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**The concept of PRAXIS
in the 21st century**

Karl Marx and the praxis thinkers

The concept of praxis in the transitional period

The latently existing system alternative

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Karl Marx und die Praxisdenker, das Praxiskonzept in der
Übergangsperiode und die latent existierende Systemalternative

Abstract

The manifold social problems and crises of the 21st century indicate the beginning of a socio-historical period of transition, in which the capitalist orientation of the economy and social life is clearly leading to increasing troubles and disasters.

Critics and conscious people are therefore looking for new avenues, but are unable to refer to a concrete alternative. The social experiments of the last century failed and current attempts at social transformation are lacking in clear orientation. The left stays in an extremely precarious situation.

Significantly, a long-term depletion of basic philosophical and scientific conceptions has contributed to the emergence of this critical situation. Moreover, the development of a positively dimensioned political economy is seriously lagging behind concerning an alternative system.

This work focuses on answering the fundamental questions raised and the revision of basic conceptions necessary to achieve that. Practical, dialectical thinking exceeds all merely critical theories. The deeper exploration of this innovation in the history of ideas re-activates Marx and the outstanding manifestations of subsequent praxis thinkers. Thus, the extended conception of reality and science in terms of the concept of praxis will make its mark in our new time.

In this way, Marx's original, utopian world philosophical approach becomes clearer than ever. In the social sciences the paradigm of a science of praxis is emerging. Its integral character breaks open the narrow academic focus, eventually leading to the development of an advanced form of socioeconomy, in opposition to prevailing economic doctrines.

Historical studies incorporating philosophical and economic aspects apply to the evolution of industrial capitalism of the 19th century to the urbanised social capitalism of the 20th century, and further to the problematic

situation of the modern transitional societies in the capitalist world system. These analyses also concern the situation in Europe. They confirm the assumption that there is already a latently existing alternative system.

A new approach to the analysis of value and reproduction conditions enables the identification of its critical junctions, a potential system transformation and the new forms this will take. The concept of a democratic economic society based on a feasible socio-economic reproduction and regulation should be understood as a unifying perspective for alternative movements and economic and political emancipation.

Horst Müller

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SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

The study "The concept of PRAXIS in the 21st Century" originated in personal experiences and a basic insight: The orientation problems of the intellectual and scientific opposition as well as the political forces closely connected with Marx' work and the diverse currents of Marxism, practice thinking and social theory that are linked to it are so profound that one can only describe them as a Gordian knot. Cutting or loosening it promises above all to identify courses of action in our difficult time. In part, however, this seemed no longer possible. Hence the great effort and the comprehensive nature of this work. It may be of interest to anyone wanting to understand the resulting, socially and historically problematic situation and searching for that which is called "social truth" in terms of the concept of praxis.

A positively forward-looking orientation

Clearly, the answers to the urgent questions are only to be found in a very concrete present and positively forward-looking orientation. This present turns out to be, essentially and as a whole, a form of sociality formed as social capitalism, embedded in an alienated capitalist world system and involved in an as yet uncertain socio-historical transition. The positive, utopian research now attempted has led to a surprising discovery: This scenario of contradictory practices already carries within it the shape of a more highly developed sociality which is just waiting to give birth.

One thing is obvious at this juncture: The activation of philosophical and scientific practice thinking means going beyond the critical and negatory economic and social theories popular in the 20th century. Because of their limited epistemic roots they cannot arrive at the concrete alternative which is inherent in the process itself and urgently required today.

The way people think critically in terms of practical logic and diagnosis of situation is always a factor prior to arriving at concrete solutions. On the other hand, in the current socio-historic transition period in the context of the modern transitional societies, praxis requires to overcome all traditional barriers to a future orientation.

With this line of thought I want to address students, critical minds, engaged people and open-minded scientists as well as social leaders who may be conscious of a deeper problem: Even sophisticated critical theories, alternative projects and programmatic statements show signs of a profound philosophical and scientific depletion. In the past this problem had been reflected in various ways, time and again as a crisis of Marxism, or even as a crisis of any system opposition and the political left, after corresponding social experiments had failed and neoliberalism marched from one victory to another. Now it has become clear upon closer inspection that even the energetic manifestations of alternative initiatives and anti-hegemonic movements suffer from corresponding fundamental problems and weaknesses.

For a long time this difficult situation was hidden on the one hand by an ongoing interplay between capitalist production of problems and crises, and on the other hand by increasingly mounting criticism of the system from the left and many other reflective people. However, the constantly repeated accusations have hardly changed the actual constitutional weakness of the opposition. This is essentially due to the fact that the societal future still seems in question or as painfully obscure as it was in the early 20th century. The idea of socialism still has a veiled, partly worn-out appearance. All the alternatives taken together clearly are not an adequate replacement. They do not possess the concreteness necessary for a political and economic programme for social development. We might find consolation in the fact that a web search with the question "What's left?" scores many hits.

Because of all this there is an increasing risk that all hope is sucked into the black hole called future, which is expanding in social consciousness. This is counteracted above all by great intellectual restlessness in society and virulent forward thinking found everywhere. In addition to that there are countless protests, resistance movements and people locally and all over the world beginning to search for liveable alternatives, and experimenting with social change. With this in mind and given the multiple crises and an obscure future it is clear that an inquiring forward thinking focus is necessary.

Rearranging the theoretical and historic domain

The present work is an attempt to untangle the Gordian knot. This necessitated a broad exploration of the history of ideas and actual history. It aims to renew the foundations by taking a philosophical-scientific, basically existential position within the meaning of the 'concept of praxis'. This resulted in a reordering of the theoretical-historical sphere and a range of unusual, partly provocative findings: In contrast to industrial capitalism, "social capitalism" (Müller 2012) is more mature and already contains the latency of something new, thus changing the historical perspective.

Looking further back it becomes clearer that Marx' dialectic, utopian inspired practice thinking is the foundation of the real world philosophy of modernity. He always had the problem of an alternative in mind and would have loved to solve it, but due to historical and theoretical limitations he could not solve them in his time. On the other hand Marx had anticipated that the fully formed global capitalist market, which has only been realised in our time, would mark the beginning of a transitional period. Thus, the new is already present "in the womb" (MEW 13: 9; MEW 42: 203) of the decadent old, manifesting itself in transitional forms.

This well-founded and fundamental disposition puts it clearly: In the 21st century, in the course of the full expansion of the capitalist world market and world system, a socio-historical period of "transition" (MEW 25: 274, 457; Wallerstein 2002: 43) was opened up. There can no longer be any talk of a serious social theory where this is not recognised. So when it comes to the topic of "society" today then one can only speak of transitional societies in scientific terms, that is, insofar as one has not conformed or been dumbed down. Hence, in the new historical period the contradictory nature of the social-capitalist formation is taken to an extreme formational conflict. Therefore, the dialectic, utopian practice thinking is eventually challenged to evolve as a paradigmatic shape of a modern science of praxis and reality and to take a stand in accordance with the "concept of praxis".

The richness of the dialectical thinking of praxis

In the face of considerable social-theoretical obfuscation and diversionary tactics there was a need first of all to offer an introduction into the intellec-

tual world of practice thinking. So I tried to make "praxis as the key problem of science and social reality" more recognisable. This includes an Ariadne's thread through the labyrinth of the history of theories, and above all the communication of a preliminary understanding of the "constitutional-theoretical" questioning. This consistent supposition is quite new and the guiding principle in all investigations and discussions.

The first main part after the introduction is titled "Historical articulations of a dialectical practice thinking". On the basis of outstanding authors and their works it aims to reclaim the authentic approach and widely repressed, tremendous heritage of Marxian thinking. It is important to pay renewed attention to the historical circumstances as well as the future potential of these articulations and work on them constructively.

This is absolutely essential because the general perception or identification of the all-round virulent, inspirational dialectical practice thinking was blocked for too long a time. Various circumstances contributed to the misjudgement of this novelty in the history of ideas: Ideological wars and complicated theoretical-historical confusions of the last century; the persistent, irritating splits in Marxian, practice and social thought; a perennial narrow-mindedness of mainstream science. In addition, there has been an ideological roll-back in the context of the neoliberal attack for decades. This went hand in hand with a massive trend towards the damage or downright dumbing-down of the social intellect and a decline of moral standards (Crouch 2015).

Dialectical practice thinking is placed in opposition to this. The paradigm of a contemporary philosophy and science of social practice as a militant position in the broad field of modern social sciences is evolving from these considerations. This position in turn leads to a consistent interpretation of Marx' work. In the final analysis Marx' work is fundamentally an analysis of praxis, criticism of alienation and theory of transformation. So it is an incipient modern world philosophy. Thus, it closely corresponds to the current historical situation, showing us that it continues to have something important to say to us.

The first thing to be mentioned in this respect is the specific, integrated epistemic type created by Marx of Comprehending the Practice. This corresponds to the conception of social practice as the human and social reality,

which, of course, also includes the permeating relationship with nature (MEW 3: 5 ff.). The focused and discursive overview of the various important practice thinkers was necessary in order to gather arguments and to explain the complex constitutional issues and the emancipated world view connected to that.

Marx' early writings as well as the Grundrisse (MEW 42) provide particular inspiration hereby. The latter represent perhaps Marx' most far-reaching philosophical-scientific internal reflections before his main work *Capital*. Ernst Bloch's thoughts on practice, nature, ethos and concrete utopia, even Henri Lefebvre's ideas concerning practice or a meta-philosophy and his concept of the urban reality are important resources. Further essential contributions come from German, Yugoslav and other European practice thinkers. George Herbert Mead's conception of the reality of mind and meanings and his idea of an "objective reality of perspectives" plays a special role. Pierre Bourdieu's engaged Praxeology challenges the various approaches of modern social sciences. In this way, he returns to concrete reality, that is, social practice including its countless domains and problems. However, when it comes to economic questions social theorists quickly reach their limits; without the fundamental achievements of Marx's critique of political economy nothing of value can be achieved in this field. With all explorations of the history of ideas special emphasis was placed on questions of dialectics. The dialectic may be reactivated in the context of a coherent epistemological and constitutional theory of social practice, and new impulses shall be generated. In contrast, Habermas' pretentious conceptualisations that are focused on intersubjectivity as well as their theoretical echo are criticised vehemently. They do not hold up to any confrontation with Marx, other practice thinkers (Bourdieu 1979; Mead 1975a) and related positions (Mouffe 2007).

The practice concept in the transition period

The understanding for the nature of practice thinking can be deepened on the outlined mental path and stimulated by original quotations from thinkers discussed here. It is both historically conditioned and tends to be universal. This raises the question what form the "practice concept" should take today, thus leading to the considerations in the second main part of "The practice concept in the 21st century". Together with the subsequent

section on "The socio-historical situation of transition" it represents the middle, central axis within the line of thought.

The practice concept emerges from the groundwork carried out by the practice thinkers in a modern, more substantial and mature shape. It is presented as a powerful position in terms of social analysis and diagnosis of time. It combines a profound and coherent conception of reality, cognisance and science based on the ontology of practice, and has appropriate conceptual and methodological tools. These include for example the Marxian "Conception of Practice," Bloch's "Latency," Mead's "Perspectivity" and Bourdieu's "Praxeology", Wallersteins "Utopistic", and not least the inspiration of Hegel's "Dialectic". This approach takes up a polemical position in the social sciences, a field otherwise fragmented, incoherent in terms of the logic of practice and imbued with ideology.

The crystallised constitution of social praxis encompasses a broad spectrum of formative moments and dimensions of social reality, including the central sphere of social reproduction. It also enables questions to be articulated about a more sophisticated institutionalised praxis, including the complex institutional nature of the state. The often neglected aspect of juridification of praxis is also discussed. Further investigations concern the basic concept of "society" and a sovereign sociality, in the political philosophy sense, and its formation as a modern economic nation state.

Overall, the "outline of a reflexive praxis science", cultivating the dialectical-practical knowledge type of conceiving, is becoming apparent. The correlated, extended conception of reality is concentrated in an idea of a multi-dimensional, contradictory social practice. Thus, all such social syntheses of practical perspectives (Müller 1986: 138 ff) appear in the transformation of historical, economic, social and political formations. As the still dominant, alienated character of the existing social-capitalist practice formation comes to light, the theory itself appears engaged in a "struggle for social truth".

The epistemology of practice culminates in the latter notion. This shows that the conception of man-made history, which is materialistic and utopian in equal parts, and its understanding of a developing reality has an equally normative dimension. It goes hand in hand with an ethos of concrete action, an enlightened conception of progress and a definite social sense of direction. Its aims in life do not need to be conjured out of an aca-

demic hat or mitre. They constitute a field of balanced criteria arising from the practice-theoretical self-reflexivity of social reality and bringing together the best thinking out of the human history of struggles and ideals. Hence, what to do and not to do is not written in a place of pure ideas, but it has to be sought and found within the scope of a concrete comprehending of the social situation.

Conceptualisation of the transitional situation

Clearly, the conceptualisation of the "socio-historical situation" as "transition" requires a more substantive rationale. The basic assumption also requires a more precise reconstruction of the historical development from the perspective of the presence determined by it. This concerns the formational development with its stages and in its various dimensions. This "historicisation" extends from the time of industrial capitalism over two centuries up to the present involvement of all societies in the world market and the capitalist world system. The focal point of the formational periodisation is the notion of the tripartite core structure of modern society, of the model type of "social capitalism" (Muller 2012), which has developed in the 20th century. This type includes the dimension of the market-based industrial production of commodities and the complementary division or formation of social infrastructures and services, usually termed public services. The third element is the modern fiscal, social and financial state as the central mediating agency between the two divisions. The thesis is this: This configuration represents a more highly developed and mature formation in relation to the era of industrial capitalism which Marx could not have known. Even in the 21st century, this basic form of modern economic and cultural societies still constitutes the actual starting point for any further development, be it a positive, emancipatory one or a negative, regressive one.

Perhaps the most surprising result is that the alternative sought after everywhere is already preconfigured, more or less latently, in the actually existing social capitalism. It is developing simultaneously in the realisation of praxis, thus existing as a political-economic "Latency" (Bloch 1978: 259 f.). The search for a positive, concrete alternative system is thereby put on a practice-analytical, factual basis; it is not utopian per se. From this viewpoint the "central contradiction" of capitalism, most recently identified in the "fearsome" tendency " $r > g$ " (Piketty 2014: 786), must be grasped differ-

ently: The point is a formational contradiction, the definitive main contradiction of the age: On the one hand we are dealing with an obsolete, decadent, declining formation of praxis trying to survive somehow and at any cost. On the other hand there is an emerging, new form of economic organisation and social life, existing already more or less latently. With regard to this latency I have spoken provocatively of the "closeness of socialism", which is recognisable in principle, but still "behind bulletproof glass" so to speak.

Overall the real, practical requirements for the development of that practice thinking as an operative paradigm of today's utopistic science arises from the actual process itself. It arises from the specific, universal and also formationally contradictory nature of the social and historical period of transition and crisis, which has begun in the 21st century and necessitates a real future orientation.

One of the most difficult questions arising with regard to the modern transitional reality refers to the relationship between social-capitalist economies and the alienated practicality of the capitalist world system. Its influence is felt everywhere and appears overpowering in this respect. This constellation brings up problems that can not be answered on the basis of "cosmopolitan illusions" (Mouffe 2007). They rather come under the field of political economy.

The science of political economy aka socioeconomics

The practice-ontological and epistemological insights do not leave the political economy founded by Marx untouched. Due to the extended conceptual understanding and with a view to the tripartite social capitalist structure discussed above it is possible to explore the contradictory transitional situation in more concrete ways. Marx himself barely anticipated this scenario. The challenge is now to advance to the crucial question of a concrete alternative system as much as possible in the semi-virtual sphere of a total transformation of the currently processing form of socio-historical practice. This comprehensive positive Dialectic of Praxis is the subject of the third main part: "Political economy as transformation analysis and outline of the alternative system".

To be able to address the far-reaching questions another clarification was required: The integral character of the developed practice science requires considerations concerning the specific nature of praxis of the "economy of society". It does not constitute a systemic complex and is not comprehensible as a product of social action. To say that an "automatic subject" is acting at the centre of the capital economy is also misleading. It is rather a very specific co-active as well as alienated practice applicable to the whole of society. This is structured in a very peculiar way, mediated through specific formations, economic calculations and determination of purpose. This theoretical part is about a practice-scientific grounding of economics, if you will. It is the foundation of a socioeconomics which also implies the sublation of economic science in an integral, historical social science (Wallerstein 2008). This approach has made it clear that the fundamental category of economic value basically expresses an objective-real sense-implication of practice. Scientifically, this can only be negated at the cost of losing ground, leading into the quagmire of capital-scientific vulgar and functional economics. It is also possible only in the course of a corresponding value and reproduction analysis, to expose the deeper causes of the obsessive accumulation of capital and the related capital-economic growth programme. Even in discussions about de-growth or a post-growth economy, the underlying problem of the "economic logic" is not yet adequately reflected.

The practice-theoretical approach thus shaped naturally stands against the mainstream, where neoliberal conceptualisations are predominant. Alongside there are Keynesian approaches or a socially and financially stunted policy mix fixated on growth. In contrast the currents of the plural, Marxist and heterodox economics increasingly point to the need for a fundamental reorientation beyond Hayek and Keynes. In the perspective being developed now this is about the development of a theoretically powerful "science of political economy" or "socioeconomics" based on theories of value, reproduction and transformation. Insofar as that ultimately works in economic and socio-political reality, it is about a collectively crystallising "Socioeconomy Project", if you will.

From this perspective the practice-logical groundlessness and reactionary, socially divisive and anti-democratic nature of neoliberalism and all affirmative capital-science can be made clear. However, it also uncovers the problematic constitution of a left economism: "Lire le Capital" or "Neue Marxlektüre" are not appropriate signposts for the unlocking of Marx' phi-

losophical and scientific, analytical and prospective achievements. Instead it requires a collaborative, enhanced research orientation in the sense of scientific "utopianism". The point is to realise that it is this very orientation that constitutes the innermost motive, the analytical logic and the thinking scope of Marx himself. Thus, it is obvious that the problem of the traditional political economy fixated on negation and capital theory has existed already since the early 20th century as a historical lag in the positive.

Approach of value, reproduction and practice analytics

Due to the clarification and prospective orientation reached so far it should be possible, at least to some extent and tentatively, to formulate a positive theory of praxis of the socio-economic rationality and emancipation. This is also so that the "economic possibilities for our grandchildren" (2007 Keynes) will not stay uncertain. The basis of this research orientation consists in the modelling of a state mediated and moderated, tripartite social-capitalist reproduction scenario. The decisive factor here is the role of the social-economic services. This category means a complementary economic morphogenesis in relation to the capitalist commodity which Marx had focused on exclusively. In economic history the social-economic services developed into the second main part of the reproductive process, especially in the course of the 20th century.

The analysis or discussion of the social-capitalist reproduction scenarios led to the identification of four critical nodes. These include the inherent compulsion to accumulation and growth or the economic logic of valorization and profit maximisation, the capitalist capture of social economy services, the inherent tendency to increasing public debt and the degradation of society as a workbench for the export oriented, global capital economy and competition. The key research question is: To what extent does a latent, though theoretical tangible, essentially different configuration of value and reproduction conditions exist in this scenario and how may it be unleashed?

Focusing on these questions is based on a fundamental insight: In the long term only an idea of social renewal displaying a perspective of transformation at the reflective level of a value, reproduction and praxis analysis inspired by Marx can achieve confidence, position a diverse social experience and be put into economic practice. Thus, it can also have an integrative ef-

fect with regard to the various movements searching for social alternatives. Either in the manner outlined here or in another way.

However, an antithetically grounded or normatively underpinned critique can never result in a corresponding analytics of practice or transformation. The same is true for theories fixated on capital which declare the future a forbidden zone instead of the primary area of work. Finally, the continued, general or abstract critique of the system or capitalism without a framework of political economy and transformation theory is unable to identify the effective nodes or targets for an "anti-hegemonic intervention" (Mouffe 2008) and systemic change. Thus, in one way or another the real situation, the social mission and the specific research tasks in the transitional period are missed. Finally, the linking up of resistance or alternative movements with the islands of solidarity economies in the capitalist sea will not in itself lead to a transformation of the social-capitalist core structure. Only a corresponding retuning may sublimate the devastating accumulation and growth imperative and put into operation a basically thrifty economic logic, a higher economic rationality.

This also answers the question how a system solution and the many alternative initiatives and experiments belong together. The decisive factor is the institution of a reproductive formation as the core structure of economic life that is no longer capitalist but a thrifty socio-economic form of reproduction. This will be the essential pillar and the practically and politically unifying aspect for a consistent and necessarily co-active unfolding of diverse, alternative formations of economic activity and human-social activity generally, if you will. Everything else – beyond capitalist forms of work and economy and the science of political economy in the narrower sense – in social life and the cultural sphere moving towards the "human invariant of direction towards a dignified life" (Bloch 1978: 208) could be joined with this concept. It implies the creation of disposable time (MEW 42: 603) and the necessary space and means for a more peaceful and free human life activity. Can all this now be conceived in a more concrete way, in the sense of a real praxis and politics which is providing an answer to the current, chaotic and unstable, highly problematic socio-historical situation?

The politics of economic-social transformation

The analysis of value, reproduction and transformation theory has identified a crucial nexus of social-capitalist system conditions: A "capital transfer tax" in addition to income tax will complete the concept of a "fiscal revolution" (Goldscheid 1976: 280, Piketty 2014: 662). This will achieve a fundamental change or transformation of the economic and social praxis as a whole. The double fiscal revolution changes the value relations and leads to new economic formations and process relationships. Perhaps the most important post-growth effect may be the transformation of capitalist surplus value into social savings. How could the approximately outlined alternative be described? It is a knowledge-based, democratic economy on the basis of a socio-economic reorganisation and regulation at a higher level. That would be open-ended "development system of social labour, production and praxis".

In the more advanced attempt to determine constitutional aspects of this kind of social "association" (MEW 42: 92; MEW 25: 456) a whole range of issues were addressed: Amongst other things the attainable equal position and even further development of social-economy services, an abolition of enforced public debt and an end to the inappropriate and regressive privatisation of the public sphere, furthermore questions of a tax reform or "fiscal revolution", finally the problem of a rational economic accounting and transparent social accountability. The planned system transformation implies a change of the fundamental property rights situation and opens up appropriate possibilities for configuring the enterprise and business constitutions collaboratively. In this context competitive and market conditions would continue to exist. But there would also be integrative socio-economic institutional structures.

The future economic mode corresponds to a "dynamic equilibrium". There is no longer an obsessively accumulative, but a "simple" though expandable and evolving reproduction. This would have a significant positive impact in terms of employment and social security, social needs and the social communication as a necessity of the first order. Finally, the "locally constituted urban practice" plays a fundamental role as a "self-similar" structured basis of modern, social-capitalist sociality, as a primary habitat and experimental field of social development. This raises the question of a different local or municipal constitution, of the future of the urban sphere or the "everyday

life in the modern world" (Lefebvre, 1972a, Harvey 2008) and about extended possibilities for individual expression of life in this medium.

The contradictory scenery of New Europe

From the developed point of view "society" today is to be understood in respect of the modern social capitalism economy and nationally constituted on this basis. This casts a critical light on the current European institutional-ity and the complex scenery of New Europe: In its current form as an "international multilevel regime" the European Union is designed and firmly bound by treaties to form a large free space for the market, capital and financial economy as an economic-political bloc in the capitalist world system. The "liberalisation machine" (Streeck 2013a: 148 ff) and its profitable production of social brainwashing and "post-democracy" (Crouch 2008, 2015) is emerging more and more from under the rhetoric of unity, progress, freedom and peace. In the final stages of crisis of the prevailing economic and social constitution this results in the tendency to undermine social, democratic and sovereign sociality. Thus, any still remaining potential for emancipation in the social-capitalist formation in the countries involved will be destroyed. It is an increasingly blatant subjugation of the socially and culturally rich economic and cultural societies under the imperatives of the alienated economy and a permanent crisis management. This development is drifting further and further into a multidimensional social dissociation.

The command centre of this historic venture is now located on the top floor of a debt tower of dizzying height from where this world's misery looks like a lesser evil. Faced with this malaise there is only one conclusion: What "Europe is probably (missing) the most" is not an economic government, that is, a centrally administrated capitalist regime that is merely given more scope on the use of force through free trade, but a "theoretically founded utopianism" or the work on a "collective design of a social utopia" (Bourdieu 1998b: 9) for concrete societies and another Europe.

Transformation and making way for emancipation

The starting point for a transition that seem still possible is the incipient, emerging real latency and mode of development of a fundamentally different, more highly evolved economy and social and cultural system. This

urgent formational contradiction is the main contradiction of this era. It not only characterises the general social conditions, but also encompasses the "infinitely differentiated federative structure" (Goldscheid 1976: 264, 315) of the state institutionality. In this complicated situation the socially alienated, relatively autonomous practicality of the world capitalist system encroaches everywhere and seems to make any attempt at escape impossible. Will this ultimately be the stumbling block for any social emancipation movement of the 21st century? On this difficult point the thesis is: A consistent policy of socio-economic transformation can lead to a form of sociality which is largely freed of the need to maximise profit, compulsion to growth and thus a much freer and more conscious sociality. Such a sociality could then be relatively consolidated and maintained in a different kind of European Cooperation and in a differently regulated, coactive relationship to a still existing capitalist world system.

So what was intended in the 20th century as a "concrete utopia" (Bloch 1977b: 226) and in experiments of liberation can be grasped differently than expected in the extremely contradictory terrain of the modern transitional societies, in the new historic phase, and asserted against a seemingly omnipotent, but decaying old world. Due to the entire theoretical-practical and historical constellation it is more likely that future social changes and revolutions constitute an emergence process and thereby real transformation rather than just a palace coup. The new, often tentative vision supporting the initiatives is already connected to social forces open to coalitions – sometimes visible, often still invisible, in all dimensions and in all fields of social praxis – through a manifold praxeology. So it can hopefully be identified more closely and delivered. The transformational force against the superiority and destructive power of the current rotten system can therefore not be constructed by pleading or merely being political. The decisive potentiality can only be found in a latent new comprehensive formation of social practice.

Ultimately it is clear that the outline of a socio-economic transformation has been developed, and it contains radical theses that should stir up the debate. But naturally it has a rather proto-theoretical status and requires further inquires and collaborative research, due to its preliminary methodology and problem exposition. This may resonate with students, intellectuals, engaged people and scientists who feel the "inwardly desperate poverty", "which forms the basis of bourgeois wealth and science" (MEW 42: 155). It

may appeal to people who want to go beyond the general protest against the production of misery and search for more concrete alternatives. I am convinced that only as part of a collective effort the "social truth" or that "prius of theory" can be brought to bear which will bestow a "primacy of practice" (Bloch 1977n: 250) with meaning and future.

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