be avoided through a reform of the money and credit system – Marx came to the conclusion that, since the credit system was one of the underlying conditions, crises could at most be aggravated or mitigated by the correct or incorrect use of monetary circulation; the true causes of crises were to be sought, rather, in the contradictions of production.⁵⁶

At the end of this first group of extracts, Marx summed up his own knowledge in two notebooks (not numbered as part of the main series) entitled [*Bullion: The Perfect Monetary System*].⁵⁷ In this manuscript, which he wrote in the spring of 1851, Marx copied out from the main works of political economy – sometimes accompanying them with comments of his own – what he regarded as the most important passages on the theory of money. Divided into ninety-one sections, one for each book under consideration, [*Bullion*] was not merely a collection of quotations but may be thought of as Marx's first autonomous formulation of the theory of money and circulation,⁵⁸ to be used in the writing of the book that he had been planning for many years. In this same period, although Marx had to face terrible personal moments (especially around the death of his son Guido in 1850), and although his economic circumstances were so serious that he was forced to put out to nurse his daughter Franziska, born in March 1851, he not only managed to pursue his own work but remained hopeful that it would soon be concluded. On 2 April 1851 he wrote to Engels:

*I am so far advanced that I will have finished with all this economic crap in five weeks' time. Et cela fait I shall complete the Economy at home and apply myself to another branch of learning at the [British] Museum. C, a commence a` mennuyer. Au fond, this science has made no progress since A. Smith and D. Ricardo, however much has been done in the way of individual research, often extremely discerning... Fairly soon I shall be bringing out two volumes of sixty sheets.*⁵⁹

Engels received the news with great joy: "I'm glad that you've at long last finished with political economy. The thing has really been dragging on far too long, and so long as you have in front of you an unread book which you believe to be important, you won't be able to settle down to writing."⁶⁰ But Marx's letter reflected his optimism about the work's completion more than it did the real state of things. Apart from all the books of excerpts, and with the exception of [*Bullion*], itself by no means a printer-ready draft, Marx had not yet produced a single manuscript. No doubt he had conducted his research with great intensity, but he had still not fully mastered the economic materials, and, for all his resolve and his conviction that he would eventually succeed, his scrupulousness

prevented him from going beyond compendia or critical comments and finally writing his own book. Moreover, there was no publisher in the wings urging him to be more concise in his studies. The “Economy” was a long way from being ready “fairly soon”.

So, Marx again turned to studying of the classics of political economy, and between April and November 1851 he wrote what may be seen as the second group (VIII–XVI) of the [*London Notebooks*]. Notebook VIII was devoted almost entirely to extracts from James Steuart’s *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*, which he had begun to study in 1847, and from Ricardo’s *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*. The excerpts from Ricardo, in fact, compiled while he was writing [*Bullion*], constitute the most important part of the [*London Notebooks*], as numerous critical comments and personal reflections accompany them.⁶¹ Until the end of the 1840s Marx had essentially accepted Ricardo’s theories, whereas from now on, through a new and deeper study of ground rent and value, he moved beyond them in certain respects.⁶² In this way, Marx revised some of his earlier views on these fundamental questions and thus expanded the radius of his knowledge and went on to examine still more authors. Notebooks IX and X, from May–July 1851, centered on economists who had dealt with the contradictions in Ricardo’s theory, and who, on certain points, had improved on his conceptions. Thus, a large number of extracts from all these books came from: *A History of the Past and Present State of the Labouring Population* by John Debell Tuckett, *Popular Political Economy* by Thomas Hodgskin, *On Political Economy* by Thomas Chalmers, *An Essay on the Distribution of Wealth* by Richard Jones, and *Principles of Political Economy* by Henry Charles Carey.⁶³

Despite the expanded scope of his research and the accumulation of theoretical questions to be resolved, Marx remained optimistic about the completion of his writing project. In late June 1851 he wrote to the devoted Weydemeyer:

*I am usually at the British Museum from 9 in the morning until 7 in the evening. The material I am working on is so damnably involved that, no matter how I exert myself, I shall not finish for another 6–8 weeks. There are, moreover, constant interruptions of a practical kind, inevitable in the wretched circumstances in which we are vegetating here. But, for all that, the thing is rapidly approaching completion.*⁶⁴

Evidently Marx thought that he could write his book within two months, drawing on the vast quantity of extracts and critical notes he had already gathered. Once again, however, not only did he fail to reach the hoped-for “conclusion”, he did not even manage to begin the manuscript “fair copy” that was to be sent to the printers. This time the main reason for the missed deadline was his dire economic straits. Lacking a steady income, and worn out by his own physical condition, he wrote to Engels at the end of July 1851:

*It is impossible to go on living like this... I should have finished at the library long ago. But there have been too many interruptions and disturbances and at home everything’s always in a state of siege. For nights on end, I am set on edge and infuriated by floods of tears. So I cannot of course do very much.*⁶⁵

To improve his financial position, Marx decided to resume journalistic activity and looked around for a newspaper. In August 1851 he became a correspondent for the New York Tribune, the paper with the largest circulation in the United States of America, and

he wrote hundreds of pages for it during a stint that lasted until February 1862.⁶⁶ He dealt with the main political and diplomatic events of the age, as well as one economic and financial issue after another, so that within a few years he became a journalist of note.

Marx's critical study of political economy nevertheless continued through the summer of 1851. In August, Marx read *Proudhon's Idee generale de la Révolution au XIXe siècle* and entertained the project (which he later set aside) of writing a critique of it together with Engels.⁶⁷ In addition, he continued to compile extracts from his reading: Notebook XI is on texts dealing with the condition of the working class; and Notebooks XII and XIII cover his researches in agrarian chemistry. Understanding the importance of this latter discipline for the study of ground rent, he took copious notes from *Die organische Chemie in ihrer Anwendung auf Agricultur und Physiologie* by Justus Liebig and *Elements of Agricultural Chemistry and Geology* by James F.W. Johnston. In Notebook XIV, Marx turned once more to the debate on Thomas Robert Malthus's theory of population, especially *The Principles of Population* by his opponent Archibald Alison; to precapitalist modes of production, as the extracts from *Adolphe Dureau de la Malle's Économie politique des Romains* and William H. Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico* and *History of the Conquest of Peru* demonstrate; and to colonialism, particularly through Herman Merivale's *Lectures on Colonization and Colonies*.⁶⁸ Finally, between September and November 1851, he extended his field of research to technology, devoting considerable space in Notebook XV to Johann H.M. Poppe's history of technology and in Notebook XVI to miscellaneous questions of political economy.⁶⁹ As a letter to Engels from mid-October 1851 shows, Marx was then "in the throes of working out the Economy", "delving mainly into technology, the history thereof, and agronomy", so that he might "form at least some sort of an opinion of the stuff".⁷⁰

At the end of 1851, the Lowenthal publishing house in Frankfurt expressed an interest in Marx's ever more extensive work. From the correspondence with Engels and Lassalle,⁷¹ it may be inferred that Marx was then working on a project in three volumes: the first would set forth his own conception, while the second would offer a critique of other socialisms, and the third a history of political economy. At first, however, the publisher was interested only in the third volume, while retaining the option to print the others if the project proved successful. Engels tried to persuade Marx to accept the change of plan and to sign an agreement: it was necessary "to strike while the iron is hot" and "absolutely essential to break the spell created by your prolonged absence from the German book market and, later, by funk on the part of the book dealers"⁷² – but the publisher's interest evaporated, and nothing ever came of it all. After two months, Marx turned again to the devoted Weydemeyer in the United States of America and asked him whether it might be possible "to find a publisher there for [his] Economy".⁷³

Despite these obstacles on the publishing front, Marx did not lose his optimism concerning the imminence of an economic crisis. At the end of 1851 he wrote to the famous poet Ferdinand Freiligrath, an old friend of his: "The crisis, held in check by all kinds of factors..., must blow up at the latest next autumn. And, après les derniers événements je suis plus convaincu que jamais, qu'il n'y aura pas de révolution sérieuse sans crise commerciale."⁷⁴

Meanwhile Marx got on with other work. From December 1851 to March 1852, he wrote *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, but because of the state censorship of his writings in Prussia he had to have it published in New York, in Weydemeyer's tiny-circulation journal *Die Revolution*. In this connection he remarked in late 1852 to an acquaintance, Gustav Zerffi: "no book dealer in Germany now dares to publish anything of mine."⁷⁵ Between May and June 1852, he then wrote with Engels the polemical *Great Men of the Exile*, a gallery of caricatured portraits of leading figures in the German political emigration in London (Johann Gottfried Kinkel, Ruge, Karl Heinzen and Gustav von Struve). However, the vain search for a publisher made his efforts pointless: the manuscript was in fact given to the Hungarian Janos Bangya to take to Germany, but he turned out to be a police agent who, instead of delivering it to the publisher, handed it over to the authorities. The text therefore remained unpublished during the lifetime of its two authors.

From April 1852 to August 1853, Marx resumed the compilation of extracts and wrote the third and last group (XVII–XXIV) of the [London Notebooks].⁷⁶ These mainly concern the various stages in the development of human society, much of his research having been on historical disputes about the Middle Ages and the history of literature, culture and customs. He took a particular interest in India, about which he was simultaneously writing articles for the *New York Tribune*.

As this wide range of research demonstrates, Marx was by no means "taking a rest". The barriers to his projects again had to do with the poverty with which he had to wrestle during those years. Despite constant support from Engels, who in 1851 began to send him five pounds sterling a month, and the income from the *New York Tribune*, which paid two pounds sterling per article, Marx lived in truly desperate conditions. Not only did he have to face the loss of his daughter, Franziska, in April 1852, his daily life was becoming one long battle. In September 1852 he wrote to Engels:

*For the past 8–10 days I have been feeding the family solely on bread and potatoes, but whether I shall be able to get hold of any today is doubtful... The best and most desirable thing that could happen would be for the landlady to throw me out. Then at least I would be quit of the sum of £22... On top of that, debts are still outstanding to the baker, the milkman, the tea chap, the greengrocer, the butcher. How am I to get out of this infernal mess? Finally... [but this was] essential if we were not to kick the bucket, I have, over the last 8–10 days, touched some German types for a few shillings and pence.*⁷⁷

All this took a heavy toll on Marx's work and time: "[I] often have to waste an entire day for a shilling. I assure you that, when I consider my wife's sufferings and my own powerlessness, I feel like consigning everything to the devil."⁷⁸ Sometimes the situation became quite unbearable, as when he wrote to Engels in October 1852: "Yesterday I pawned a coat dating back to my Liverpool days in order to buy writing paper."⁷⁹

Yet the storms in the financial market continued to keep Marx's morale high, and he wrote about them in letters to all his closest friends. With great self-irony, he declared to Lassalle in February 1852: "The financial crisis has finally reached a level comparable only to the commercial crisis now making itself felt in New York and London. Unlike the gentlemen of commerce, I cannot, alas, even have recourse to bankruptcy."⁸⁰ In

April he told Weydemeyer that, owing to extraordinary circumstances such as the discovery of new gold deposits in California and Australia and English commercial penetration of India, “it may well be that the crisis will be postponed until 1853. But then its eruption will be appalling. And until that time there can be no thought of revolutionary convulsions.”⁸¹ And in August, immediately after the speculative collapses in the United States of America, he triumphantly wrote to Engels: “Is that not approaching crisis? The revolution may come sooner than we would like.”⁸²

Marx did not keep such assessments only for his correspondence but also wrote of them in the New York Tribune. In an article of November 1852 on “Pauperism and Free Trade”, he predicted: “The crisis... will take a far more dangerous character than in 1847, when it was more commercial and monetary than industrial”, since the more surplus capital concentrates itself in industrial production... the more extensive, the more lasting, the more direct will the crisis fall upon the working masses.”⁸³ In short, it might be necessary to wait a little longer, but he was convinced – more out of impatience to see a new season of social upheavals than from rigorous analysis of economic events – that sooner or later the hour of revolution would sound.

The trial of the communists and personal hardships

In October 1852 the Prussian government initiated a trial of members of the Communist League who had been arrested the previous year. The charge was that they had participated in an international organization of conspirators led by Marx against the Prussian monarchy. From October to December, in order to demonstrate that the accusations were baseless, he got down “to work for the party against the government’s machinations”⁸⁴ and composed *Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial* in Cologne. Published anonymously in Switzerland in January 1853, this short work did not have the desired effect, since a large part of the print-run was confiscated by the Prussian police and it circulated only in the United States of America among a small readership, where it first appeared in installments in the *Neu-England-Zeitung* in Boston, and then as an independent booklet. Marx was understandably disheartened by this publishing failure after so many others: “It’s enough to put one off writing altogether. This constant toil pour le roi de Prusse!”⁸⁵

Contrary to the claims orchestrated by Prussian government ministers, Marx was politically very isolated during this period. The dissolution of the Communist League – having effectively taken place in 1851, then becoming official at the end of 1852 – greatly reduced the number of his political contacts. What the various police forces and political opponents defined as the “Marx party”⁸⁶ had very few committed supporters. In England, apart from Engels, the only men who could have been considered “Marxian”⁸⁷ were Pieper, Wilhelm Wolff, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Peter Imandt, Ferdinand Wolff and Ernst Dronke. And in other countries, where most of the political exiles had taken refuge, Marx had close relations only with Weydemeyer and Cluss in the United States, Richard Reinhardt in Paris, and Lassalle in Prussia. He was well aware that, although these contacts allowed a network to be kept going in quite difficult times, this “doesn’t add up to a party”.⁸⁸ Besides, even this narrow circle had difficulty understanding some of Marx’s political and theoretical positions, and indeed his allies often brought him more disadvantages than benefits. On such occasions he could let off steam with no one besides Engels: “Of the many disagreeable experiences during my years here, the greatest have consistently been provided by so-called party friends... I

propose at the next opportunity to declare publicly that I have nothing whatever to do with any party.”⁸⁹ Unlike other leaders of the political emigration, Marx had always refused to join the existing international committees, which spent their time fantasizing about the imminent revolution; and the only member of other organizations with whom he maintained relations was Ernest Charles Jones, the main representative of the left wing of the Chartist movement.

The recruitment of new active supporters, and especially the involvement of workers in his ideas, was therefore an important and complicated matter, and the work Marx had under way was meant to serve that purpose, too. Recruitment was a necessity both theoretically and politically. In March 1853 Engels wrote to him:

*You ought to finish your Economy; later on, as soon as we have a newspaper, we could bring it out in weekly numbers, and what the populus could not understand, the discipuli would expound tant bien que mal, mais cependant non sans effet. This would provide all our by then restored associations with a basis for debate.*⁹⁰

Marx had previously written to Engels that he hoped to spend a few days with him “in April” and to “chat undisturbed about present conditions, which in [his] view must soon lead to an earthquake”.⁹¹ But Marx did not manage to concentrate on his writing because of the poverty that tormented him. In 1853 Soho was the epicentre of another cholera epidemic, and the circumstances of the Marx family became more and more desperate. In August he wrote to Engels that “sundry creditors” were “laying siege to the house”, and that “threequarters of [his] time were taken up chasing after pennies”.⁹² In order to survive, he and his wife Jenny were forced to have frequent recourse to the pawn shop, pledging the few clothes or objects of value left in a house that lacked “the wherewithal even for les choses les plus nécessaires”.⁹³ The income from journalistic articles became more and more indispensable, although they took up precious time. At the end of the year, he complained to his friend Cluss:

*I had always hoped that... I might somehow contrive to withdraw into solitude for a few months and work at my Economy. It seems that this isn't to be. I find perpetual hackwork for the newspapers tiresome. It is time-consuming, distracting and, in the end, amounts to very little. However independent one may think oneself, one is tied to the newspaper and its readers, especially when, like myself, one is paid in cash. Purely learned work is something totally different.*⁹⁴

When Marx had no choice but to heed the necessities of life, his thinking thus remained firmly anchored in the “Economy”.

The articles on the crisis for the New York Tribune

In this period, too, economic crisis was a constant theme in Marx's articles for the New York Tribune. In “Revolution in China and Europe”, from June 1853, where he connected the anti-feudal Chinese revolution that began in 1851 to the general economic situation, Marx again expressed his conviction that there would soon come “a moment when the extension of the markets is unable to keep pace with the extension of British manufactures, and this disproportion must bring about a new crisis with the same certainty as it has done in the past”.⁹⁵ In his view, in the aftermath of revolution, an unforeseen contraction of the great Chinese market would “throw the spark into the

overloaded mine of the present industrial system and cause the explosion of the long-prepared general crisis, which, spreading abroad, will be closely followed by political revolutions on the Continent". 96 Of course, Marx did not look upon the revolutionary process in a determinist manner, but he was sure that crisis was an indispensable prerequisite for its fulfilment:

*Since the commencement of the eighteenth century there has been no serious revolution in Europe which had not been preceded by a commercial and financial crisis. This applies no less to the revolution of 1789 than to that of 1848... Neither wars nor revolutions are likely to put Europe by the ears, unless in consequence of a general commercial and industrial crisis, the signal of which has, as usual, to be given by England, the representative of European industry in the market of the world.*⁹⁷

The point was underlined in late September 1853, in the article "Political Movements: Scarcity of Bread in Europe":

*neither the declamation of the demagogues, nor the twaddle of the diplomats will drive matters to a crisis, but . . . there are approaching economical disasters and social convulsions which must be the sure forerunners of European revolution. Since 1849 commercial and industrial prosperity has stretched the lounge on which the counter-revolution has slept in safety.*⁹⁸

Traces of the optimism with which Marx awaited events may be found in the correspondence with Engels. In one letter, for example, also from September 1853, he wrote: "Les choses marchent merveilleusement. All h[ell] will be let loose in France when the financial bubble bursts."⁹⁹ But still the crisis did not come, and he concentrated his energies on other journalistic activity so as not to forego the only source of income.

Between October and December 1853, Marx penned a series of articles entitled Lord Palmerston, in which he criticized the foreign policy of Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston, the long-time foreign secretary and future prime minister of Britain. These appeared both in the New York Tribune and in The People's Paper published by the English Chartists. Between August and November 1854, following the Spanish civilian and military uprising in June, he wrote another series, The Revolution in Spain, in which he summarized and analyzed the main events of the previous decade in Spain. He took these labours very seriously, as we can gauge from the nine large books of extracts that he compiled between September 1853 and January 1855, the first four of which, centred on diplomatic history, provided a basis for Lord Palmerston, while the other five, on Spanish political, social and cultural history, included research for the Revolution in Spain articles.¹⁰⁰

Finally, at some point between late 1854 and early 1855, Marx resumed his studies of political economy. After the three-year break, however, he decided to re-read his old manuscripts before pressing on. In mid-February 1855 he wrote to Engels:

*For the past 4–5 days I have been prevented from writing . . . by a severe inflammation of the eyes... My eye trouble was brought on by reading through my own notebooks on economics, the intention being, not so much to elaborate the thing, as at any rate to master the material and get it ready to work on.*¹⁰¹

This review gave rise to twenty pages of fresh notes, to which Marx gave the title [Quotations: Essence of money, essence of credit, crises]; they were further extracts from extracts he had already made in recent years. Returning to books by writers such as Tooke, John Stuart Mill and Steuart, and to articles from *The Economist*, he further summarized the theories of the major political economists on money, credit and crisis, which he had begun to study in 1850.¹⁰²

At the same time, Marx produced more articles on the recession for the *New York Tribune*. In January 1855, in “The Commercial Crisis in Britain”, he wrote with satisfaction: “The English commercial crisis, whose premonitory symptoms were long ago chronicled in our columns, is a fact now loudly proclaimed by the highest authorities in this matter.”¹⁰³ And, two months later, in “The Crisis in England”:

*A few months more and the crisis will be at a height which it has not reached in England since 1846, perhaps not since 1842. When its effects begin to be fully felt among the working classes, then will that political movement begin again, which has been dormant for six years... Then will the two real contending parties in that country stand face to face – the middle class and the working classes, the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat.*¹⁰⁴

Yet, just as Marx seemed on the point of restarting work on the “Economy”, personal difficulties once more caused a change of plan. In April 1855 he was profoundly shaken by the death of his eight year- old son Edgar, confiding to Engels:

*I've already had my share of bad luck but only now do I know what real unhappiness is.. Amid all the fearful torments I have recently had to endure, the thought of you and your friendship has always sustained me, as has the hope that there is something sensible for us to do together in the world.*¹⁰⁵

Marx's health and economic circumstances remained disastrous throughout 1855, and his family increased again in size with Eleanor's birth in January 1856. He often complained to Engels of problems with his eyes and teeth and a terrible cough, and he felt that “the physical staleness also stultifie[d his] brain”.¹⁰⁶ A further complication was a lawsuit that Freund, the family doctor, had brought against him for non-payment of bills. To get away from this, Marx had to spend some time from mid-September to early December living with Engels in Manchester, and to remain hidden at home for a couple of weeks after his return. A solution came only thanks to a “very happy event”: an inheritance of £100 following the death of Jenny's ninety year- old uncle.¹⁰⁷

Thus, Marx was able to start work again on political economy only in June 1856, writing some articles for *The People's Paper* on Credit Mobilier, the main French commercial bank, which he considered “one of the most curious economical phenomena of our epoch”.¹⁰⁸ After the family's circumstances improved for a while in autumn 1856, allowing them to leave their Soho lodgings for a better flat in North London, Marx wrote again on the crisis for the *New York Tribune*. He argued in “The Monetary Crisis in Europe”, published on 3 October 1856, that “a movement in the European money markets analogous to the panic of 1847” was under way.¹⁰⁹ And in “The European Crisis”, which appeared in November, at a time when all the columnists were confidently predicting that the worst was over, he maintained:

*The indications brought from Europe... certainly seem to postpone to a future day the final collapse of speculation and stock-jobbing, which men on both sides of the sea instinctively anticipate as with a fearful looking forward to some inevitable doom. That collapse is none the less sure from this postponement; indeed, the chronic character assumed by the existing financial crisis only forebodes for it a more violent and destructive end. The longer the crisis lasts the worse the ultimate reckoning.*¹¹⁰

The events also gave Marx the opportunity to attack his political opponents. In “The Monetary Crisis in Europe”, he wrote:

*If we place side by side the effects of this short monetary panic and the effect of Mazzinian and other proclamations, the whole history since 1849 of the delusions of the official revolutionists is at once deprived of its mysteries. They know nothing of the economical life of peoples, they know nothing of the real conditions of historical movement, and when the new revolution shall break out they will have a better right than Pilate to wash their hands and protest that they are innocent of the blood shed.*¹¹¹

In the first half of 1857, however, absolute calm prevailed on the international markets. Until March, Marx worked on Revelations of the Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century, a group of articles published in The Free Press, a paper run by the anti-Palmerston Conservative David Urquhart. These pieces were meant to be only the first part of a work on the history of diplomacy, which Marx had planned at the beginning of 1856 during the Crimean war, but which he would never complete. In this case too, he made a profound study of the materials, and between January 1856 and March 1857 he compiled seven books of extracts on international politics in the eighteenth century.¹¹²

Finally, in July, Marx wrote some brief but interesting critical remarks on Harmonies Économiques by Frédéric Bastiat and Principles of Political Economy by Carey, which he had already studied and excerpted in 1851. In these notes, posthumously published under the title [Bastiat and Carey], he pointed up the naivety of the two economists (the first a champion of free trade, the second of protectionism), who, in their writings, had striven to demonstrate “the harmony of the relations of production”¹¹³ and thus of bourgeois society as a whole.

The financial crisis of 1857 and the [Grundrisse]

This time, unlike in past crises, the economic storm began not in Europe but in the United States. During the first few months of 1857, the New York banks stepped up their volume of loans, despite the decline in deposits. The resulting growth in speculative activity worsened the general economic conditions, and, after the New York branch of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company became insolvent, the prevailing panic led to numerous bankruptcies. Loss of confidence in the banking system then produced a contraction of credit, a drying up of deposits and the suspension of money payments.

Sensing the extraordinary nature of these events, Marx immediately got back to work. On 23 August 1857 – the very day before the Ohio Life collapse that sowed panic in public opinion – he began to write the [Introduction] to his “Economy”; the explosive onset of crisis had given him an additional motive that had been absent in previous years. After the defeat of 1848, Marx had faced a whole decade of political setbacks and

deep personal isolation. But, with the outbreak of the crisis, he glimpsed the possibility of taking part in a new round of social revolts and considered that his most urgent task was to analyse the economic phenomena that would be so important for the beginning of a revolution. This meant writing and publishing, as quickly as possible, the work he had been planning for so long.

From New York the crisis rapidly spread to the rest of the United States and, within a few weeks, to all the centres of the world market in Europe, South America and the East, becoming the first international financial crisis in history. News of these developments generated great euphoria in Marx and fuelled a huge explosion of intellectual productivity. The period between summer 1857 and spring 1858 was one of the most prolific in his life: he managed to write more in a few months than in the preceding years. In December 1857 he wrote to Engels: “I am working like mad all night and every night collating my economic studies, so that I might at least get the outlines [*Grundrisse*] clear before the deluge.” He also took the opportunity to point out that his predictions that a crisis was inevitable had not been so ill-founded, since “Saturday’s Economist maintains that, during the final months of 1853, throughout 1854, the autumn of 1855 and the sudden changes of 1856, Europe has never had more than a hair-breadth escape from the impending crisis”.¹¹⁴

Marx’s work was now remarkable and wide-ranging. From August 1857 to May 1858 he filled the eight notebooks known as the [*Grundrisse*],¹¹⁵ while as New York Tribune correspondent, he wrote dozens of articles on, among other things, the development of the crisis in Europe. Driven by the need to improve his economic circumstances, he also agreed to compose a number of entries for The New American Cyclopædia. Lastly, from October 1857 to February 1858, he compiled three books of extracts, called the [*Crisis Notebooks*].¹¹⁶ Unlike the extracts he had made before, these were not compendia from the works of economists but consisted of a large quantity of notes, gleaned from various daily newspapers, about major developments in the crisis, stock market trends, trade exchange fluctuations and important bankruptcies in Europe, the United States, and other parts of the world. A letter he wrote to Engels in December indicates how intense his activity was:

*I am working enormously, as a rule until 4 o’clock in the morning. I am engaged on a twofold task: 1. Elaborating the outlines of political economy. (For the benefit of the public it is absolutely essential to go into the matter *au fond*, as it is for my own, individually, to get rid of this nightmare.) 2. The present crisis. Apart from the articles for the Tribune, all I do is keep records of it, which, however, takes up a considerable amount of time. I think that, somewhere about the spring, we ought to do a pamphlet together about the affair as a reminder to the German public that we are still there as always, and always the same.*¹¹⁷

As far as the [*Grundrisse*] are concerned, in the last week of August Marx drafted a notebook “M” that was meant to serve as the [*Introduction*] to the work; and then, in mid-October, he pressed on with another seven notebooks (I–VII). In the first of these and in part of the second, he wrote the so-called [*Chapter on Money*], which deals with money and value, while in the remaining notebooks he wrote the so-called [*Chapter on Capital*]. In this he allocates hundreds of pages to the process of production and circulation of capital and takes up some of the most important themes in the whole manuscript, such as the concept of surplus-value and the economic formations which

preceded the capitalist mode of production. This immense effort was not sufficient, however, for him to complete the work. In late February 1858 he wrote to Lassalle:

I have in fact been at work on the final stages for some months. But the thing is proceeding very slowly because no sooner does one set about finally disposing of subjects to which one has devoted years of study than they start revealing new aspects and demand to be thought out further... The work I am presently concerned with is a Critique of Economic Categories or, if you like, a critical exposé of the system of the bourgeois economy. It is at once an exposé and, by the same token, a critique of the system. I have very little idea how many sheets the whole thing will amount to... Now that I am at last ready to set to work after 15 years of study, I have an uncomfortable feeling that turbulent movements from without will probably interfere after all.¹¹⁸

In reality, however, there was no sign of the long-awaited revolutionary movement that was supposed to spring up along with the crisis, and this time, too, another reason for Marx's failure to complete the manuscript was his awareness that he was still far from a full critical mastery of the material. The [Grundrisse] therefore remained only a rough draft. After he had carefully worked up the [Chapter on Money] between August and October 1858 into the manuscript [Original Text of the Second and the Beginning of the Third Chapter of "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy"], he published in 1859 a short book that had no public resonance: A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. Another eight years of feverish study and enormous intellectual efforts would pass before the publication of Volume One of Capital.

Conclusions

If we bear in mind not only the well-known works translated into English, but also the manuscripts and books of extracts in MEGA2, the immensity and richness of Marx's theoretical project appear in a clearer light. These notebooks show the huge limitations not only of the Marxist-Leninist account – which often depicted Marx's conception as something separate from the studies he conducted, as if it had been magically present in his head from birth – but also of the debate in Europe in the 1960s about whether there was an epistemological break in his thought or a basic continuity with the philosophy of Hegel. In fact, the participants in that debate only considered a few of Marx's texts, and even some of these they treated as thoroughly finished works when that was far from being the case.

Marx's researches between the period of the [Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844] and [The German Ideology] and the period of the [Grundrisse], and then between the [Grundrisse] and the various drafts of Capital, have finally become accessible to scholars through the volumes of MEGA2. This has made it possible to follow the many intermediate stages in the evolution of his ideas, both in the 1850s and after publication of Volume One of Capital, which suggest a more critical and open interpretation of his theory. The picture that emerges from MEGA2 is of an author who left a large part of his writings unfinished, in order to engage until his death in further studies that would verify the correctness of his theses.

At a time when Marx's ideas have finally been liberated from the chains of Soviet ideology, and when they are again being investigated for the sake of analysing the contemporary world, a more faithful account of the genesis of his thought may not be

without important implications for the future – not only for Marx studies, but for the refounding of a critical thought that aims to transform the present.

Notes

1. Innovative overall interpretations of Marx's thought include Moishe Postone, *Time, Labour and Social Domination*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (CUP), 1993; Daniel Bensaïd, *Marx l'intempestif*, Paris: Fayard, 1996; Terrell Carver, *The Postmodern Marx*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998; and Michael A. Lebowitz, *Beyond Capital*, 2nd ed., London: Palgrave, 2003. See also David Leopold, *The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing*, CUP, 2007, and Marcello Musto, ed., *Karl Marx's Grundrisse. Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy 150 Years Later*, London: Routledge, 2008. In addition, John Bellamy Foster, *Marx's Ecology*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000, and Paul Burkett, *Marxism and Ecological Economics*, Leiden: Brill, 2006, are noteworthy for having related Marx to the environmental question. For a comprehensive survey of Marxist studies in the past twenty years, see Goiran Therborn, "After Dialectics: Radical Social Theory in a Post-Communist World", *New Left Review* 43 (Jan–Feb. 2007): 63–114.
2. Cf. Marcello Musto, "The Rediscovery of Karl Marx", *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (2007): 477–98. 3. The second section of MEGA2, *Das Kapital und Vorarbeiten*, which will contain this material, is expected for the year 2010, coinciding with the publication of Volume II/4.
3. *Manuskripte 1883–1867. Teil 3*, the last remaining batch of manuscripts from the 1863–67 period.
4. In this essay, the editorially assigned titles of Marx's incomplete manuscripts are inserted between square brackets.
5. Of the few authors who, with the sources available at the time, made a real effort to interpret the less well-known phases of the genesis of Marx's thought, special mention should be made of Maximilien Rubel, "Les cahiers de lecture de Karl Marx. I. 1840–1853" and "II. 1853–1856", first published in 1957 and 1960 in the *International Review of Social History* and subsequently reprinted in *Marx critique du marxisme*, Payot: Paris 1974, pp. 301–59. Later works in English include: Terrell Carver, ed., *Karl Marx: Texts on Method*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975, and the three books by Allen Oakley, all published by Routledge & Kegan Paul (London): *The Making of Marx's Critical Theory* (1983); *Marx's Critique of Political Economy: Intellectual Sources and Evolution. Volume I: 1844 to 1860* (1984) and *Volume II: 1861 to 1863* (1985).
6. Sometimes this debate has been based on highly superficial interpretations. For a recent (bad) example of this kind, see Francis Wheen, *Marx's Das Kapital: A Biography*, London: Atlantic Books, 2006.
7. See Karl Marx, "Proceedings of the Sixth Rhine Province Assembly. Third Article. Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood" and "Justification of the Correspondent from the Mosel", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (hereafter MECW), London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–2005, vol. 1, pp. 224–63, 332–58.

8. Karl Marx, “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. Part One”, in MECW 29, p. 263.
9. Karl Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844”, MECW 3, p. 231.
10. Censorship, as well as dissension between Marx and the other director, Arnold Ruge, dealt a severe blow to this publication, which appeared only once, in February 1844.
11. The Marx Nachlass contains some two hundred notebooks of summaries, which are essential for an understanding of the genesis of his theory and of parts of it that he never had an opportunity to develop as he would have wished. The surviving extracts, stretching all the way from 1838 to 1882, are written in eight languages (German, ancient Greek, Latin, French, English, Italian, Spanish and Russian) and pertain to the most varied disciplines. They were gathered from texts of philosophy, art, religion, politics, law, literature, history, political economy, international relations, technology, mathematics, physiology, geology, mineralogy, agronomy, ethnology, chemistry and physics, as well as from articles in newspapers and journals, parliamentary proceedings, and official government statistics, reports and publications.
12. As Marx did not yet know the English language in 1844, the English-language books he read at that time were in French translation.
13. These extracts are contained in the volumes Karl Marx, *Exzerpte und Notizen. 1843 bis Januar 1845*, MEGA2 IV/2, Berlin: Dietz, 1981, and Karl Marx, *Exzerpte und Notizen. Sommer 1844 bis Anfang 1847*, MEGA2 IV/3, Berlin: Akademie, 1998. The only parts translated into English are “Comments on James Mill, *Éléments d'économie politique*”, MECW 3, p. 211–28.
14. On the relationship between the [Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844] and the [Paris Manuscripts], see Marcello Musto, “Marx in Paris: Manuscripts and Notebooks of 1844”, *Science & Society*, vol. 73, no. 3 (July 2009): 386–402.
15. “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844”, MECW 3, p. 272.
16. “Heinrich Bürgers, Autumn 1844 – Winter 1845”, in Hans Magnus Enzensberger, ed., *Gespräche mit Marx und Engels*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1973, p. 46.
17. Engels to Marx, Beginning of October 1844, MECW 38, p. 6.
18. In reality, Engels contributed only ten or so pages to the text.
19. Engels to Marx, 20 January 1845, MECW 38, p. 17f.
20. Marx Engels, *Werke* (MEW), vol. 27, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1963, p. 669, n. 365.
21. “Marx’s Undertaking Not to Publish Anything in Belgium on Current Politics”, MECW 4, p. 677.

22. Karl Marx, “Draft of an Article on Friedrich List’s Book *Das Nationale System der Politischen Oekonomie*”, MECW 4, p. 265–93.
23. All these extracts may be found in Marx, *Exzerpte und Notizen. Sommer 1844 bis Anfang 1847*.
24. See “Plan of the ‘Library of the Best Foreign Socialist Writers’”, MECW 4, p. 667.
25. These extracts are contained in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Exzerpte und Notizen. Juli bis August 1845*, MEGA2 IV/4, which also includes the first [Manchester Notebooks]. It was during this period that Marx began to read directly in English.
26. These still unpublished extracts, forming part of the [Manchester Notebooks] VI–IX, are due to appear in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Exzerpte und Notizen. August 1845 bis Dezember 1850*, MEGA2 IV/5.
27. Karl Marx, “Declaration against Karl Gru”n”, MECW 6, p. 72.
28. Karl Marx to Carl Wilhelm Julius Leske, 1 August 1846, MECW 38, p. 50.
29. Friedrich Engels, “Preface to the Pamphlet *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*”, MECW 26, p. 519. In fact Engels already used this expression in 1859, in his review of Marx’s book *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, but the article had no resonance and the term began to circulate only after the publication of *Ludwig Feuerbach*.
30. Marx to Carl Wilhelm Julius Leske, 1 August 1846, MECW 38, p. 51.
31. Georg Weerth to Wilhelm Weerth, 18 November 1846, in Enzensberger, *Gespräche mit Marx und Engels*, pp. 68f.
32. These extracts constitute the volume Karl Marx, *Exzerpte und Notizen. September 1846 bis Dezember 1847*, MEGA2 IV/6, Berlin: Dietz, 1983.
33. “Letter from Marx to Pavel Vasilyevich Annenkov”, 28 December 1846, MECW 38, p. 95.
34. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The Manifesto of the Communist Party”, MECW 6, pp. 481, 482.
35. Karl Marx, “Wage Labour and Capital”, MECW 9, p. 198.
36. Marx to Engels, 23 August 1849, MECW 38, p. 213.
37. Karl Marx, “The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850”, MECW 10, p. 134.
38. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Announcement of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-ökonomische Revue*”, MECW 10, p. 5.
39. Karl Marx to Joseph Weydemeyer, 19 December 1849, MECW 38, p. 220.

40. "The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850", MECW 10, p. 135.

41. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Review: January-February 1850", MECW 10, pp. 264f.

42. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Review: March-April 1850", MECW 10, p. 340.

43. Ibid., p. 341.

44. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Review: May-October 1850", MECW 10, p. 497.

45. Ibid., p. 503. 46. "Reviews from the Neue Rheinische Zeitung Revue No. 4", MECW 10, p. 318.

47. Marx and Engels, "Review: May-October 1850", MECW 10, pp. 529f.

48. "The vulgar democrats expected sparks to fly again any day; we declared as early as autumn 1850 that at least the first chapter of the revolutionary period was closed and that nothing was to be expected until the outbreak of a new world economic crisis. For which reason we were excommunicated, as traitors to the revolution, by the very people who later, almost without exception, made their peace with Bismarck." Friedrich Engels, "Introduction to Karl Marx's The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850", MECW 27, p. 510.

49. Marx to Engels, 11 February 1851, MECW 38, p. 286.

50. Marx to Engels [postscript by Wilhelm Pieper], 27 January 1851, MECW 38, pp. 269f.

51. Marx to Engels, 11 February 1851, MECW 38, p. 286.

52. Engels to Marx, 13 February 1851, MECW 38, pp. 290f.

53. See Walter Tuchscheerer, Bevor "Das Kapital" entstand, Berlin: Akademie, 1973, p. 318.

54. For an appraisal of the importance of the [London Notebooks] see the special issue – no. 7 (1979) – of the journal *Arbeitsblätter zur Marx-Engelsforschung* edited by Wolfgang Jahn and Dietrich Noske, Fragen der Entwicklung der Forschungsmethode von Karl Marx in den Londoner Exzerptheften von 1850–1853.

55. Except for the material from Adam Smith, which is in the volume *Karl Marx, Exzerpte und Notizen. März bis Juni 1851*, MEGA2 IV/8, Berlin: Dietz, 1986, all the excerpts in question may be found in *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Exzerpte und Notizen. September 1849 bis Februar 1851*, Berlin: Dietz, 1983, MEGA2 IV/7. Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (Notebook VII) and Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (Notebooks IV, VII and VIII), which Marx had read in French during his stay in Paris in 1844, were now studied in the original English.

56. See Marx to Engels, 3 February 1851, MECW 38, p. 275.

57. "Bullion. Das vollendete Geldsystem", MEGA2 IV/8, pp. 3–85. The second of these unnumbered notebooks also contains other extracts, most notably from John Fullarton's *On the Regulation of Currencies*.

58. Another brief exposition of Marx's theories on money, credit and crisis is contained in Notebook VII, in the fragmentary "Reflections", MECW 10, pp. 584–92.

59. Marx to Engels, 2 April 1851, MECW 38, p. 325. Translation modified.

60. Engels to Marx, 3 April 1851, MECW 38, p. 330.

61. See Karl Marx, Exzerpte aus David Ricardo: On the principles of political economy, MEGA2 IV/8, pp. 326–31, 350–72, 381–95, 402–4, 409–26. Proof of the importance of these pages is the fact that the extracts, together with others by the same author contained in Notebooks IV and VII, were published in 1941, in the second volume of the first edition of the [Grundrisse].

62. In this crucial phase of new theoretical acquisitions, Marx's relationship with Engels was of the greatest importance: for example, some of his letters to him summarize his critical views on Ricardo's theory of ground rent (Marx to Engels, 7 January 1851, MECW 38, pp. 258–63) and monetary circulation (Marx to Engels, 3 February 1851, MECW 38, pp. 273–8).

63. In this same period, Marx turned his attention to industry and machinery. See Hans-Peter Müller, *Karl Marx über Maschinerie, Kapital und industrielle Revolution*, Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1992.

64. Marx to Joseph Weydemeyer, 27 June 1851, MECW 38, p. 377.

65. Marx to Engels, 31 July 1851, MECW 38, p. 398.

66. At the time, the New York Tribune appeared in three different editions (New York Daily Tribune, New York Semi-Weekly Tribune and New York Weekly Tribune), each of which carried many articles by Marx. To be precise, the New York Daily Tribune published 487 articles, more than half of which were reprinted in the New York Semi-Weekly Tribune and more than a quarter in the New York Weekly Tribune (and to these should be added a few others that he sent to the paper but which were rejected by the editor, Charles Dana). Of the articles published in the New York Daily Tribune, more than two hundred appeared as unsigned editorials. It should finally be mentioned that, to allow Marx more time for his studies of political economy, roughly half of these articles were actually written by Engels. The submissions to the New York Tribune always aroused great interest, as we can see, for example, from an editorial statement in the issue of 7 April 1853: "Mr Marx has very decided opinions of his own, . . . but those who do not read his letters neglect one of the most instructive sources of information on the great questions of current European politics." Quoted in Marx to Engels, 26 April 1853, MECW 39, p. 315.

67. See Friedrich Engels, "Critical Review of Proudhon's Book *Idé e g e n e r a l e de la R e volution au XIXe sie cle*", MECW 11, pp. 545–70.

68. The extracts from these books are contained in Karl Marx, *Exzerpte und Notizen. Juli bis September 1851*, MEGA2 vol. IV/9, Berlin: Dietz, 1991.

69. These notebooks have not yet been published in MEGA2, but Notebook XV featured in Hans Peter Müller's collection: *Karl Marx, Die technologisch-historischen Exzerpte*, Frankfurt/Main: Ullstein, 1982. See the recent study by Amy E. Wendling, *Karl Marx on Technology and Alienation*, New York: Palgrave, 2009.

70. Marx to Engels, 13 October 1851, MECW 38, p. 476.

71. See esp. Ferdinand Lassalle to Karl Marx, 12 May 1851, MEGA2 III/4, pp. 377f; "Marx to Engels, 24 November 1851", MECW 38, pp. 490–2; and Engels to Marx, 27 November 1851, MECW 38, pp. 493–5.

72. Engels to Marx, 27 November 1851, MECW 38, p. 494, translation modified.

73. Marx to Joseph Weydemeyer, 30 January 1852, MECW 39, p. 26.

74. Marx to Ferdinand Freiligrath, 27 December 1851, MECW 38, p. 520. Tr. of French passage: "After the most recent events, I am more convinced than ever that there will not be a serious revolution without a commercial crisis".

75. Marx to Gustav Zerffi, 28 December 1852, MECW 39, p. 270.

76. These notebooks have not yet been published.

77. Marx to Engels, 8 September 1852, MECW 39, pp. 181–2.

78. Marx to Engels, 25 October 1852, MECW 39, p. 216, translation modified.

79. Marx to Engels, 27 October 1852, MECW 39, p. 221.

80. Marx to Ferdinand Lassalle, 23 February 1852, MECW 39, p. 46.

81. Marx to Joseph Weydemeyer, 30 April 1852, MECW 39, p. 96.

82. Marx to Engels, 19 August 1852, MECW 39, p. 163.

83. Karl Marx, "Pauperism and Free Trade – The Approaching Commercial Crisis", MECW 11, p. 361.

84. Marx to Adolf Cluss, 7 December 1852, MECW 39, p. 259.

85. Marx to Engels, 10 March 1853, MECW 39, p. 288.

86. This expression was used for the first time in 1846, with regard to the differences between Marx and the German communist Wilhelm Weitling. It was subsequently employed also in the trial proceedings at Cologne. See Rubel, Marx, critique du marxisme, p. 26, n. 2.

87. This term appeared for the first time in 1854. See Georges Haupt, “From Marx to Marxism”, in *idem, Aspects of International Socialism, 1871–1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 2.

88. Marx to Engels, 10 March 1853, MECW 39, p. 290.

89. Marx to Engels, 8 October 1853, MECW 39, p. 386, translation modified.

90. Engels to Marx, 11 March 1853, MECW 39, p. 293.

91. Marx to Engels, 10 March 1853, MECW 39, p. 289.

92. Marx to Engels, 18 August 1853, MECW 39, p. 356.

93. Marx to Engels, 8 July 1853, MECW 39, p. 352.

94. Marx to Adolf Cluss, 15 September 1853, MECW 39, p. 367.

95. Karl Marx, “Revolution in China and Europe”, MECW 12, pp. 95f.

96. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

98. Karl Marx, “Political Movements: Scarcity of Bread in Europe”, MECW 12, p. 308.

99. Marx to Engels, 28 September 1853, MECW 39, p. 372.

100. These notebooks of extracts have recently been published in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Exzerpte und Notizen. September 1853 bis Januar 1855*, Berlin: Akademie, 2007.

101. Marx to Engels, 13 February 1855, MECW 39, p. 522.

102. See Fred E. Schrader, *Restauration und Revolution*, Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1980, p. 99.

103. Karl Marx, “The Commercial Crisis in Britain”, MECW 13, p. 585.

104. Karl Marx, “The Crisis in England”, MECW 14, p. 61.

105. Marx to Engels, 12 April 1855, MECW 39, p. 533.

106. Marx to Engels, 3 March 1855, MECW 39, p. 525.

107. Marx to Engels, 8 March 1855, MECW 39, p. 526.

108. Karl Marx, “The French Crédit Mobilier”, MECW 15, p. 10.

109. Karl Marx, “The Monetary Crisis in Europe”, MECW 15, p. 113.

110. Karl Marx, “The European Crisis”, MECW 15, p. 136.

111. Karl Marx, “The Monetary Crisis in Europe”, MECW 15, p. 115.

112. These notebooks of extracts are still unpublished.

113. Karl Marx, *Oeconomische Manuskripte 1857/58*, in MEGA2, II/1.1, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1976, p. 4; “Bastiat and Carey”, in *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Draft)*, London: Penguin Books, 1993, p. 886. Like the extracts from Ricardo, the [Bastiat and Carey] fragment was included in volume two of the first edition of the [Grundrisse].

114. Marx to Engels, 8 December 1857, MECW 40, p. 217.

115. Apart from Notebooks M and VII, which are kept at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, these are all at the Russian State Archive for Socio-Political History in Moscow. With regard to dates, it should be stressed that the first part of Notebook I, which contains Marx’s critical analysis of *De la réforme des banques* by Alfred Darimon, was written in the months of January and February 1857, not (as the editors of the [Grundrisse] thought) in October. See Inna Ossobowa, “Über einige Probleme der ökonomischen Studien von Marx im Jahre 1857 vom Standpunkt des Historikers”, *Beiträge zur Marx-Engels-Forschung* 29, 1990: 147–61.

116. These notebooks have not yet been published. Cf. Michael Krautke, “Marx’s ‘Books of Crisis’ of 1857–8”, in Marcello Musto, ed., *Karl Marx’s Grundrisse*, pp. 169–75.

117. Marx to Engels, 18 December 1857, MECW 40, p. 224. A few days later, Marx communicated his plans to Lassalle: “The present commercial crisis has impelled me to set to work seriously on my outlines of political economy, and also to prepare something on the present crisis” (Marx to Lassalle, 21 December 1857, MECW 40, p. 226).

118. Marx to Lassalle, 22 February 1858, MECW 40, pp. 270f.

[**APPENDIX**](#) (click here)